

**TOWN OF BEDFORD**  
**March 24, 2022**  
**ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES**

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, March 24, 2022 in the Town Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road.

**I. Call to Order:** Chairman Russell opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Present: John Russell (Chair), Chris Bandazian (Vice Chair), Bill Foote (School Board), Andrew Gillis, Sue Thomas (Town Council Liaison)

Absent: Lori Radke (Town Council Alternate), Bing Lu, Bart Fromuth, Tom Elwood

**II. Quorum Count (5)**

**III. Welcome back Lori Radke and Sue Thomas as Town Council representatives**

**IV. Welcome new School Board member**

Mr. Foote stated that everything passed, so there would be new HVAC and sprinklers for the elementary schools. He thanked the voters. The new School Board member is Andrea Campbell and the new School Board alternate for the Energy Commission is Mindy Bator.

**V. Approval of Minutes –**

**a. 02/24/2021**

**MOTION by Councilor Thomas to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2022 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Foote. Vote taken – Motion passed – 5-0.**

**b. 12/16/2021**

**MOTION by Councilor Thomas to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2021 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Bandazian. Vote taken – Motion passed – 5-0.**

**VI. Reports of Members and Committees**

**a. School projects progress and planning**

Mr. Foote stated that with the HVAC improvements they expect to see a large energy use reduction. They should be going out to bid soon. Mr. Bandazian wanted to know if he expected a slow supply chain and if it would be in before school started in September. Mr. Foote stated that the goal was to have Peter Woodbury done for sure, but that was up in the air as far as what they can do for supplies. Chairman Russell wanted to know what the plan was for getting the sprinklers done. Mr. Foote stated that there would be equipment design and installation with supply chain problems, and finding qualified plumbers was going to be a problem. The project will go out to bid and he thought that Bedford was going out to bid early so they would be first in line.

**VII. Old Business**

**a. Solsmart**

Mr. Gillis stated that they created the entire solar zoning for Bedford and it passed.

Thomas wanted to know if that was important for Solsmart to have zoning. Mr. Gillis stated that when they started with Solsmart, solar was not mentioned once in their zoning code and you need to have zoning for something. Mr. Bandazian thought that was the last box to be checked for their bronze designation. If they get Chubbuck Road on line that would get them at least a silver.

## **b. Solar Projects**

### **1. Transfer Station**

Mr. Bandazian stated that the President signed the \$500k grant into law for the Town of Bedford to extend 3-phase power on Chubbuck Road. Additional funding would be required and Jeff Foote was bringing that forward to the Town Council on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April. Chairman Russell wanted to know if the Commission needed to do anything to help it and Mr. Bandazian stated that they could attend the meeting. Councilor Thomas thought that Chairman Russell should touch base with Bill Carter, because he's now the Chair and he's responsible for the agenda.

Mr. Foote thought that was going to be more like \$2m thanks to Eversource. Mr. Bandazian stated that it went down to about \$900k, but there's a big gap to be filled. There are ARPA funds that can be used for that. This would make the Transfer Station improvements going from smashing trash with a backhoe to doing a compactor, which works out to a 7.5% rate of return on that money that needs to be kicked in and after a 13-year investment, then its pure gravy after that. None of it is money that comes out of the local taxpayer's pocket. The PV phase, if that comes forward in the next year that would be great. There's a lot of money to be made there. Even if the low-hanging fruit, which seems to make the most economic sense right now, that offsets all of the Town's electricity and in the future he's sure the not low-hanging fruit could be developed.

Mr. Foote wanted to know how the ARPA funds work. Councilor Thomas stated that they have to be used for specific projects. It's earmarked for Town improvements. Mr. Foote wanted to know how much was in the ARPA fund. Mr. Bandazian thought it was around \$1m.

Mr. Bandazian stated that if it's approved, it would contract with Eversource. The quote that's locked in would have to be signed in mid-May. Councilor Thomas wanted to know if there was a timeframe to use the grant. Mr. Bandazian didn't know but thought it was either 2024 or 2026, but it would be long done by then. The quote from Eversource was time sensitive.

Chairman Russell stated that the initial layout of the landfill was a small PV site wanted to know if there was any movement on going all over it. Mr. Bandazian stated that they weren't at the RFP stage. They have projections that have been worked out with ReVision Energy that it was very viable to do that and the return of \$100k using very conservative numbers like 2.5% electricity inflation coupled with utility inflation. Mr. Gillis stated that that was only using a small amount of the land too; they were only using the flat part. Mr. Bandazian stated that that was just a very conservative projection to not oversell the project. Once it goes out to RFP it might be much more substantial than that; it depends on who bids and what their funding proposals are. The best option was for the Town to finance it and own it right out of the box. After that, investor financed, which basically doesn't pay off any principal and kicks that ownership can down the road. Investors get some advantages that Towns don't get. They would have a much higher rate of return than they would as a Town. All of it is pure speculation until it goes out to RFP and somebody commits to do something. If it rolls forward on the fastest timeframe they would have something to evaluate and make a recommendation towards the end of the year with the thought of putting something on the ballot for voter approval in 2023.

### **2. Town Pool PV Shade/Shelter**

Mr. Bandazian believed the Public Works Department would be putting out an RFP for the pool site. The only question in his mind was whether the Safety Complex equipment bay gets added on as part of that as an option to bid on and thought that Jeff Foote would bring that forward.

**c. Municipal Aggregation Cost Analysis and Presentation**

**1. Thoughts on the CPCNH presentation in February**

Mr. Bandazian thought it was a very encouraging presentation. He especially liked the materials that Chairman Russell sent around today, which were the studies in Massachusetts that demonstrated some consistent savings to customers. Mr. Gillis added that it was across a large number of towns too. It wasn't just two or three; there were about 50. Mr. Bandazian thought it gave it a lot of credibility; it's not really speculative. He thought it would generate some real savings. Mr. Gillis stated that the average was about 10% or more. Mr. Bandazian stated that one of the study areas was about 2% across the board, but 2% was better than no %. They weren't quick snapshot studies; they looked over them over a period of time. He thought it was very encouraging in that it had more credibility that he hoped would be persuasive. Ultimately it goes to the voters anyway. It means persuading people who weren't necessarily in the main flow of communication about that stuff.

Chairman Russell mentioned the questions he had asked and wanted to know if the Commission had any thoughts. Mr. Gillis stated that he liked the way they put it where they said they have three options. Instead of the first option being 'opt-in', it said participate, because they were already participating. They were now just participating in something that was cheaper. The three options were participate, 'opt-out', and 'opt-up', because they have the option to go with a greener power source or some power source that was more environmentally responsible. He liked that way of thinking about it; participate, 'opt-out', 'opt-up'. Chairman Russell thought the idea of having more renewables was enticing. That would include any type of nuclear option, which he thought would be fantastic. Mr. Gillis stated that most of the green power in NH was hydro, so that's what they would get if they went with the green option.

Mr. Foote talked about a program in Nantucket, MA where he has a house. He runs on solar, so he didn't pay a delivery and he's running a positive. Mr. Bandazian thought it was interesting that 100% renewable was a penny more than whatever standard blend in Massachusetts. Mr. Gillis stated that renewables were cheaper to make than the other ones. It's just the transport; getting them from wherever they are to you that costs more.

**2. Energy Commission to assume the role of creating the Study Committee for CCA.**

It was mentioned that they had to go to the Town Council first. Mr. Gillis thought having that presentation from Hollis was good. Chairman Russell stated that he would reach out and get the ball rolling about making a presentation.

**VIII. New Business:**

**a. Building Car Charging Stations Opportunities**

Chairman Russell stated that he noticed the Nouria gas station finally had installed software according to Alex. They were working on some issues with billing, but otherwise it's ready to go. It's the one on South River Road. Mr. Gillis stated that he drove by there and it's an L3; it's nice.

**1. Open discussion from Andrew's BIL discussion in February**

Mr. Gillis stated that the commercial chargers were pretty expensive. Once they were installed the billing should be straightforward. ChargePoint was one of the main ones that would be bidding to put all of the L3 chargers everywhere. The cost of the hardware was a little expensive; it was about \$7,500 for one unit. After that, they charge you x dollars a month to manage it and a cut of the power and you could charge whatever you want. You pick some nominal rate and the rest of the fees would be easy to pay off. He thought the Nouria on South River Road was just going to have some slow L2 there; he didn't know they were actually going to have a real L3 charger. Those things are not cheap. That was a major investment for that gas station. Mr. Foote wanted to know if there was any tax benefit and Mr. Gillis was sure there was. He installed a couple of chargers in his house this year and up until this year there was a 30% tax rebate for any alternative fuel filling station. It could be anything from a hydro filling, natural gas to an electric charger. He's certain they got some money for that, but it wouldn't have come anywhere near to cover the cost. He didn't think it would make money day one, but eventually. You can lease them from ChargePoint, so maybe it was a lease. That's probably what they did. You can pay just one flat fee a month and they just drop one of those in and manage the whole thing. From a business standpoint that was probably easier than actually buying it outright. Mr. Bandazian wanted to know what the useful life of that would be and thought maybe 10 years. Mr. Gillis assumed they ran pretty much forever. It's a pretty simple electronic device; he didn't think it would break. They give you a maintenance contract along with it. Chairman Russell wanted to know if every car except for a Tesla would charge at the L3. Mr. Gillis responded yes.

**2. Request for support from the commission from Alex Valias: charging stations at the new Nouria Gas Station 101/Jenkins Road.**

Chairman Russell stated that Alex Valias requested that they support his proposal to put a Nouria gas station at 101/Jenkins and wanted to know what the Commission thought. Councilor Thomas stated that she's on the Zoning Board so she couldn't support it. She's not sure the Commission should be supporting a whole project. She thought the Commission could say they support charging stations. He's going to need variances and she didn't know what they were yet. Mr. Gillis stated that he told them what the variances were, because he's installing a fuel station as well, so he needs underground fuel tanks. Councilor Thomas thought he needed a lot of variances, and being on the Zoning Board she couldn't take a stand on it. She also didn't think they should take a stand on a particular person's project as opposed to supporting charging. She thought it would be cleaner that way. Chairman Russell wanted to know if she thought they shouldn't go and support the person. Councilor Thomas stated that they were all individuals and could attend and speak about the charging station part of it. She thought he could attend and speak as Chair of the Commission and support the need for charging stations. There's a way to address it. Mr. Bandazian suggested mentioning that it's on the State identified EV fast charging route. Mr. Foote wanted to know if Mr. Valias wanted them at a meeting or a letter from the Commission. Chairman Russell stated that he suggested a letter and the letter reads,

*To Town of Bedford Zoning Board,*

*Please be advised that I am a resident in the Town of Bedford. I met with the developers of the project to discuss their proposed variances requesting connection with a warehouse building for local business, Holistic Pet, and gas C-store and coffee station with electric charging stations. I support said requests and ask the Zoning Board of Adjustment approve the requested variances and any other relief. The proposed project is consistent with the character of the community and will provide needed services to the residents of Bedford.*

Mr. Gillis thought it sounded like he wanted them to send a letter as themselves, not necessarily as the Energy Commission, which was totally fine. Councilor Thomas stated that people do that

all the time. Chairman Russell stated that it was sent to him and Tim as Energy Commission Chair and Vice Chair. Mr. Bandazian thought if he was holding himself out as Energy Commission Chairman, he would probably need to constrain the way they talk. Councilor Thomas thought the letter was fine from an individual, but didn't think it was fine from a Town commission. There was probably going to be a number of zoning waivers and the letter is saying approve all of them. Mr. Gillis thought that most of the things they want won't have anything to do with electric charging. If they were only building and electric charging station, they wouldn't need the zoning. He wanted to know if Councilor Thomas knew when it was planning to give a list. Councilor Thomas stated that they only get it a month in advance. The next Zoning meeting was April 19<sup>th</sup>. They need a lot of work done. He must be getting close if he's asking for a letter.

Chairman Russell wanted to know if there was any more discussion on car charging stations. Mr. Gillis stated that once the NH Legislature has a budget for that sort of thing and starts accepting RFP's for what to do with it it's going to be more interesting. For a town, they will pay 100% of the equipment for anything you want. You just have to submit it and have it approved.

**b. Clean Energy Renewal**

Chairman Russell stated that he reached out to Rick Sawyer and he has put it forward to the Town Finance person. He wanted to know if anyone uses the Clean Energy NH website. Mr. Bandazian stated that he sometimes does to look at Legislation.

**IX. Reminders:**

**a. Next upcoming meeting April 28, 2022**

**X. Adjournment**

**MOTION by Mr. Gillis to adjourn by at 7:37 pm. Seconded by Mr. Foote.  
Vote taken – All in favor.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Boufford