

City of Malden

110 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Energy Efficiency Commission

Minutes of April 12, 2021

The Energy Efficiency meeting duly called in accordance with the City of Malden Ordinance and its by-laws was held remotely via Zoom on Monday evening, April 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

▪ Meeting to Discuss

- Continue discussion on long term emissions goals as related to Paper 278-20
- Update on Electrical Aggregation
- Discuss opportunities for Rain Barrel program
- Explore potential federal funding for school HVAC upgrades for ventilation and filtration
- Low Income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN)

▪ Attendee Names

- Members: David Camell, Allyson Pardek, Josh Smith, Eric Rubin, Matt Walsh, Stacy VanDeveer
- Guests: Nathan Post, Atticus Smith

▪ Members Not Present

- Molly Pidgeon

Matters discussed

- Meeting Minutes from previous zoom meeting 2021-02-08, moved by VanDeveer, second by Walsh.
- Continued discussion on long term emission goals:
 - The climate bill, *Senate Bill 9 - An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy* has passed and a 5-year plan is still in process. VanDeveer, Walsh and Camell will work on a presentation for the next EEC meeting.
- Update on Electric Aggregation: Rubin states that May or is agreement. The commission has the data and ready to go back to the finance committee, in order to move forward. VanDeveer moves that Camell and Rubin develop a presentation for the council. Seconded by Walsh.

- Low-Income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN): Walsh states that the program is income survey based. Smith will reach out to LEAN and ask for a representative to speak to the commission.

- New Business:
 - Rain Barrel program: Smith contacted The Great American Rain Barrel, which is a program that provides discounted rain barrels. Smith will check on ordinances, and ask for a Board of Health opinion concerning mosquito activity. Medford has offered this program, see attached flyer, Smith will research scale and success of Medford program.

Barrels would be optional for residents who are interested in reducing use of treated water. Questions will be gathered in a document organized by Smith. Distribution and delivery of rain barrels will need to be discussed further.
 - Explore potential federal funding for school HVAC upgrades for ventilation and filtration: The city is in the process of exploration of available COVID-19 funds (based on the CARES Act) for upgrades. See attached HARDI flyer.

Adjournment (moved by Smith, second by VanDeveer)

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

BY ALLYSON PARDEK, CLERK

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) provides much needed economic help to distressed businesses to prevent further economic harm. The law offers financial assistance through the Small Business Administration and tax deferrals to maintain cashflow. Additional refundable tax credits to offset required paid sick and family leave will protect workers and businesses hurt by COVID-19.

Timeline of actions to help small businesses increase cashflow:

MARCH
27

Businesses can defer the employer portion of payroll taxes (6.2% paid by the employer) to keep money in the business. Employers will not need to deposit their portion of payroll tax at the next required deposit date.

Businesses can deduct business losses in 2018, 2019, or 2020 from the previous five years of business tax returns to receive refunds on taxes previously paid.

APRIL
6

Secretary Mnuchin wants Americans to begin to receive stimulus money, taxpayers with direct debit on file will be the first to receive their money, others may be delayed until May for physical checks to be received.

APRIL
11

SBA required to release guidance and rules for Paycheck Protection Program and loan forgiveness.

MID
APRIL

Department of Treasury will release instructions and forms to receive advances on refundable payroll tax credits to offset the cost of required paid sick and family leave.

More Details about the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act):

Protecting workers paychecks through Small Business Administration backed loans:

The CARES Act creates a “paycheck protection program” for small businesses (less than 500 employees). This program provides loans to small employers with the promise that any part of the loan used to pay for payroll, interest on business mortgages, rent, or utility bills for up to 8 weeks will be forgiven. Loan forgiveness can be retroactive to February 15, 2020 to allow workers to be re-hired. Regulations covering these loans will be coming out mid-April and we will share more information then.

Employer payroll taxes deferred for 2020:

The CARES Act deferred all payments of the employer portion of Social Security taxes (6.2%) for 2020. Any portion that is owed by an employer will be due over two years, half in 2021 and half in 2022. Due to the paid sick and family leave portions of the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#), many employers will have reduced payroll taxes. FFCRA allows small employers (less than 500 employees) to deduct the value of emergency paid sick and family leave.

- Employers will be reimbursed via refundable employer payroll tax credits for the cost of wages and employer contribution for health insurance during the either sick or family leave.
- Employees can receive up to \$511 per day for 10 days if the employee is sick with COVID-19 and \$200 per day for 10 days if a family member is sick with COVID-19.
- Additionally, employees can receive up to 10 weeks of paid family leave to recover from COVID-19 or up to \$200 per day to care for a family member sick with COVID-19 or a child unable to attend school because of closures.
- Employers must offer this paid sick and family leave to employees

With these refundable deductions, some employers may have little to no employer payroll tax owed. The IRS will release further guidance on how employers should track unpaid employer payroll taxes and how to get advances on the refundable credits.

Tax credits to maintain payrolls during economic hardship:

Companies that face closure orders or suffer economic hardship due to COVID-19 and continue to pay employees can receive a 50% tax credit for wages earned up to \$10,000. This tax credit is available to businesses that see a 50% drop in gross receipts over the same quarter the previous year or face full or partial shutdown orders.

Allows businesses to write-off losses on previous tax years:

Any business that lost money in 2018, 2019, or 2020 can write off those losses on previous tax returns up to 5 years ago and receive tax refunds from those previous taxes paid.

Allows businesses to write-off improvement made to pre-existing buildings:

The legislation fixed a technical error from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Under the new law any improvements, including HVAC systems, commercial refrigeration and other improvements, made to an existing building can be immediately expensed on the customer’s taxes. [Learn more about HVAC expensing in this infographic.](#)