

TOWN OF BEDFORD
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES
November 17, 2022

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, November 17, 2022 in the Town Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road.

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

Present: Chuck Nettleship, Bill Foote (SB Liaison), Andrew Gillis, Chris Bandazian (Vice Chair/Town Council Liaison), Bing Lu

Absent: John Russell (Chair), Tom Elwood, Carolyn Mahoney, Sue Thomas (Town Council alternate), Mindy Bator (SB alternate)

II. Approval of October 27, 2022 Minutes

MOTION by Mr. Foote to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2022 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Nettleship. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 5-0.

III. Reports of Members and Committees

a. School projects progress and planning

Mr. Foote stated that they were going through their budget session, so it's school operations and looking at the budget into 2024. They didn't see any focused energy there except in the kitchens. They were looking at variable frequency drives for the blowers, because that was a big power consumption that was identified. They were doing it through the capital process instead of through a bond. They were looking at replacing a switch gear at McKelvie. They replaced one a few years back and this one was going too. They won't start putting equipment in until next summer.

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that the variable speed motors or blowers might be eligible for NHSaves rebates. Mr. Foote stated that it would be starting after July 1, 2023, which would be next year's budget. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that there was a custom commercial that school districts and towns fall into. That's how they got \$50K for the geothermal from Eversource; because of the efficiency. Mr. Foote wanted to know if that was on top of the Executive Council grant and Vice Chair Bandazian responded yes. It cost less than a conventional system, because of that. Mr. Foote stated that Saturday was their capital discussion and maintenance people will be there. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that they want to know how much electricity you would save as a result of doing the efficient thing. Mr. Foote that it was a 4 or 5 year payback when they did the study, but with the cost of power now the payback would be even faster. He thought maybe it was something they could expense out of this year and try and pull the savings in. As far as Portfolio Manager, he'll see the guys on Saturday. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that if they can they would like to get bills back to January 2021, so they could get a little history. That would have to be manually input to get the baseline and then Eversource could do it through their API. It looked like there would be opportunities with the IRA that maybe didn't seem viable before.

Mr. Gillis mentioned about parking lots needing to have solar in Washington State. There were so many rebates coming out this year. Schools have a lot of parking lots, so it might be something to look into. Mr. Nettleship mentioned how there were modulating base mount that could track the sun. Mr. Gillis wasn't sure they could put that over a parking lot, but there was a decent amount of land around the schools for that sort of thing. Mr. Nettleship stated that it takes up less space and was more efficient than the stationary ones. Mr. Gillis stated that it was a 30% increase.

IV. Old Business

a. Solsmart – No update

b. Solar Projects

1. Transfer Station

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that separately funded was the 3-phase upgrade, so that didn't have to enter into their calculations. DPW was working on details for a warrant for both the solar and trash compactors. Solar with the rebates if they don't take that additional 10% for domestic content would come down to about \$1.9M and trash compactors would be \$6.?, which includes changes to the building, trailers, etc. that have to go along with it. That would go on the warrant. He thought they would have clearer numbers then. It looked like right out of the starting gate even with debt service there was going to be at least a small tax savings. It could be very large if utility rates keep going up. There was talk about them softening and the Town's current contract was \$16.07 per kilowatt hour and the rest of us were at \$22. When they look at the figures, it is taking the cost and dividing by the power. Mr. Gillis thought Eversource was going to be one of the cheapest in NH by the end of it. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that some of the other utilities will be coming up earlier before February, so he thought they would have some really persuasive numbers. He thought they would save money in year one even with the bond issue.

Mr. Nettleship stated that a small savings he saw with what it costs for moving that, because you have to compact it. It may be more weight, but you are making less hauls. It's a small savings. Mr. Gillis stated that it's fuel savings. Everything he sees is all about saving runs of a truck. Mr. Nettleship didn't know if there was a figure to say they were saving x amount of runs and the carbon footprint they were drawing down on as well. Mr. Gillis stated that everything about trucking was costing more. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that instead of buying a backhoe, they would be using the hand-me-down backhoe from the highway garage and that alone they were capital reserving \$23K a year for replacing a backhoe. Mr. Gillis assumed that they were going to try and put the whole Transfer Station behind the meter for the solar. He couldn't believe they couldn't do the Town garage too. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that it was pretty far down Chubbuck Road, but it would make sense to have it behind the meter. Mr. Foote suggested Riddlebrook too if they could squeeze it in. Vice Chair Bandazian thought Town and School District would get there, because it's the flattest, cheapest project and it takes care of the Town's buildings. He thought in the next 10 years it will be very attractive and the 3-phase power lines will have the capacity to fill the School District's needs. Mr. Gillis stated that the proposal they have only fills about a third of the mound they have at the Transfer Station and the rest of it is very steep. It costs more and it's harder. They got 1 megawatt, but he thought they could fit 3 or 4 there if they worked at it. Once they get to the point where they have a warrant article and get it voted on, they can get an RFP for what they have in this proposal, which is the easy money and then the more complicated ones with the higher megawatt capacity.

Mr. Lu wanted to know if the 3-phase was big enough to push more power through. Mr. Gillis responded yes. Once that thing is run. Vice Chair Bandazian thought it would do a total of 3 megawatts. The School was getting more efficient and the Town was getting more efficient. By the time those projects could be built out it would fulfill the needs of both the Town and the School District. He's looked back as far as he could for the history of electricity prices and 3.4 cents per kilowatt hour was in 1975. In today's dollars, that's 19 cents.

Mr. Gillis stated that they had a quote from ReVision, which was great; they were the largest solar installer in NH. The chance of them actually being the ones to do this was very high. He's assuming they would put it out to bid. They do a lot of the large stuff in this area. They are very nice and

they keep sending these quotes to them year after year. This particular one still had the \$43K a year savings for the trash compactor. That was a non-trivial amount of money; almost \$1M over 40 years. He had to subtract that, but they still make \$12M or buy power for the next 40 years at .004, literally free. Those were the numbers from November 2nd, but he felt they would be getting better and better. Vice Chair Bandazian thought they were conservative numbers. They are 3% annual utility escalators. Mr. Gillis stated that it's a 3% annual escalator, which means they have the power 40 years from now at being 52 cents per kilowatt hour. He thought it was going to be a lot more than that.

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that the next Town Council meeting was December 14th and they should have those numbers. Mr. Gillis wanted to clarify that the plan now was to potentially try and get a warrant article and Vice Chair Bandazian confirmed that. It's got to get 60%, so as soon as they get final numbers it's time to start talking to people and alleviating fears, because their shouldn't be any. Mr. Gillis thought the most interesting thing about his proposal was the 25-year warranty period. So the \$4.9M was a guarantee. If it died before then, they would replace it for free. That's a number that's non-negotiable. They will make a 12% return over 25 years. They would get \$4.9M over the next 25 years. After that, it's just gravy.

Mr. Foote thought it was a long time coming. They could never get over that hurdle of making it affordable, but thought Eversource was helping them out with their pricing.

c. Button-Up Bedford Follow-up

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that it was 10 years since their last Button-Up Bedford presentation. Given all of the changes, that was probably too long to not bring them back to do it. The program sponsors were very interested in the number of views and he asked almost immediately and there were only two. He thought they should make it more prominent on their webpage. He thought there were three things he immediately had to do. One was to try and get rid of the freezer in the basement. The other two things were in January when the incentives kick in.

Mr. Gillis wanted to know how much they went over what was coming next year. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that it was an hour and half program. Mr. Foote stated that it was mostly practical. It wasn't about IRA stuff. He said that there was a lot of stuff coming that hasn't been put out year. There was a steep learning curve and they were at the bottom of it. Mr. Gillis stated that enough of it has been put out. If you buy an air source heat pump it's 50% unless you fall below the poverty line and then it's 100%. You almost want to call your HVAC guy, because come January 1 when people start realizing what's going on, these guys were going to be booked out for a year installing these air source heat pumps. There were also cool things like an air source clothes dryer that didn't even vent to the outside; it just sucks the water out of your clothes. You get like a \$900 rebate for one of those. Mr. Foote mentioned the hot water heater, which was going to be a big savings as well. Mr. Gillis stated that they were getting the 30% across for the hot water heaters and the solar and all this stuff, so that's all back to where it was before. The new stuff about the huge amounts of money for air source heat pumps and some of these really efficient types of appliances. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that heat pumps were strongly incentivized. Mr. Gillis stated that the whole thing is no more natural gas; don't even put the tank in your yard. Go right to the all-electric. You would think that electric would be expensive, but these things were insanely efficient.

d. Website link updates

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that with all of these things coming online, they needed to compile some new information and make some suggestions. They can be funneled through him and he'll get them to the right place to have those things happen. He doesn't check all the time, but they could have some dead links. Mr. Lu wanted to know if they had people track traffic on the website.

Vice Chair Bandazian responded no, but they could ask for that. There's nothing right now that drives people there. Periodically they get a little push on the Facebook side, but they're not big social media folks. There's come great stuff coming down the pike that people could save some serious money and there's no reason why they shouldn't. He asked that they take a look at the website and if they find something useful that should be there let him know and he would try and get it posted.

Mr. Nettleship wanted to know if there were any new home builders they could reach out to. If there was any projection on new homes that may be going in to maybe drive the homeowner to look at these resources and options they may have. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that home builder Kevin Doherty had come in and he said that Wheeler Farm Road was the last that he was going to do. He knew that Bob LaMontagne was doing some small project. There was nothing really big in Town anymore. Mr. Nettleship mentioned the retrofitters and HVAC folks and reach out that way, because it was the retrofit where they were going to get the cost savings. Mr. Gillis stated that with new home construction you get the same rebates, so you could potentially save a huge amount of money. You could go through the home: insulation, windows, HVAC, etc. There's a limit of \$15K per year for the whole program, but for a new home you should be able to get to \$15K quickly. For 2023 it's still going to be a tax rebate. They are working on all of these things to where they can actually take it off the top. You have to make enough money to be paying \$15K a year in taxes, so you can absorb that tax rebate the following year. For 2024, they were going to try and get it where it comes off the top.

e. Community Power

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that with Eversource going up community power became more interesting. Mr. Gillis wanted to know if a town had managed to completely finish the process. He thought Hanover was the closest one. Vice Chair mentioned that Lebanon had something in the works and Mr. Gillis thought they were still working on it. Vice Chair Bandazian thought they ought to watch for a year and seriously watch what they do, rather than come back in a year and say what have they done. It may be a process where they learn and we could learn from them.

Mr. Nettleship stated that his mother lived up there and he gets up there periodically, so he could try and do some outreach. Mr. Gillis stated that they were basically looking for a path on how to actually do it. That's what everybody is waiting for, because it hasn't been done yet. Mr. Nettleship stated that he would take that on.

V. New Business:

a. Upcoming CENH Programs

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that they were members of Clean Energy NH, so instead of paying \$5 for that webinar they wouldn't have to pay anything. Whether you pay as a member of the general public or not there's some really good stuff there for events. He'll try and stay on top of it, but stay on top of it yourselves as well, because with the IRA getting going in 2023 they were going to have a lot of stuff coming up.

Mr. Nettleship stated that he had some new business. They had a guest speaker and hopefully they can get them in on the 26th. It's Terry Murch who lives in Weare. He's on the InfraGard group that he's been a member of for about 10 years. It wouldn't be a sales type thing. It would be more of as they look towards critical infrastructure protection against war against natural and manmade EMP type threats. As they're getting into the critical infrastructure for geometric storms and that kind of thing. He would give a holistic natural security overview. The other gentleman is Bruce Benwell with Detech. It would be the 26th of January for about 30-45 minutes.

Mr. Gillis wanted to know how the new fire station was going. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that they were still working on a location. Mr. Gillis wanted to confirm that it would be a whole new building and Vice Chairman Bandazian confirmed that that was the plan. It would definitely be an opportunity to do it right the first time.

Mr. Gillis stated that they've got this thing now where literally every town gets a free electric school bus. Mr. Foote stated that they don't own the school buses and Vice Chair Bandazian thought maybe they should. Mr. Gillis wanted to know why they don't own the buses and if it was because it's much easier to contract that out. Mr. Foote stated that it is, but then they have to do the maintenance and operations. It's easier to have a paid contractor come in. They have people trying to compete and they only get one bidder. Mr. Gillis stated that the buses drive around and they say Bedford School System. They contractors, but they're really Bedford's contractors. Can't they be like we bought you a bus, do you want to use it? Mr. Foote wanted to know if there was a subsidy or a rebate. Mr. Gillis stated that there were tons of subsidies and on top of that they come up with payment plans and there is no maintenance. That's what the electric bus companies were doing now. Mr. Foote wanted some information about it. Mr. Gillis mentioned a school district in Maryland that got 100 electric school buses and they save about \$75K a day in diesel. Mr. Nettleship thought there were people that could get free service, because those buses were just sitting there for a period of time during the day, so they could be a shuttle around town. Mr. Gillis thought it would be interesting to use the small buses, the handicapped ones, because they have electric versions of those. The other ones were too big to wander around town picking up people. Vice Chair Bandazian thought they could own a bus and lease it to the bus company. Mr. Gillis stated that's what he was thinking. They own the buses and they lease them to the bus company.

VI. Reminders:

- a. Next upcoming meeting December 22, 2022**

VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Boufford