

NYSERDA'S 42ND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

October 23, 2024

Clean Copy of Transcript

Dale Bryk:

Alright. Okay. Welcome everyone. We call the meeting to order of the Governance Committee of the NYSERDA Board. We had a notice of the meeting forwarded to the Committee Members on October 15, 2024 and the press on October 16, 2024 and a revised agenda was issued to everybody on October 22, 2024. This meeting is being conducted in person and by video conference the Authority will post a video, add a transcript of this meeting on the web. So to confirm that we have a quorum, I want to just go around and ask Committee Members to introduce themselves. I'm Dale Bryk, I'm the Chair of the Committee.

Charles Bell:

Chuck, Chuck Bell, Member of the Committee, Member of Board.

Sherburne Abbott:

Shere Abbott. Member of the Committee. Member of the board.

Chair Kauffman:

Richard Kauffman, Chair of the Authority.

Dale Bryk:

Alright. And is Jay on Bingle? Yeah, but we still have a quorum. Yes. Excellent. Okay. Thanks everyone. Alright, the second matter we have is approval of the minutes from the 41st meeting, the last meeting and that was held on June 24, 2024. Does anybody have any comments on the minutes? They looked great to me. Thanks. Can I have a motion to approve Vote?

Charles Bell:

So moved.

Dale Bryk:

Thank you. A second?

Chair Kauffman:

Second.

Dale Bryk:

Excellent. Anybody? All in favor?

Members of the Committee:

Aye.

Dale Bryk:

Opposed? Excellent. Alright, the minutes have been approved. Okay, now of the meeting, we have a great presentation coming up on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion report from Michelle,

the Authority's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer. So Michelle, without further ado, I hand it over to you. We'll keep forward to your presentation.

Michelle Andry:

Yes, good morning. Thank you. Committee Chair. Thank you. Board Chair and Members of the Committee for having us here this morning. Today I'm also being joined by Bianca Shaw, who is a Senior Project Manager on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team. She's joining us from Buffalo where she's based to help in providing this update on NYSERDA DEI efforts. Just a little bit about Bianca really quickly, because we're going directly to her. Bianca has been with the NYSERDA for over six years. She directly supports implementation of NYSERDA DEI strategic plan along with me and other team Members. And prior to this role, Bianca managed NYSERDA statewide outreach and engagement program and co-led the development of the regional Clean Energy Hubs initiative to help New Yorkers access clean energy programs. I'm really grateful to have her on the DEI team. And so with that, I'm going to pass it right over to Bianca to begin our presentation and then I'll be back.

Bianca Shaw:

Thank you Michelle for that introduction. Can everyone hear me? Okay? Great. Thank you to the Chair and the Members of the Committee for having me today. Today I'm going to provide an update on NYSERDA's efforts to measure progress towards our DEI goals using indicators. Next slide please. But first, some background. So NYSERDA, DEI strategic plan set forth a goal to be accountable for our DEI efforts and outcomes with measurements to show achievement of our DEI goals. And we've begun this work in earnest this year and are now moving forward with a four phased approach that I will get into shortly.

Bianca Shaw:

Next slide please. And I will just say, I'm going to breeze through the slides. I know we're a little limited on time, so feel free to jump in at any point with any questions you might have. So some additional background for this work. Earlier this year, Governor Hochul provided guidance and best practices to all New York State entities to strengthen and increase capacity for DEI across the New York State workforce. That guidance directed state entities to not only embed and operationalize equity into systems, policies and practices across New York state entities, but to also use evidence-based data-driven strategies to inform our DEI initiatives. Next slide please.

So at NYSERDA we know that a more inclusive workforce is a stronger one that is better able to achieve our mission. So I first want to begin by recognizing that the clean energy industry has traditionally struggled with diversity and inclusion for some context, the figures you see here summarized NYSERDA annual reporting on the demographic composition of our existing workforce as of last year. So 2023. And those figures have remained relatively unchanged for all groups over the past three years, with the exception of a slight uptick in new hires identifying as women last year, which resulted in a split 49% women and 51% men and some slight fluctuations in the racial and ethnic demographics of our existing workforce over the past three years, particularly for historically marginalized groups totaling 16% of our workforce compared to 28% in the New York State government workforce. A few important items to note the data in these charts are an approximation based on voluntary self-reported information by our workforce.

So please keep that in mind as you look at these charts. Another item to note that the first chart here does not include data on the transgender gender non-conforming and non-binary community due to limited data categories. What I mean by that is we currently have a single non-binary or X category that not everyone may see themselves reflected in. Additionally, given recent guidance from the governor's office on the collection of sexual orientation and gender identity or what we call SOGI data, we want to be cognizant of the privacy risks unique to gender identity. However, we are actually working with a vendor currently to assess NYSERDA current state of inclusivity and we will be receiving recommendations based on best practices that we will consider for future implementation. One other consideration for sharing information is whether it can result in unreliable conclusions due to small sample sizes. As such, veteran and disability status of our existing workforce is not included here due to small population size, but we've been working tirelessly to improve engagement and inclusion and we know that we need to take an honest and nuanced look at where there may be opportunities for improvement within our policies and processes. With that, I will turn it over to Michelle to provide an update on some other initiatives underway at NYSERDA.

Chair Kauffman:

Just a question. So what's the participation revenue? These service?

Bianca Shaw:

I apologize, I couldn't hear you.

Chair Kauffman:

What percentage The employees are talking about 80% percent, 90%

Bianca Shaw:

Sure. The self-identification rate you mean?

Chair Kauffman:

Yeah, I mean this comes from a survey, right?

Bianca Shaw:

This is from, it's a section in our payroll system where people can go in and identify their demographics. Yes. So I would say 47.3% identify their race or ethnicity. So less than half are self-identifying. So the other half we don't really know what that is. And then gender identity, 90% of new hires are self-identifying on applications in a DP and a hundred percent self-identify upon onboarding. But that's just new as of April of this year. Does that answer your question?

Chair Kauffman:

Yeah. So I really don't know how to think that about the race and ethnicity. Less than half the people we can look shield survey, I don't really know, does it, does intuitively these numbers make sense to you?

Michelle Andry:

They do actually. And I would say that we are definitely actively working to have more employees complete the self-identification that we have. But generally these numbers do largely track with our workforce demographics.

Bianca Shaw:

Yeah. Okay. Other questions?

Charles Bell:

Yes. So the diversity of the state workforce as a whole is at 20% rather than 15% like we have. But I'm just wondering is there any difference with the private sector workforce in New York state and then the population of New York State, I guess would be the other,

Michelle Andry:

Yes. I believe Bianca actually has some numbers on the clean energy industry. Do you want to share that Bianca?

Bianca Shaw:

Yeah, so for the clean energy industry, let me take a look here. I actually took those out, but I can get those in quick order. So I would say for New York State in terms of the gender split, we are actually doing better compared to the overall clean energy industry for the racial and ethnic categories. I'll have to check compared to the overall clean energy industry.

Chair Kauffman:

Thank you.

Bianca Shaw:

You're welcome.

Michelle Andry:

Alright, onto the next slide please. Could we go to the next? Okay, great. So the actions that we are taking to build an inclusive workforce of and workplace of diverse backgrounds, experience and perspectives are currently largely in the areas of hiring and retention and include, but we're not limited to a number of actions that the HR team and the DEI team are implementing as relates to policy processes and culture, which I've shared here on this slide. So under hiring, just to run through a number of these, we have increased our recruiting personnel and the HR team to optimize our capacity to do outreach to more diverse candidate communities as well as increase our capacity to do monitoring of how that expanded outreach is having an impact. This also increases our ability to provide education and support for our hiring managers and search Committees through a more, as well as a more consistent and standardized process for screening, interviewing and making offers.

We're also utilizing our contracts and agreements with job posting resources to expand our digital reach to more diverse communities of job seekers. Also, we've updated our policy on posting positions which results in the majority of our vacancies and new positions being posted externally, which helps to ensure well-rounded candidate pool. While we're also balancing the

provision of new opportunities to existing staff, we've updated our policy to ensure people who join us as fellows gaining experience while transitioning from schooling or previous career to have a more defined opportunity to transition to permanent employment with us. And we are in the process of revising and standardizing our job descriptions to align with industry benchmarks for experience and education to ensure that our qualifications in our postings are the right fit for the job, while also being inclusive to various career and educational backgrounds. Under retention, we've clarified promotion eligibility and the process for a promotion helping to ensure that all employees understand and have access to growth opportunities.

Likewise, we've established universal funding resources and tools to ensure access to professional development for every staff member. Work is completed and ongoing by the DEI team to provide foundational and more expansive learning opportunities to our existing staff and our new hires to support a more inclusive workplace environment and more inclusive work working relationships. We have launched an extensive effort organization-wide to stimulate and facilitate discussion and solutioning across every business unit at NYSERDA to continually improve employee engagement. And we have offered in our continuing to provide management training across the organization as well as specific opportunities for leadership development among our senior leadership team, including 360 degree feedback. So all of these efforts have been implemented in the last one to two years or less and we're looking forward to having metrics and measures available to help us understand the impact that these efforts are having. And so with that, I'll turn it back over to Bianca to talk about our work on that via our DEI indicators. If we could go to the next slide. Oh sorry. I'll stop one moment if there are any questions. Nope. Okay. Onto the next slide please.

Bianca Shaw:

Thank you Michelle. Alright, so I did quickly go to my older notes and the percentage of historically marginalized groups in the overall clean energy workforce is 44%. That's compared to our 16%. So just to give you that stat, Chuck.

Charles Bell:

Thank you.

Bianca Shaw:

You're welcome. Alright, so earlier this year the DEI team set a goal to establish indicators to track the workforce impacts of policy and process updates on inclusive access to hiring and promotion opportunities. At NYSERDA we will use indicators, again, those are also known as metrics and those provide a way to quantifiably measure and track change towards specific objectives. And we will assess the following indicators over time. The first one is recruitment funnel. That is basically the number of applicants that have successfully completed each stage of the recruitment process compared to the total number of applicants for each stage. And when we understand this indicator, we can learn if any stage or stages of the funnel need attention. We will also look at average performance rating, which is exactly what it sounds like. It's the average of the individual performance ratings for our workforce for each group.

And we actually convert the rating to a numerical scale and we'll also look at promotion rate, which is the total promotions during a specified period of time compared to the total workforce.

And we will look at these indicators across these different demographic groups that you see here, including disability status, veteran status, age range, gender, et cetera, as well as by role where data is available. The benefits of doing this work include but are not limited to gaining greater clarity on the outcomes of our internal policies and procedures, identifying areas for improvement and promoting accountability organization-wide for NYSERDA DEI goals. Are there any questions before I move on to the next slide?

Chair Kauffman:

Yeah, so Bianca, sorry again. So in terms of hiring, I know in the private sector my kids have experienced this, there's a kind of technical test that they have to go through after the interview process. Do we do that? Do we give people,

Bianca Shaw:

I'm struggling to hear you a bit,

Chair Kauffman:

Some kind of thing that demonstrates not an SAT test, but something that's relevant to the job.

Bianca Shaw:

Are you asking if there's a technical test that folks take after they've interviewed?

Chair Kauffman:

Yes,

Michelle Andry:

I'll let Pam address that.

Pam Poisson:

I think I can help on that one. Thank you. In select instances where it's required that there be proof of skills, which is a very technical accounting position, for instance, there is from time to time a test that is administered just to ensure that the applicant actually has those skills. That's very limited in use and certainly not the only factor. I think that's one of probably 20 factors that are considering the hiring process. So just on a very limited basis and where is 100% necessary to the job?

Chair Kauffman:

I don't know where most the hiring is, but maybe you want to think about the idea for people that relate to their program jobs, what kind of relevant assessment you could give people so that it's not just somebody looks or how they whole chemistry thing. What do you think?

Bianca Shaw:

Are you talking about before hiring or after?

Chair Kauffman:

No, well I'm talking about before hiring. I'm talking about in the process.

Michelle Andry:

Yeah, so in some cases we also do use, we offer the option for people to use work products as a part of the search process. So maybe we'll ask an individual, especially depending on the level of position they're coming in at, to maybe do something along the lines of a presentation for the search C to better understand whether or not they can respond to the needs of the position, what their fluency is in the aspects of the job. So we definitely use those opportunities where they seem appropriate and growth checks as well.

Sherburne Abbott:

Bianca, can I ask you a question about the 40%, the industry in the clean energy industry, is that mostly from the, that's the overall industry, including private sector or mostly in the private sector?

Bianca Shaw:

That is, I'm not clear actually, it's from the New York State clean energy industry report. So I would have to go back and double check if that's inclusive of private entities and government

Sherburne Abbott:

Because one of the things that we should be thinking about given the Supreme Court's decision and the impact on the pipeline and how it's one thing to measure, provide metrics for the internal hiring and once people are here, but it's another to try to reach back to see what the market is providing in terms of the universities, the community colleges, the trade, all of these, whether or not we're having an impact on pulling from those communities. I don't know what the metrics for that look like, but it seems to me that it's a conversation that needs to happen broadly in the clean energy sector in a way that informs the impact of these large scale decisions about affirmative action and other related efforts on our goals. I'm not sure how you do it, but it seems to me that it would be a useful process.

John Williams:

So just to maybe get, and this might be getting a little too deep in the clean energy industry report. So the statistics that we get for that report, they're actually partly derived from the national study that happens and then we layer on some additional New York based including some demographic information that comes from specific surveys that we'll do to New York State employers. The vast majority of that work both on the federal side as well as kind of the New York supplement really is looking at the private industry. We do look about employee attraction and kind of skillset sets as well as those demographics. I think we are going to start doing a better job trying to get to some of those connective tissues that I think you're identifying Shere, but those are certainly things that we're trying to figure out how can we navigate to get reliable information given the nature of the survey responses.

Dale Bryk:

Long and short of it is, and it is difficult for us to find a reliable benchmark for this because of course our workforce is quite different than the clean energy industry workforce, the type of work we do. So then we say what's the government and large, what is the state workforce? There's a lot of ways we can,

I think it'll help us to triangulate by providing a lot of data in this respect, given that not one is like a perfect batch in my view. But the long and short of it is we have made, I think, great strides to broaden the reach of the ways in which we're recruiting. And I think that when one looks at our actual hiring data, and that's something we'll be providing, we see improvements in that respect. It's just when you have a workforce of 600 people and you're hiring 80 people a year, it takes a while for those numbers to start a peer within our broader workforce. Yeah, well on your point, the types of jobs that the entire industry is doing compared to the types of jobs that Myer is doing is totally different. So it's not really comparable, but I thought where you were going, and I think something that's really interesting for future conversation, we don't have time now, is what's the interplay between internal DEI work and the work of NYSERDA, the energy workforce with more about workforce development and all of the equity objectives that are embedded in the climate objectives of the state.

So that's like there's so much learning to be happening across just the actual substantive work of the Authority anyway, we don't have that much time. I want to make,

Sherburne Abbott:

can I just add one thing where I was partly going is that what I see is the difference between the private sector poll versus the public service aspect. And so I think that's something to look at over the long time.

Michelle Andry:

Okay, thank you Shere.

Bianca Shaw:

Thank you all for that feedback and thoughtful suggestions. Certainly a tough challenge to tackle. So we will continue in our efforts. Okay, next slide please. Alright, I'm going to breeze

Through this with three minutes left. So at NYSERDA we know that organizations that track workplace demographics throughout the employee life cycle are better equipped to create inclusive cultures. So for the first phase of this effort, we will outline a data management plan to ensure the confidentiality and security of the information that we will use for the indicators. And we will work to compile the information from various systems of record collected at various points in the employee life cycle into a coherent dataset. The second phase is to conduct data integrity testing to ensure accurate and complete information is used to make improvements informed by data. And in both phase one and two, we'll work with our data solutions team to develop requirements to automate these tasks to make the process more efficient in the future. The third phase is to conduct data analysis to contribute to more informed outcomes.

So we will work to get a baseline and conduct analysis to draw insights that will help us inform potential areas for improvement. And we'll also work with our statistics and analytics team to understand any trends and ensure that any insights we find are statistically sound. And in the last stage that is the communications phase really to ensure transparency. We will develop and execute on a communication strategy to outline how this information will be communicated to the various stakeholders over time and on a recurring basis to ensure not only transparency, but

accountability. And with that, that concludes our DEI updates. Thank you for your time and attention and I'm happy to take any other questions if we have time.

Michelle Andry:

And before we jump into other questions, it is really important that we update, ensure that we're giving you accurate statistics. So we did just quickly look back at our notes on the clean energy statistic of racial minorities and I believe it's more like the mid 20 percents in terms of that number, not the 44% we mentioned earlier. So I just wanted to correct that.

Bianca Shaw:

Other questions or comments?

Dale Bryk:

Thank you guys. That was great. Very much. Thank you Bianca.

Bianca Shaw:

Thank you all.

Dale Bryk:

That was all just for our information discussion, no decisions or we made. So the last item on the agenda for the meeting is other business. Anybody have any other business that they want to bring before the Committee? Alright, in that case, shall we adjourn the meeting?

Charles Bell:

So moved.

Dale Bryk:

Second?

Sherburne Abbott:

Second.

Dale Bryk:

Wonderful. Any opposed? Excellent. The meeting is adjourned. Thanks.