

City of Boston BERDO Review Board
Public Meeting Minutes
Zoom Virtual Meeting
March 9, 2026, at 4:30 pm
[View recording here](#)

Board Members in Attendance: Jessica Boatright, Stephen Ellis, Hessann Farooqi, Gail Latimore, and Reginald “Reggie” Stovell Jr, and Councilor Brian Worrell.

Board Members not in Attendance: Lori Ferriss

Staff Present: Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, and Dr. Claudia Diezmartínez.

Others: Approximately eight (8) members of the public attended this meeting.

Call Meeting to Order

4:33 pm: A meeting of the Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance, hereafter referred to as (BERDO), within the Air Pollution Control Commission, was called to order on March 9 at 4:33 pm. This meeting was held virtually.

Roll Call

4:34 pm: The following BERDO Review Board members were in attendance: Chair Jessica Boatright, Stephen Ellis, Hessann Farooqi, Gail Latimore, Reginald “Reggie” Stovell Jr, and Councilor Brian Worrell.

The following Environment Department staff were in attendance: Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, and Dr. Claudia Diezmartínez.

Others: Approximately nine (9) members of the public attended this meeting.

First Agenda Item: Vote on Solar Exemption Request Application

4:35 pm: C. Diezmartínez presented information and details about the Boston Housing Authority’s solar exemption request.

4:48 pm: City staff presented staff comments.

4:50 pm: Board Q&A Session

- J. Boatright asked how the BERDO team will be notified when the solar farms that have not yet started operation go online.
 - C. Diezmartínez answered that information on solar net metering credit use is collected through annual BERDO reporting. Building owners must indicate whether they used renewable energy, including solar, and specify whether it was generated on-site or obtained through net metering credits. For net metering, owners are required to provide documentation demonstrating compliance with BERDO requirements or eligibility for exemptions. This reporting process allows staff to track when buildings begin receiving and using solar net metering credits.
- G. Latimore asked what savings BHA will receive from the solar contracts.
 - J. Wool explained that BHA expects significant cost savings from its community solar contracts, though the exact amount is difficult to calculate because of varying contract terms and production levels. Savings typically range from about 10% to 30%, and initial estimates suggested around \$1M annually, with some portion shared with HUD. These operating savings directly support essential housing services such as staffing, maintenance, and repairs, ultimately improving the quality of life for tenants.
- G. Latimore asked for the definition of a ‘public entity metering cap.’
 - J. Wool explained that historically, net metering has been subject to caps on the amount of solar capacity utilities can support. However, public entities like BHA have benefited from higher limits and more favorable compensation rates due to their public-interest role. BHA is now nearing the roughly 10-megawatt cap, and there is interest in increasing flexibility to enable further participation. While Massachusetts is shifting toward the SMART program, net metering remains valuable because it allows entities to purchase renewable energy credits within the same contracts, which is generally not possible under SMART. As an anchor customer for community solar projects, BHA receives preferential compensation, but the existing cap constrains this opportunity.

5:01 pm: Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to approve Boston Housing Authority’s solar exemption request. Board Member R. Stovell seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (6) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:02 pm.

Second Agenda Item: Discussion and Vote on the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund 2026 Application Cycle

5:03 pm: D. Vasquez presented information and details about the 2026 application cycle for the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund (the Fund).

5:14 pm: Board Q&A Session

- J. Boatright asked if the move to the new platform would make it harder for potential applicants to apply to the Fund.
 - D. Vasquez explained that the City is transitioning from a manual Google Form and Google Sheets process to WizeHive, a centralized platform designed to streamline grant applications and reviews. By allowing applicants and reviewers to create single accounts, the system hosts all necessary documentation (such as tax IDs) in one place, allowing applicants to apply for multiple city grants without duplicating effort. This shift aims to reduce administrative burden, centralize data collection, and provide a more efficient experience.
- S. Ellis raised his concern about the amount of money left in the Fund to be able to open later application cycles.
 - H. Payne answered that the City intends to sustain the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund through future alternative compliance payments; the exact timing and amount of those funds remain uncertain.
- H. Farooqi commented that he would like the language to be a stronger workforce development priority in the application.
- H. Farooqi asked when the Environment Department will have an idea of how many ACPs the Environment Department will collect.
 - H. Payne explained that the compliance process relies on resolving data discrepancies between reporters and verifiers, after which emission statuses are updated in the reporting portal and the Touchstone database. Once status is confirmed, building owners can opt for compliance via ACPs. While proactive owners may know how many ACPs they may own by May, total revenue will continue to trickle in through June as enforcement actions prompt lagging owners to settle payments. The City expects to determine by early summer whether the accumulated funds will support a grant cycle comparable in size to previous years.

- G. Latimore suggested adding links to the City's and Massachusetts' diversity portals to the application so that applicants can find MWBE businesses.
- R. Stovell asked how the City engages with MWBE enterprises for City of Boston projects.
 - H. Payne answered that City projects must follow the Boston Resident Jobs Policy, which sets hiring goals for construction sites. These goals focus on employing more Boston residents, women, and minority workers. For other types of city business, such as purchasing supplies or services, there are different rules requiring officials to seek bids from businesses owned by women and minorities. Together, these programs help make sure that city money supports a diverse workforce and local business owners.
- Councilor B. Worell raised a concern about the construction season aligning with the application timeline.
 - D. Vasquez explained that over the past two application cycles, funded projects have generally fallen into three distinct categories based on their scale and readiness. Many larger initiatives are already underway and use grant awards as supplemental funding to complete an existing capital stack. At the same time, smaller-scale projects often focus on efficiency upgrades, such as waste heat recovery systems, with established contractors ready to execute. While the Fund also receives proposals for service-based projects that do not require physical building modifications, these have historically been less common, with awards typically favoring projects that involve tangible infrastructure changes, such as solar installations. Because most applicants are well into their project timelines before applying, the City can distribute funds effectively without significant delays caused by seasonal construction constraints.
- H. Farooqi asked what the average projection completion timeline is for projects that are interested in applying to the Fund.
 - D. Vasquez answered that the scale of the intervention largely determines project timelines and whether the Fund serves as the primary source of capital or supplemental funding within a complex capital stack. Larger initiatives, such as multi-year deep energy retrofits, often use the fund to bridge gaps caused by federal funding clawbacks, sometimes concluding shortly after the award is granted because of their late-stage status. Conversely, smaller-scale efficiency upgrades, such as waste heat recovery systems, typically operate for shorter durations, with expected completion

dates within a single season. Ultimately, the grant timeline on whether the grant supports a specific, localized task or serves as the final piece of a larger, multi-stage development project.

5:43 pm: Board Member H. Farooqi made a motion to allocate \$600,000 for the 2026 application cycle with a preference to grant multiple awards of up to \$200,000, with the intention to open the application on March 30 and close on June 1, 2026 with the amendment: Describe the job quality and standards of workers on this project, including those employed by contractors and subcontractors. This should include, but not be limited to, living wages, equitable employment and contracting standards, and the impact of local workforce development programs on the application for the Fund. Board Member G. Latimore seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (6) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:47 pm.

Third Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes.

5:47 pm: The Review Board voted to approve the [February 9 Meeting Minutes](#). Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Chair J. Boatright seconded the motion. Four (4) board members voted in favor. Two (2) board members abstained. The motion carried at 5:48 pm.

Fourth Agenda Item: Administrative Updates

5:48 pm: D. Vasquez shared the following updates:

The number of flexibility measure applications.

The nominations for the Boston Climate Leader awards are open.

Annual BERDO reporting launched on February 17.

The BERDO team has planned the 2026 webinar series, and recordings are available on the [BERDO website under “previous events.”](#)

The next meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2026.

5:51 pm: C. Diezmartínez gave an update on the proposed Regulations updates

Meeting Adjournment

5:56 pm: Chair J. Boatright made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member S. Ellis seconded. All board members in attendance (6) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:57 pm.