

**Town of Boscawen
ENERGY COMMITTEE
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, July 11th, 2022, 5:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Edward J. Cherian Jr— Chair; Charles Niebling— Vice Chair; Gary Tillman

Excused: Nate Preisendorfer; Paul Dickey—Ex Officio

Guest Speakers: Madeline Mineau—Briar Hydro/Essex Hydro; Jordan Betts—Green Lantern Solar; Henry Herndon—Herndon Enterprises, LLC; Aaron Hinze—UConn TAB Program

Staff Present: Kellee Jo Easler— Planning and Community Development Director; Kearsten O'Brien—Deputy Planning and Community Development Director; Kara Gallagher—Planning and Community Development Clerk; Katherine Phelps—Town Administrator

Chair Cherian opened the meeting opened at 5:30 p.m.

PCD Clerk Gallagher completed roll call.

Minutes:

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from March 16th, 2022. Mr. Tillman requested several changes:

- Line 48, add a space between “Unitil” and “customers”.
- Line 66, remove “yet”.
- Line 94, remove “of”.

Mr. Tillman motioned to accept the 3.16.22 draft minutes as amended. Seconded by Vice Chair Niebling. All in favor. None opposed.

Old Business:

EV Locations and Updates: No update. The Committee is still looking for grant money and potential locations to put EV Chargers. Chair Cherian asked if PCD Director Easler could ask the Economic Development Committee to reach out to a few businesses along King Street. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien is creating a letter to send out to local businesses on behalf of the EDC to encourage attendance of their meetings. She will put this topic on the next EDC agenda. This topic will be continued to the next meeting.

Energy Facility Tours: Chair Cherian suggested starting tours in the fall, for the Committee but also for the public if possible. Ms. Madeline Mineau said Briar Hydro and Essex Hydro just started doing tours again. She stated that October or November would be an ideal time to tour their facilities. Chair Cherian would like to find out how many people could be accommodated.

Ms. Mineau said if a large amount of people are interested, two groups could be accommodated at one time. Vice Chair Niebling offered to arrange the tour.

Review of Master Plan: Chair Cherian would like to finish this task and pass it along to the Select Board. He stated that the latest revision had captured all the required changes. He asked if there has been any update on the Renewable Energy Ordinance. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said it is currently with Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission. Chair Cherian asked for this topic to be added back to the agenda under old business.

Briar Hydro/Essex Hydro: Ms. Mineau reviewed that she last spoke with the Committee at the end of 2021, when they were getting ready to work towards enrolling their facilities as group net metering hosts. The three facilities were previously not eligible to participate in net metering until the law changed about a year ago. She stated that they were recently successful in enrolling Penacook Lower Falls as a group net metering host. It was challenging and took much longer than they had hoped. As they were putting the group together they realized they are going to need some large accounts to fill it out. To be able to enroll as a group host, they have to have a total member load that is at least equal to or greater than their historic generation. That group is now almost full. They are now working on enrolling Rolfe Canal, which will also fill up fast due to new laws making the State of New Hampshire eligible as a group host. Ms. Mineau would like to work with the Committee on identifying some accounts that could be added into those groups either when there is room or as needed. She said as early as the end of this year they will be needing to cycle new members into the groups. She would like the Committee's help figuring out which accounts have the bigger load. Chair Cherian stated that the Municipal Complex and either the Public Works building or the Transfer Station would have the biggest load. He told Ms. Mineau that the information needed could be sent to her. Discussion ensued about when the town could be enrolled in these groups.

New Business:

Green Lantern Solar: Jordan Betts from Green Lantern Solar introduced himself to the Committee. His company is working on an RFP for the Merrimack County facilities in town. He said he wanted to attend the meeting to get a feel for projects that the Committee is involved in. He was also interested in finding out more about the town's requirements for zoning and permitting. The Committee had several questions about the solar project for Merrimack County. Discussion ensued with Mr. Betts about some of the specifics of the project. Chair Cherian asked if there was a site visit planned. Mr. Betts said he believes it is scheduled for July 28th. Chair Cherian or Vice Chair Niebling would be interested in attending the site visit. Chair Cherian asked if Green Lantern Solar had done other projects in New Hampshire. Mr. Betts said no, only in Vermont, Massachusetts, and Maine. Chair Cherian thanked Mr. Betts for attending the meeting.

Community Power Coalition of NH: Henry Herndon from Herndon Enterprises, LLC was at the meeting on behalf of the Community Power Coalition of NH. This is a new nonprofit power agency that was recently formed in the state that is community owned and controlled. It is on track to provide services for community power aggregation. Mr. Herndon was at the meeting to extend an invitation to the town of Boscawen to join this group, what the organization is and how

the town may participate if there is interest. Mr. Herndon brought a presentation with him and went through this with the Committee. He explained what community power is and, as a result of recent legislation, cities and towns in NH can now become the default energy provider for their residents and businesses. He said that if the town were to implement this program there would be a process which would include developing a plan, and then that plan would need to go through the Select Board and Town Meeting. This program would always be voluntary. He said any customer could choose to opt out. Chair Cherian asked if the town would be managing this process or just contracting on behalf of the residents. Mr. Herndon said contracting on behalf of the residents. The coalition is a statewide organization controlled by the cities and towns that have chosen to take part in it, to handle the procurement and services on behalf of their towns so that an energy procurement manager doesn't need to be hired. There was discussion on how individual communities could potentially design their own goals and portfolio. Mr. Herndon said this system is not one big aggregation that applies to all membership. Other towns could not dictate the program for Boscawen and the town would retain control over its own preferences.

Chair Cherian asked if the town would lose the ability to participate in a net metering program. Mr. Herndon said no, these programs can be quite complementary. Chair Cherian asked how the program is funded. Mr. Herndon said there is no cost for membership, other than the time of the appointee to attend a monthly Board meeting and potential participation in a Committee if they so choose. He said none of the programs are operational yet, as it is still in the startup phase while waiting for the state to finish the regulatory rules. The organization has received approximately \$130,000 in grants for funding and a Board of community appointed members will oversee an RFP process to hire the procurement team, or energy risk management team, which will manage all of that purchasing. There will be a legal firm operating on a deferred compensation model who will provide the services up front. After customers are enrolled and cash flow begins, they will recover their costs. Vice Chair Niebling asked if the cash flow would be a percentage of the gross revenues. Mr. Herndon said it won't be a set per kilowatt/hour rate, it will be transparently allocated according to the costs of the different services. The vast majority of the cash flow will go to energy purchases. No taxpayer funds are involved other than incidental costs, for example if a town attorney reviewed the contract or joint powers agreement. There was discussion about the Board and how each town enrolled is involved. The Coalition is looking at spring of 2023 to launch the initial 10-12 community programs to kick the organization off.

Chair Cherian asked if private sector meters within a town would be eligible for this program. Mr. Herndon said yes, the town would become the default and anyone who is currently getting Unil default supply will be automatically enrolled. Anyone who is getting competitive supply can choose to opt in, or if they take no action they will be unaffected. Mr. Herndon said he couldn't tell the Committee exactly what kind of savings the town would receive, but from what other markets have shown the current savings are 8-12% on energy supply with less sophisticated models. Mr. Herndon discussed different ways to lower energy costs.

At this point Mr. Herndon went into the process to join. Step one would be the Select Board would review the Joint Powers Agreement document, which is the contract that created the coalition. It includes the bylaws and details about how the organization is structured. The next step would be to designate the Energy Committee as responsible for developing the community power plan, or electric aggregation plan. The last step would be to bring the plan to Town Meeting. If the Agreement was accepted the Town would receive an Energy Risk Management Policy, a Financial Reserves Policy and a Cost Sharing Agreement. These

documents would outline how the Coalition sets rates, buys power and collects reserves on the town's behalf.

Chair Cherian asked what the process would be for the town to withdraw from the Coalition if that was chosen. Mr. Herndon said the town could withdraw at any time with no penalty, subject to the continuous obligations once power supply is initiated. Once agreements have been entered into, there will be obligations to not walk away during the term of the contract.

Vice Chair Niebling asked if Mr. Herndon could put together a FAQ sheet for the Committee's review. Chair Cherian thanked Mr. Herndon for his time.

UCONN TAB Program: Aaron Hinze introduced himself to the Committee. Mr. Hinze is working with the Brownfields Advisory Committee to create a community wide revitalization plan for multiple properties in town, including Commercial Street where the EPA Removal Program is currently working to remove mill buildings. He has been researching economic information, demographics, plan studies and town documents on sites he was given throughout town.

Mr. Hinze had a few questions for the Committee. His main question was if there was any need for another solar or hydro facility, other than the proposed solar project at the Merrimack County facilities, because there could be potential somewhere along Commercial Street. Vice Chair Niebling said solar panels on top of any new buildings on Commercial Street would be an appropriate idea to consider. Chair Cherian said his understanding for Commercial Street is after the cleanup, an RFP would be out for developers and it would all depend on what is proposed for the site.

Mr. Hinze's next question was if 51-57 Commercial Street has to stay a gravel pit or if there would be potential for another use of the land. PCD Director Easler said it would depend on what is proposed. PCD Director Easler and Chair Cherian both agreed that the site is unstable because of the sand. It could be stabilized but would cost a lot of money to do so. PCD Director Easler told Mr. Hinze that she could send him a plan of the site so he could see what is currently there and what it looks like. PCD Director Easler said the current owner of the pit does plan to develop it at some point, but plans to use it as a gravel pit for 3-5 years.

Vice Chair Niebling told Mr. Hinze that any building that does not have access to natural gas, but instead will use propane, oil or electricity, has the potential to implement a modern wood heating system, for example a fully automated wood boiler system. Vice Chair Niebling offered to help Mr. Hinze learn more about wood heating systems. Mr. Hinze told the Committee he plans to visit Boscawen very soon and he will reach out to set up a time to meet. Chair Cherian thanked Mr. Hinze for joining the meeting.

Other Business:

Standard Power: PCD Director Easler asked if there had been any further contact from Standard Power other than the MOU that had been sent. The Committee said not that they knew of. Chair Cherian does not recommend signing the MOU at this point. Discussion ensued.

Energy Audits: Vice Chair Niebling would like to at some point talk about the audits that were done previously. He said he hasn't heard anything since they had been completed. Vice Chair Niebling got the feeling that Facilities Director Gary Moore was reluctant to move forward, but

feels that is where this Committee would come in to make recommendations on the most cost effective investments that can be made. Vice Chair Niebling asked PCD Director Easler to forward the audit information to the other Committee members. This discussion item will be put on the agenda for September as Vice Chair Niebling will not be able to attend the August meeting. It was recommended to have FD Moore in attendance for the September meeting.

Vice Chair Niebling motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Tillman. All in favor. None opposed.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 8th, 2022, at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.