

TOMPKINS COUNTY Climate and Sustainable Energy Advisory Board

Friday, May 15, 2026, 12:00pm (Via Zoom)

Meeting Facilitator: Candice Reeves

Final Minutes

Attendance

Member		Member		Staff	
Andrea Aguirre	P	Candice Reeves	P	Terry Carroll	P
Ethan Bodnaruk	P	Martha Robertson	P	Hailley Delisle	P
Rebecca Evans	P	Janet Smith		Kristin McCarthy	E
Susan Holland	P	Chris Wirth			
John King	P	<i>*Irene Weiser</i>			
Guillermo Metz	P				

*Non-voting member

Guests: Peter Bardaglio

1. Call to Order/Agenda Review/Minutes Approval – Facilitator Candice Reeves called the meeting to order at 12:00pm. No changes were made to the agenda. The minutes were approved as submitted (motion by Martha Robertson, second by Andrea Aguirre).

2. Public Comment – Peter provided a preview of the forthcoming 2030 District Annual Report, highlighting that while water reduction targets were met, the district fell 1.7% short of its energy target and — most concerningly — solo driver commutes have surpassed pre-pandemic baseline levels for the first time since approximately 2021. The report will be distributed shortly to the Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative (TCPPI) and 2030 District listservs, with Peter presenting the findings at the next TCCPI meeting.

3. Member Updates – Candice shared highlights from the NY-BEST annual conference in Albany, where key themes included affordability, reliability, sustainability, and community education around battery storage siting — particularly addressing public fear driven by high-profile battery fire incidents. Peter and Martha added that opposition and moratoriums on battery storage are growing statewide, and that Dryden has addressed the issue through its zoning update. John provided an update on the recently passed "One Big Beautiful Bill," noting that ground source heat pump credits were preserved, that Tompkins County qualifies largely as an energy community due to the Lansing plant closure, and that a new exemption opens the door to third-party ownership and leasing models for the first time. Susan reported that the Southworks project will test battery storage and geothermal technologies within the Ithaca Green New Deal framework, and that planning is underway to assess energy needs. She also highlighted state-level advocacy around legislation allowing the reuse of construction materials including reclaimed lumber, which is currently moving through both chambers in Albany. She noted that the International Building Code may incorporate similar standards in its 2028 revision.

4. Update: Strategic Planning Subcommittee – Candice presented a recap of the CaSE Strategic Planning Subcommittee's first session, drawing on lessons from the Environmental Management Council's planning process including stakeholder mapping. Irene offered historical context on the board's

evolution and framed the central question as what it means to be an advisory board and what the County wants CaSE to advise on. Martha suggested the board could serve a range of County entities beyond PEEQ, while John recommended identifying areas where the County holds clear statutory authority so CaSE's work translates into tangible impact. Guillermo pressed the group on moving from open-ended discussion to a more formalized approach, and Candice proposed that the subcommittee lead a recurring strategic planning segment at each board meeting. The group agreed to proceed with this model, with Candice volunteering to organize next steps.

5. Albany Update – Martha reported that the New York State budget remained unresolved, with climate provisions caught up in complex negotiations. Key proposed changes would extend greenhouse gas regulation deadlines, replace the binding 2030 emissions target with a softer 2040 commitment, and revert to a methane accounting methodology that makes fossil fuel emissions appear smaller. Irene noted that the data center moratorium bill is expected to be taken up after the budget is finalized.

The conversation then turned to the NYSEG/RG&E rate case. Rebecca reported that the Public Service Commission had granted a temporary one-year rate increase, with negotiations ongoing for subsequent years. Irene expressed frustration that extensive prior evidentiary work had not yielded more decisive outcomes, and Rebecca noted that the Mayor of Ithaca was expected to introduce a resolution calling for an Attorney General investigation into Iberdrola.

6. Staff Report – Terry and Hailley reported updates across several County initiatives: Terry noted staff are focused on the Center of Government project and District Feasibility Study, with a design update planned for the upcoming Facilities & Infrastructure legislative committee meeting, and reminded board members of a June 1st budget request deadline. Hailley shared that a case study video for the induction cooktop program was completed and set to premiere at the June 4th PEEQ meeting, and that staff have begun revamping the County's Energy Roadmap into a full climate action plan covering transportation, waste, energy production, and emissions.

7. Chair's Report – None

8. County Legislature Report – Irene shared that the 2027 County budget is expected to be tight and encouraged board members to advocate for green building commitments in the Center of Government project, geothermal investments, and fleet electrification — issues that surfaced in last year's budget process and are likely to recur. She also shared that she was recently appointed to the NYS Association of Counties' energy committee and looks forward to consulting with Martha, who previously chaired it.

9. Meeting Wrap-Up – The group agreed to add a recurring 20- to 30-minute strategic planning segment to future meetings, with Candice volunteering to lead subcommittee organization and John facilitating the next meeting on June 12.

10. Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 1:35pm.