Virginia Solar Energy Development and Energy Storage Authority Meeting

**Minutes**

**July 26, 2023**

**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Ashland Public Library**

**Call to Order**

Authority Chair Skyler Zunk called the meeting to order at 10:08.

**Members Present:** Paul Duncan, Michael Walsh, Skyler Zunk, Gregory Habeeb, Colleen Lueken,

**Members Absent:** Jo Anne Webb, Rumy Mohta, Katharine Bond, Michael Herbert, Harry Godfrey

**Virginia Energy Staff Present:**

Ken Jurman

Staff reminded members present that since there was not a quorum they could discuss matters but could not vote on material matters.

**Presentation on Grid Enhancing Technologies (GETs)**

AJ Hall with AES, a global energy company, delivered a presentation to the members and those online titled Grid Enhancing Technologies – Unlocking Grid Capacity for the Energy Transition.

Mr. Hall’s presentation indicated that PJM forecasts a 4-5% annual load growth over the next 15 years. Driven largely by data centers in Virginia, which peaked at 2.7 GW in 2022, and is expected to rise to 6 GW by 2030. In addition, electric vehicles and electrification of heating and other commercial loads are expected to also greatly increase after 2030.

He discussed the growing pains in the PJM interconnection queue and showed that the wait time to interconnect new renewable generation to help meet the growing demand has increased to nearly five years, with average network upgrades rising from $29/kW in 2019 to $240/kW today. These issues result in only around five to 15% of new renewable generation making it through the PJM queue to actual operation, versus 30% in 2012.

Mr. Hall explained that the reasons for the increased time and costs for new renewables is insufficient transmission capacity, and that an additional 60% in transmission capacity will be required by 2030. This, however, will be difficult as new transmission takes eight to ten years and costs $10,00 per MW/mile, and reconductoring existing transmission takes two to three years and $4,000 per MW/mile.

He then transitioned into how GETs, such as dynamic line rating, storage as transmission, topology optimization, and other technologies can unlock transmission capacity. Offset more expensive traditional wires investments, mitigate the impact of outages and improve the capacity of newly added lines.

Mr. Hall’s presentation will be posted on the Authority’s website once it is moved from its current location and onto the commonwealth’s domain.

**Annual Report**

Staff reminded the members of the new guidelines that the Annual Report focus only on what the Authority worked on over the course of the year.

Mr. Zunk reminded the members of their powers and duties as spelled out in Virginia code § 45.2-1906 and indicated the Authority should make some policy recommendations to the legislature.

Staff will draft the report for discussion for the September 13 meeting.

**Future Meeting Topics**

Future topics members discussed included:

* Ms. Lueken’s recommendation of inviting data centers or the Data Center Coalition active in Virginia to hear from them on their clean energy needs over the coming years.
* Mr. Zunk mentioned inviting local leaders or VACO to share their thoughts on local permitting of solar. He also wants an update from storage developers and would like to hear a comparison on how other states handle solar permitting.
* Mr. Duncan would like to hear from both Dominion’s operations and planning groups, as well as Appalachian Power.
* Mr. Hillis brought up the electric coops who have fewer constraints that IOUs.

The group then had a brief discussion about the status of the HB 206 workgroup looking at the mitigation under the DEQ Permit by Rule process.

**Future Meeting Dates**

The members then discussed future meeting dates and decided on the second Wednesday of each quarter except for January, which would be the second Tuesday to avoid the opening day of the General Assembly on the 10th, and a potential virtual meeting in early October to finalize the Annual Report.

**Vacancies**

Finally, members discussed the fact that there a number of vacancies on the Authority and were advised by staff that if anyone had suggestions for new members, they should reach out to them and advise them to sign up on the Governor’s website to serve on the Authority

**Public Comments**

Mr. Zunk called for comments from members of the public present online. None were offered.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:45.