

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES
June 23, 2022**

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, June 23, 2022 in the Town Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road.

I. Call to Order: Vice Chair Chris Bandazian opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Present: Chris Bandazian (Vice Chair), Tom Elwood, Bill Foote (School Board), Sue Thomas (Town Council Liaison), Bing Lu, Chuck Nettleship, Carolyn Mahoney, Mindy Bator
Absent: John Russell (Chair), Andrew Gillis, Lori Radke (Town Council Alternate)

Mr. Bandazian introduced new member Carolyn Mahoney who was appointed by the Council last night and Mindy Bator who was the new School Board alternate who was participating by phone.

Mr. Bandazian asked Carolyn Mahoney to tell them a little bit about herself. Ms. Mahoney stated that she had lived in Bedford for about 21 years. She had two kids that went through the school system. One just graduated and one graduated last year. She works for the Department of Veteran's Affairs as an engineer. She takes care of their high cost, high tech medical equipment for the New England area, so she's familiar with technology, mostly radiology-type things. She helps them do their strategic planning with placement and maintenance-type activities, so she's used to project management. She's interested in energy in general; making the Town as green as they can and helping the residents lower their costs if that's possible as well.

II. Approval of May 25, 2022 Minutes

**MOTION by Mr. Foote to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2022 meeting.
Seconded by Mr. Nettleship. Vote taken – Motion Passes (Thomas and Bator
abstained). Ms. Mahoney hadn't been sworn in yet.**

III. Review of updated Rules of Procedure and vote on approval

Mr. Bandazian stated that he was going to put that off until the next meeting, because he's not quite done reviewing it yet.

Mr. Foote stated that it mentions serving on three other particular boards while on the Energy Commission and wanted to know why those were singled out. Councilor Thomas stated that she's also on the Zoning Board and no one told her she couldn't be. Mr. Bandazian stated that it was particularly the land use boards. Councilor Thomas wanted to know the reason for not being on both and what would be the conflict. Mr. Bandazian stated that if there was a Town piece of property, which there were, that they wanted to put solar on. If it needed a setback variance. Councilor Thomas pointed out that the Town didn't need a variance. Mr. Bandazian stated that it was advisory. He didn't think there was a legal impediment, but thought it was important just for appearances to say it's permitted to be on those three land use boards. He didn't see a good reason to exclude the ZBA. If anyone has any suggestions between now and the next meeting that he would be happy to pass those along.

IV. Reports of Members and Committees

a. School projects progress and planning

Mr. Foote stated that they have the bond funded and should receive the money on July 9th. They were hoping for less than 2.5% and it came in at 3.3%. They may have some of the bids back today. The prices were higher than expected. They were looking at a 1, 2, or 3 year plan. Mr. Bandazian wanted to know what would be tackled first or was it too early to tell. Mr. Foote stated that Memorial was in process. Peter Woodbury was the goal for this summer. He didn't know if that included the sprinkler system or not, but certainly the ventilation. That may be subject to the availability of equipment.

V. Old Business

a. Solsmart – No discussion in Lori's absence

b. Solar Projects

1. Transfer Station

Mr. Bandazian stated that there was an Eversource deadline on June 18th to fund the portion that was not going to be funded by the Federal grant. On June 8th, the Town Council had a tie vote to not approve the expenditure. Tie votes were losing votes.

Councilor Thomas stated that the biggest issue was coming up with the money. Mr. Bandazian stated that it was a timing issue. Councilor Thomas stated that as far the ARPA funds, they were holding back on those, because of other projects they were looking at. Rick's (Sawyer) concern was they were committing to \$1m and they didn't have the Federal \$500k in hand. Jeff Foote told them that there was also another step to get that money. The Council felt that later in the year they would have a better idea of what's been spent and what they are doing. Just knowing some things that they were working on, they were holding back using any of the remaining ARPA funds.

Mr. Bandazian stated that at the end of May, the Department of Energy submitted information about filing a more detailed application by the end of June, which he just learned on June 8th. Councilor Thomas stated that they asked Jeff to file the application to keep the process going and see where it takes them. Mr. Bandazian stated that he's looked at it to see if he could be of assistance, but he can't. It's pretty involved. Jeff wrote to Eversource and asked for a refund of their deposit and an extension on their not to exceed quote. He didn't think there was a response.

Mr. Foote wanted to know how ARPA funding worked for the Town. Councilor Thomas stated that they had to be used for specific types of projects and the project they have in mind would fall under ARPA funds. They've already spent half of the ARPA funds and thought there was \$1.2m left. The Council was looking at a major facilities project and that's their number one issue right now and the ARPA funds could be used for it. She was hoping that Eversource would stay true to their quote, which they probably won't, because everything was going up right now. The Council just couldn't commit the funds right now.

Ms. Mahoney wanted to know if they had to go back and ask for them again or would it automatically be considered. Councilor Thomas stated that the bid was \$1.5m to run 3-phase power up Chubbuck Road. They would get \$500k from the Federal Government, so it's the 2nd \$500k. They are still working on getting the 1st one. As the year progresses they would have a better idea of what money was left in the budget; where they've spent and where they haven't spent. From the Council's point of view, saying they have \$500k without seeing any of the rules for the money and when the money is coming, when would Eversource expect to be paid and when is the Federal grant coming. There were so many questions where they were committing to come up with \$1m and they couldn't right now.

Mr. Lu wanted to know if they needed to wait for that money to come in and then apply again. Councilor Thomas stated that they've asked Jeff Foote to ask Eversource to hold their bid, and if they say 'no', then they would get the project rebid. Someone on the Council was looking into alternatives to Eversource. As far as the \$500k, they want it and they were going to try and get it and that money would have to be used in 2-3 years. It's just not budgeted for. This project isn't in the budget. Everyone thought they could use ARPA funds, but some things they are working on are coming in higher than expected, by a lot. There was definite support on the Council. The other issue was it says in the write-up for the funds that they got that it was for the 3-phase power for a solar farm. That's \$2.5m, so when would they have to do that. That would be a warrant article, a bond most likely, but would it compete with a Police Station that they were trying to work on. They just need more rules on how it had to be spent, when it could be spent. Saying you have \$500k was great, but they need more information. They were going for that money and they wouldn't have to reapply for that. They were doing the final application and hopefully getting it and then it would be up to the Council to find ways to fund the rest of it.

2. Town Pool PV Shade/Shelter

Mr. Bandazian stated that Jeff Foote was probably too busy with the Department of Energy on the bigger grant. It's not going to be a revenue producing project of any significance. It might be one where they do a Power Purchase Agreement where there's a little discount on a little electricity, but they've made good use of a newly re-roofed building at a very visible public location. He will offer to redo the RFP and maybe that will move it along.

c. Municipal Aggregation Cost Analysis and Presentation

Mr. Lu stated that he didn't have an update, but they need to do it, because electric was going to rise up a lot. People probably need this more than ever, so they probably want to move forward.

Mr. Foote stated that Mass. put in legislation to try and end that process. He didn't know what the problem was in Mass. except that it was a successful program. Mr. Bandazian thought it was still going to be a while in the regulatory process before anything could really be done. The PUC had no deadlines to do anything. Mr. Foote thought with the disruption in market pricing it was going to be hard for them to get around to it anyway. Mr. Bandazian stated that Eversource proposed on the supply side to go from 10.669 to 22.566. That's more than doubling on the supply side. What people read in the paper is it's a 50% increase, which because transmission and the other charges weren't going up at the same rate, it probably is. The projection was \$70 more a month for the average consumer. Based on that, the PUC may nibble the rate down a little bit, but it's still in that doubling territory. That makes their solar project at the Transfer Station look better, because they

projected 2.5% in their avoided cost estimate. The landscaped was changing, so he thought they would be in a monitoring phase and not really advancing anything to the Council at this point.

d. Clean Energy NH Legislative & PUC Update

Mr. Bandazian stated that he did that webinar and thought it was interesting. Mr. Nettleship stated that he also did the webinar. Mr. Bandazian stated that one of the more exciting things to him was that the PUC end approving time of use rates. Liberty Utilities has the ability to offer four time of use rates including a very low after midnight. Eversource has been directed by the PUC to submit a proposal that's due by the end of July for time of use rates, however, Eversource's billing software will only have the capacity for two rates. He didn't know how they will break that down.

Mr. Foote wanted to know if NH didn't have time of use rates. Mr. Bandazian stated that for commercial they do, but not for homeowners. He thought that would be interesting to watch.

Mr. Bandazian stated that the NH Saves program was going to continue on, so that was good for the regular consumer.

Mr. Nettleship stated that there was something on the micro grids and that kind of stalled in March. That was a UNH study. He didn't know why a study like that would not have been reported on by the State. He thought it had good ramifications particularly if they were going to expand and protect themselves and factor that in. It's not something you do overnight, but working with the utilities. If they do expand, it's a dual use type of operation for the utilities. If they were looking at a small micro grid at the Police Station or something like that where they could be protected. You get a self-protection with a micro grid. He thought it was something they should bring someone in in to take a look at and get them educated on it to see what's possible on new projects they were going to be funding in the Town.

Mr. Bandazian pointed out that they lag the rest of New England in EV fast charging for tourism. Councilor Thomas stated that there's none in the Lake Winnepesaukee area. In Bedford, there's one at Whole Foods and one at Nouria gas station. Mr. Bandazian stated that if you were a Bedford Grand patron you could charge there. There were a few scattered around Town, but somebody planning a trip or vacation, you would plan it out and you might avoid the area. Staying on 93, Hooksett was easy. It's not that NH doesn't have any, but as EV's get more prevalent in the mix and if other states are easier to travel around, and produce less anxiety on vacation, it's going to take a bite out of tourism here.

VI. New Business:

a. Discussion of energy cost saving programs available to residents.

1. NH Saves

Mr. Bandazian stated that it was mentioned at their last meeting that their emphasis ought to go back to how do they help residents save money. NH Saves is revamped with the re-upping of that program. Their site is a lot more user friendly than it used to be. He thought there were some decent opportunities including building envelope improvements that people would usually find difficult to finance, because you don't get immediate return on investment; especially for fixed income

residents. That would be a project that's hard to afford some other way, but those are the people who can least afford high heating bills. He might reach out to someone at Eversource to see if they can come in and do a presentation. Mr. Lu thought programs like that would be difficult for two reasons: 1) let people know. You try and help people, but you have to get information out. Maybe use the TV station; 2) he was using it last year, but he was looking at it towards the end of the year and it seemed that they were running out of money at the end of the year. You have to educate people to know that the money will run out, so you have to plan at the beginning of the year. Facebook would be another way to get the information out there. Councilor Thomas stated that they discussed this at the Council meeting. The hardest thing to do was to get the word out. It's hard to get out to people what's going on unless people are willing to connect.

Mr. Bandazian stated that he would find somebody from Eversource to come in and talk to them about this and at least get them on BCTV with that.

2. HAREI

Mr. Bandazian was hoping Andrew would be there to give an update. HAREI is the Hillsborough Area Renewable Energy Initiative, which was incorporated by them and one person from Dunbarton many years ago. They pretty much do solar projects on a barn-raising model, so it's a volunteer organization; people who have acquired expertise. Andrew has a lot of expertise and the Hillsborough group has equipment to lift solar panels onto roofs and is really quite advanced. He didn't know what COVID had done to that organization, but basically if you wanted to have solar panels on your house and you were willing to help somebody else later on down the road, you would get a crew of people there. You would have to have an electrician there and pull the building permit and do all of that appropriately. He thought they would help find an electrician and the labor is done on a volunteer basis. Sometimes they make bulk purchases of panels, so it's really a way to do it inexpensively. Hopefully they can get an update from Andrew.

3. Other ideas

Mr. Bandazian wanted to know if anybody had any ideas that they could work on this year to help the average resident. Mr. Nettleship stated that the one he brought up at the end of the meeting was with the rising energy costs, getting the word out early on who may be at risk in the winter not knowing what it's going to be like this winter. Maybe couple that with the program for the outreach, because he thought people would be running into some issues with home heating fuel, propane, etc. and paying those bills, what alternatives are there and if there are any other ARPA subsidy programs that could be managed by the Town for those in need and getting the word out sooner rather than later.

Mr. Bandazian stated that a long time ago when Bill Dermody was on the Council, he in particular was looking at bulk purchases if they could find someone who would offer Town residents fuel oil, propane or whatever, at a discount based on an aggregate number of people. He found a place that was helpful, but it's very difficult to do that as a Town-endorsed program.

Mr. Nettleship stated that at their company they have a very good program it's just whether people were taking advantage of it or not early enough and getting into that or if there was a deadline, could it be extended. A couple of years ago when they were running low on propane, that had emergency management, so that might be something that they get the Police and Fire into early

too and start looking at that. When they were running that crisis in 2018, it was so cold, it was who was running out and helping with that as a public service for those, especially the elderly. If they did that before, he wanted to know if that was something they could recreate. Mr. Bandazian thought that it was something that's been done, but might happen a lot more often and require some more planning. He thought there would be a lot of people having problems with oil because of the price. Councilor Thomas thought it was going to be a tough winter for a lot of people.

Mr. Nettleship stated that the delivery aspect of it was the issue and, if need be, emergency shelters or having neighbors taking in somebody for a period of time until the supply chain caught up with the delivery mechanism. It's making sure that someone who was elderly had someone to go to or do they start looking at emergency shelters. He made it a worst case scenario.

Mr. Bandazian stated that he could see people deferring their purchase, then getting a cold snap, and then being in trouble.

Mr. Bandazian stated that he was looking at Portfolio Manager today and he noticed that DPW had started entering propane heating fuel in Portfolio Manager and he was delighted to see that. He emailed Rick (Sawyer) and Jeff Foote and said it was really commendable. Unlike the electricity stuff, which comes in automatically by an API, when you get a propane bill or gas bill it has to be done manually. Somebody's doing a little extra work, but all of a sudden from 2022 on they are going to be able to see the actual real energy use. They've had Town Hall, which is their only oil burning building, entered manually into portfolio manager, but those tanks get filled irregularly. The Safety Complex and the other more heavily energy consuming buildings he thought it would be very useful going forward. Especially when they get to renovations or end of useful life stages. That information is available to all of them in a read-only format, so anytime they want to log into Portfolio Manager, he can give them the information to login. His only frustration with it now was they've been doing this so long that the real drop in energy consumption, the graphs by default were back five years, but they really cut energy consumption in Town more than five years ago. Over time, they've almost cut energy (electricity) consumption in half over the life of the organization.

Mr. Foote stated that the Town Manager Report showed the performance of the Transfer Station and wanted to know if that was something they had to dig out or was it something that they can...Mr. Bandazian stated that that was the DPW report. Mr. Foote wanted to know if that was per meeting or per month. Mr. Bandazian stated that it was one per month. Kind of intentionally before a meeting, so everybody is up to speed by meeting time. It would coincide with a Council meeting. Rick (Sawyer) puts his reports up, but Department Heads don't. Mr. Foote thought it was very informative. Mr. Bandazian didn't know of any particular reason not to make it public. They will ask for it. Councilor Thomas stated that every department does a report and the Council has access on Sharepoint. Mr. Bandazian stated that they are all public documents. Councilor Thomas stated that they were monthly activity reports. Mr. Bandazian thought that they would be of interest to the public. He was all for transparency and making that stuff available.

Councilor Thomas stated that the composting at the Transfer Station was really taking off. Councilor Kathleen Bemiss spent all day Saturday just talking to people about it and people are using the food composting there, which takes a lot of the weight off of the trucks that take the trash. If they get more people to do that it would lower the cost for the Transfer Station. Mr.

Bandazian thought that was the single best thing that citizens could do; divert waste from the regular municipal solid waste.

VII. Reminders:

- a. **Next upcoming meeting July 28th, 2022**

VIII. Adjournment

MOTION by Mr. Foote to adjourn by at 7:44 pm. Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Boufford