

**TOMPKINS COUNTY ENERGY TASK FORCE**  
**Friday, June 21, 2019**  
**Human Services Building, 320 W. State/MLK JR, Ithaca, NY 14850**  
**Final Minutes**

**Attendance**

<b>Member</b>		<b>Member</b>		<b>Staff</b>	
Sharon Anderson	P	Bob Howarth	P	Katie Borgella	P
Martha Armstrong	P	Tim Mount	P	Darby Kiley	P
Cliff Babson	A	Martha Robertson	P	Kristin McCarthy	P
Fernando de Aragón	E	Brice Smith	E	Megan McDonald	P
Brian Eden	P	Jennifer Tavares	P		
Todd Fox	A	Irene Weiser	P		
Nick Goldsmith	P	Gordon Woodcock	P		
Curt Gooch	A	Sarah Zemanick	P		

**Guests:** Terry Carroll, Joe Wilson, Sara Hess, Deborah Dawson, Drury Mackenzie, Naomi Crimm

**Comments from the Public: Round 1 – None**

**Agenda Review/Changes –** Approval of the April draft minutes, which couldn't be voted on at the May meeting due to lack of quorum, was added to the agenda.

**Approval of April 19 and May 17, 2019 minutes –** Martha Armstrong moved approval of the April and May meeting minutes. Bob Howarth seconded the motion, which was passed by the members present.

**Challenges for developing a low-carbon community –** Andres Carvallo, CMG

Guest presenter Andres Carvallo, who brought with him two colleagues he has collaborated with on projects, spoke to the group about his background in the renewable energy sector – as part of the Austin Energy (<https://austinenergy.com>) team, he built the first smart grid for the City of Austin, Texas, in 2009 – and the work of his consulting firm, CMB (<https://512cmg.com>). The overarching theme of his talk covered what lessons from Austin could apply to Tompkins County's efforts to develop a viable system for managing renewable energy and delivering energy services. A key difference between the two, however, is that Austin has its own municipal utility agency whereas Tompkins County depends on NYSEG (a privately-owned company) for electricity. The discussion covered such topics as trends impacting the industry (digitalization of world, with energy comprising one vertical); affordability and reliability; leveraging "brain trust" here in Ithaca (e.g. experts at Cornell and other area institutions); and the interplay between the core components of infrastructure, service, and storage.

**Energy Strategy Update – Katie Borgella**

Given the extensive (mostly negative) feedback received at the May ETF meeting, staff members stepped back and reflected on the comments received and the project as a whole. The result is a much more action-oriented approach, as opposed to methodical and incremental, to updating the County Energy Strategy. The revised draft strategy states how the County can lead by example in its own operations (Internal Focus) as well as through its support for community efforts to reduce fossil fuel dependency and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (External Focus).

Here are a few of the comments shared at the meeting regarding the revised draft and related discussion:

- Good set of organizing principles
- Thumbs-up for the departure from incrementalism and the County's role as a "convener"
- Increase emphasis on net-zero buildings

- County should lead in renewables and heating arena
- To achieve these goals, Legislature should provide more funding for department to hire staff – ideally someone with experience in the utility sector. Counterpoint – unlikely to find a person with that background interested in working for County. Budget could be reallocated to pay for consultants; Business Energy Advisors program could be extended to target funding (right now on three-year grant funding)
- NYSEG major stumbling block. Huge disconnect between their perception of service and the public’s
- Consider Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) to get away from NYSEG monopoly
- Are there options to keep NYSEG as poles and wires but find other vendors to take over smart grids?
- Look at other counties (e.g. Ulster) to see how they’re supporting municipalities
- Add topic about economic development and funding mechanisms
- Engage with stakeholders who can advise on local investment opportunities for pay as you save
- Increase regional cooperation – play a prominent role in organizations such as Southern Tier 8 and the Regional Economic Development Council
- Explore pros and cons of relationship with MEGA (Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance) and what role they should be playing
- Move Together New York, a Cornell Cooperative Extension-Tompkins County (CCE-TC) mobility education program, partners with eight counties across the state. CCE-TC looks forward to collaborating with Planning and Sustainability Department staff and has applied for a Clean Energy Communities grant

### **Policy Committee**

The committee gave an update on recent CCA activity in New York State. Principally, with the passage of Gov. Cuomo’s budget, the New York Power Authority is now able to help with procurement and financing of renewable generation projects for municipalities that have created CCA communities. Irene will forward information on the East Bay Community Energy Alliance’s CCA initiative (<https://ebce.org>) for Alameda County, Calif. In addition, Cayuga County has formed a Public Utility Service Agency.

### **Member Announcements**

- NYSERDA is launching a three-year Home Energy Ratings Pilot (Pearl Home Certification) in Tompkins County.
- City will focus next on improving public outreach and education for the Green New Deal and identifying staffing requirements in time for the Aug. 1st budget deadline.
- NYSEG will release its revised RFI (request for information) for the Lansing Non-Pipes Alternative project soon.
- Brian updated the group on recent advocacy efforts to promote and accelerate the adoption of renewable energy technologies (e.g. ground-source and air-source heat pumps) for heating and cooling buildings and private residences in New York State.

**Comments from Public Round 2 – None**

**Adjournment** – Chair Sharon Anderson adjourned meeting at 10:57 am.