

TOMPKINS COUNTY Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board

Tuesday, Aug. 26, 2025, 4:00-6:00PM

Old Jail Conference Room/Via Zoom

Final Minutes

Meeting Facilitator: Andrea Aguirre

Attendance

Member		Member		Staff	
Andrea Aguirre	P	Rebecca Evans	A	Terry Carroll	P
Ethan Bodnaruk	P	Guillermo Metz	P	Hailley Delisle	P
Louise Bruce	A	Martha Robertson	P	Kristin McCarthy	P
Veronica Pillar*	P	Sarah Schnabel	A		
Brian Eden	P	Irene Weiser	P		
Danielle Eiseman	P	Chris Wirth	E		

*Non-voting member

Guests: Peter Bardaglio, Anne Koreman, Kathleen Yen

1. Call to Order/Agenda Review/Draft Minutes Approval – Meeting facilitator Andrea Aguirre called the meeting to order at 4:03pm. No changes were made to the agenda.

Action: Irene Weiser made a motion, seconded by Danielle Eisemann, to approve the draft June 2025 minutes. Motion carried.

2. Public Comment – Peter Bardaglio reported on his collaboration with Full Circle Future and BluePrint Geneva on regulation of methane emissions from New York landfills. He discussed meetings with NYS DEC officials and working with Assemblymember Anna Kelles on legislative pressure. Peter noted that six other states have successfully implemented cost-effective methane reduction methods and mentioned coordinating with Bob Howarth on the initiative.

3. Member Updates – Danielle Eisemann reported on climate and health projects including a Sciencenter collaboration with students on water quality issues. She's also working on extreme heat planning for rural communities and developing a vector-borne disease exhibit. Irene provided updates on community resilience initiatives, noting Danby's resilience fair on Sept. 6 and similar groups forming in Dryden and Interlaken. She also reported on NYSEG's rate increase filing (36% gas, 24% electricity) amid poor company performance. Brian Eden discussed state energy activities including comments on NYPA's renewable strategic plan and noted the federal lawsuit against New York over the Climate Change Superfund Act.

4. County Legislature Update – *Anne Koreman*

Anne Koreman provided updates from the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality (PEEQ) Committee, mentioning a recent presentation by NYSEG representatives and upcoming discussions on a biosolids/sewage sludge local law scheduled for the Sept. 5 PEEQ meeting.

5. Report/Discussion: TeraWulf– *Brian Eden*

Brian provided background on TeraWulf's acquisition of the former Cayuga Power Plant site, expressing

concerns about data centers' impact on residential electricity rates through favorable commercial rates that subsidize massive energy usage. Group discussed various related topics, including TeraWulf's "zero carbon" claims. When Rebecca Evans joined the meeting later, she clarified that she had no immediate actions to propose but expressed interest in also exploring the impact on downstream municipalities. The board discussed adding data center impacts to a future agenda.

6. Report/Discussion/Action: Bylaws Update– *Irene Weiser*

Irene provided an overview of the bylaws review process. She shared that the County Legislature clerks had reviewed the proposed bylaws and made recommendations, flagging two provisions desired by CaSE as needing County Attorney review. After discussion, the group decided to table the bylaws discussion until the next meeting and convene a smaller group to work on them in the interim.

Action: Irene Weiser made a motion, seconded by Brian Eden, to table discussion and approval of the revised Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board bylaws until the next meeting. Motion carried.

7. Discussion: Working Groups – CaSE Priorities/Work Plan – *Irene Weiser*

Irene led a discussion on the role of working groups and CaSE's function as an advisory board to the County Legislature on climate and sustainable energy. She stressed the importance of shifting focus from procedural matters to impactful actions that would benefit residents. The board currently has groups working on mobile homes, NYSEG rate cases, and various resilience initiatives. Martha raised a key question about the extent of the County's authority on energy issues beyond its own facilities, and Ethan expressed interest in researching what other county sustainability boards have achieved. Members discussed creating new working groups focused on educating legislators, advocating for the budget, and monitoring compliance with green building policies in County projects.

8. Staff Report – Hailley Delisle updated the board on several sustainability initiatives, including an upcoming lunch-and-learn for employee commutes, progress on EV charging at the airport, and positive feedback from an induction cooktop program. She also announced a municipal sustainability conference from September 10-12. Terry Carroll highlighted advocacy priorities, noting the need for public comments on the EPA's proposed withdrawal of the greenhouse gas endangerment finding. He also reported on new boiler installations at the Human Services Building and the need to begin construction on the solar canopy at the Department of Health before new federal restrictions take effect.

9. Chair's Report – None

10. Meeting Wrap-up – Group noted the need for factsheets to help legislators understand energy issues, particularly regarding TeraWulf's claims about using "zero carbon" electricity from the grid. Annie shared information about propane suppliers potentially adding charges for low-usage customers, which could affect people transitioning to electric appliances. Discussion also referenced upcoming TCCPI meetings on the State Energy Plan.

11. Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 6:04pm.