



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
Board of Public Utilities
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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

A Regular Board meeting of the Board of Public Utilities was held on October 28, 2020, via Teleconference: 1 312 626 6799 Webinar ID: 939 6273 9035 or watch online @ <https://youtu.be/kQRoZB4cHu4>

Public notice was given pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-18 by posting notice of the meeting at the Board's Trenton Office, on the Board's website, filing notice of the meeting with the New Jersey Department of State and the following newspapers circulated in the State of New Jersey:

Asbury Park Press
Atlantic City Press
Burlington County Times
Courier Post (Camden)
Home News Tribune (New Brunswick)
North Jersey Herald and News (Passaic)
The Record (Hackensack)
The Star Ledger (Newark)
The Trenton Times

The following members of the Board of Public Utilities were present:

Joseph L. Fiordaliso, President
Mary-Anna Holden, Commissioner
Dianne Solomon, Commissioner
Upendra J. Chivukula, Commissioner
Robert M. Gordon, Commissioner

President Fiordaliso presided at the meeting and Aida Camacho-Welch, Secretary of the Board, carried out the duties of the Secretary.

It was announced that the next regular Board Meeting would be held on November 18, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. via teleconference.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

After appropriate motion, the following matters, which involved pending litigation attorney/client privilege and contract negotiation pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act at N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)7 were discussed in Executive Session.

8. CLEAN ENERGY

C. Docket No. QO18070713 – In the Matter of the Request for Proposal for Consulting Services: New Jersey's Clean Energy Program Advertising/Public Relations/Marketing Research and Web Design And Maintenance.

Discussion: This matter was presented by Cathleen Lewis, Outreach Coordinator, Office of Clean Energy, and it involved a one-year extension of the contract the Board approved in 2019 to create and launch a marketing campaign around our Clean Energy Programs.

The revamped Marketing Campaign was launched on September 21, 2020, and will continue through January 2021.

This extension will provide for a continuation of this campaign in 2021 and will include additional marketing as the Clean Energy program moves towards the Energy Efficiency (EE) Transition.

As part of that transition, the Board called for staff to promote general awareness of EE and other clean energy opportunities in New Jersey and engage in a collaborative effort in consistent branding, messaging, and promoting energy efficient programs. This Marketing Campaign is the first step in this process.

The term of the original contract was for one year and may be extended up to two years with no single extension exceeding one year.

The total budget for the first year was \$4,000,000.00, and the total estimated budget for the second year is \$6,000,000.00.

The second year of the contract will be funded over 2 fiscal years.

In Fiscal Year (FY21), there is currently \$4 million budgeted for marketing and an anticipated carryover budget from FY20 due to COVID-related delays in launch of the program.

Any FY21 expenditure over the \$4 million and any spending in FY22 will require the Board approval.

9. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Docket No. EG20060445 – In the Matter of the Energy Assistance Grant as Authorized Under N.J.S.A. 48:2-29.39 – Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric Program – Order Authorizing Grant Award.

Discussion: This matter was presented by Maureen Clerc, USF Team, and it pertained to the administration of the Board's Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric (PAGE) program. The PAGE program is funded by the Unclaimed Utility Deposit Trust Fund, and its enabling legislation requires the Board to designate a nonprofit to receive this funding to administer the program. PAGE currently provides assistance to residential gas and electric customers with household income over the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) income limits up to NJ median income and is currently administered by the Affordable Housing Alliance (AHA) of Neptune, New Jersey. The Board's contract with AHA expires in January 2021; therefore, in June 2020, the Board initiated a competitive bidding process by authorizing the issuance of a Notice of Grant availability to solicit bids from nonprofits seeking to administer PAGE for the next contract period. The Notice was published in the New Jersey Register on August 17, 2020, as well as on our website and was emailed out to numerous potentially interested parties. The Public Notice contained some adjustments to the current PAGE Program to better meet the needs of the public during the pandemic. These changes included the following:

- The PAGE income floor was dropped from \$1 over the LIHEAP income limits down to zero income;
- Households income eligible for the Board's Universal Service Fund (USF) program or the federal LIHEAP program must apply for those programs first to maximize available funding before seeking supplemental assistance from PAGE; and
- PAGE funding must be divided by the program administrator into two separate accounts, one for moderate-income households and one for low-income households.

Bids were due on September 16, 2020. The Board received two proposals from AHA and New Jersey SHARES. An evaluation committee, comprised of Board staff, individually scored each proposal in accordance with the criteria listed in the notice. AHA scored 46 points higher than the alternative bidder NJ SHARES. AHA received the highest scores overall, from each committee member, as well as in all scoring criteria. AHA's average score was 90 compared to NJ SHARES' average score of 81.

Some of the reasons AHA received the highest score were as follows:

1. AHA's track record of administering numerous energy assistance programs, statewide, in Monmouth county, and for the utility companies;
2. AHA's detailed budget models anticipating fluctuations in available funding;

3. AHA's history of working with the utility companies including its collaborative outreach methods and its detailed description of how benefits are determined, verified by the utility companies and applied to customer accounts;
4. AHA provided analysis regarding the new low-income population and their plan for meeting the influx of the newly eligible applicant pool; and
5. Finally, AHA proposed it can have the modified PAGE program up and running within 15 days of being awarded the contract and can therefore provide seamless services to the public.


While the committee unanimously recommended AHA continue as the PAGE Program Administrator, the committee recommended a few modifications to AHA's proposal, which are described in the Board Order. Staff recommended that:

1. The PAGE benefit cap be set at \$400.00 for low-income households and \$700.00 for moderate-income households, unless a low-income household has been denied USF and LIHEAP benefits. In this case, the household should receive the moderate income benefit cap of \$700.00;
2. The amount of USF and LIHEAP benefits a PAGE applicant has received not impact their eligibility for a PAGE grant;
3. AHA periodically review its proposed 24 month time limit for returning applicants and be able to adjust this time limit down to a minimum of 12 months, depending on available funds and demand; and
4. In terms of required documentation, AHA request, but not require social security cards for all household members.

Overall, the Evaluation Committee was pleased with AHA's proposal and feels confident in its ability to operate the program effectively and efficiently and meet the new influx of low income households in need.

Therefore, Staff will be recommending the Affordable Housing Alliance as the PAGE grantee.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.



AIDA CAMACHO-WELCH
SECRETARY OF THE BOARD

Date: May 19, 2021