

TOWN OF BEDFORD
November 18, 2021
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, November 18, 2021 in the Town Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road.

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

Present: Tom Elwood, Bill Foote (School Board Alternate), Lori Radke (Town Council Alternate), Chris Bandazian, John Russell (Vice Chair), Bing Lu

Absent: Bart Fromuth, Andrew Gillis, Sue Thomas (Town Council Liaison), and John Schneller (School Board Liaison)

II. Quorum Count (5)

Mr. Russell stated that Chairman Tim Paradis had resigned. He acknowledged Tim's tremendous commitment and dedication. Sitting next to him felt like Tim was a future Town Council chairman, so it was an honor to sit next to him as Vice Chair. They will miss him and wish him well.

III. New Chairman

MOTION by Councilor Radke to nominate John Russell as Chairman of the Energy Commission. Seconded by Mr. Bandazian. Vote taken – All in favor.

IV. New Vice Chairman

MOTION by Chairman Russell to nominate Chris Bandazian as Vice Chairman of the Energy Commission. Seconded by Councilor Radke. Vote taken – All in favor.

V. Approval of Minutes – September 23, 2021

MOTION by Chairman Russell to approve the September 23, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Bandazian. Vote taken – all in favor.

VI. Meeting with David Gilbert

Chairman Russell stated that he and Mr. Bandazian met with Town Council Chairman Dave Gilbert and Town Manager Rick Sawyer.

a. Study Committee for CCA

Chairman Russell stated that TC Chairman Gilbert would like the study committee for CCA to come from the Energy Commission. Rather than him appointing people, he wants the Energy Commission to take the lead on that and drive it. He would like to see a group of folks very interested in this step up and take the lead for municipal aggregation. They conduct this themselves and ultimately present something to the Town Council.

Councilor Radke thought they needed to step back a little bit. She attended the Municipal Association conference where she attended a meeting on community power. She stated on Friday, October 1st, a group incorporated and call themselves the Community Power Coalition of NH. It's a non-profit joint powers agency to assist cities and towns in launching community power programs. She thought this was something the Energy Commission should look into; maybe have some representatives come and talk to them. If they think it's something they might want to consider in the future; maybe join the coalition. There are 14 towns and cities and Cheshire County that are part of the Coalition. There is no cost to the Town. There is no cost to join. Once you join, you become part of this group and you can get a bunch of resources and one member of your group will sit on their board of directors. When they get to 21 towns and cities, the board will consist of voting members. As far as aggregation, there are no towns in NH that have aggregation. Keene has done all of their work and has submitted it to the PUC and if they get approved, they will be the first. The towns and cities in the coalition get together and work as a group and they have better buying power to work with energy suppliers. She thought it was something they should look into as a group. She read about the Coalition, *'to foster resilient NH communities by empowering them to realize their energy goals.'* *They create value for Community Power member municipalities by jointly contracting for services, developing projects and programs together, educating and engaging the public, and advocating for communities and customers at the Legislature and Public Utilities Commission.* She would be happy to do some research and come back and maybe do a formal presentation to the Energy Commission and if it's something they are interested in, then they can go in front of the Council.

Chairman Russell wanted to clarify that the Coalition would help them come up with a presentation for the Town Council, put this whole thing together, come up with education, etc. Councilor Radke responded yes, the members that are on their board of directors now would be more than happy to come and help. They also have legal counsel that would help them out.

Mr. Lu clarified that they would provide all of the information and help, but the Energy Commission would still need to make the presentation. Councilor Radke stated that the Coalition would educate them first, so they would be prepared to make an in-depth presentation to the Council. She would be happy to ask any of the members to come to their next meeting. Chairman Russell responded yes, do it.

Mr. Elwood wanted to know if they were a charitable organization or non-profit. Councilor Radke read the following: *The Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire is a non-profit Joint Powers Agency incorporated on October 1, 2021 — governed "by communities, for communities" — empowering towns, cities and counties across New Hampshire to:*

- 1. Streamline the process for authorizing a Community Power program locally.*
- 2. Share services and staff support across member cities, towns and counties.*
- 3. Participate in joint power solicitations and local project development opportunities.*
- 4. Share knowledge and collaborate regionally on clean energy and resilient infrastructure development.*
- 5. Speak with one voice at the Legislature and Public Utilities Commission on public advocacy issues related to energy and Community Power.*

Mr. Elwood thought that it all sounded like an awful lot of stuff for free and his lesson is there is no such thing as free. Councilor Radke continued to read, *Community Power, authorized under NH RSA 53-E, democratizes energy governance by empowering towns, cities and counties to*

choose where their electricity comes from on behalf of their residents and businesses, work with utilities on local energy infrastructure upgrades, and provide electricity supply rates and services to all customers participating in the program.

Chairman Russell stated that they are actually brokers. Councilor Radke stated that they work in that way. Mr. Lu thought it would be interesting to find out what's the difference between what they do versus what the other brokers do. Councilor Radke stated that whoever would sit on the board of directors to represent the Town would get more of a say. With the other brokers, they would rely on their expertise.

Mr. Bandazian stated that it's their responsibility to do the study, they need to start learning, so that's a good place to start learning. Councilor Radke stated that she would set it up and work with Chairman Russell.

b. David's proposal on making proposals

Chairman Russell stated that TC Chairman Gilbert gave them some ideas on how they might approach the Town Council; things he would like to see:

- Create the presentation as a proposal for acceptance
- What exactly are they proposing – spell it out
- What is the reason for doing this
- What are the pluses and minuses of doing this
- What is the cost to the Town and to the taxpayer
- What would be the cost savings to the Town and to the taxpayer
- What is the payback, how is it achieved, and when is it expected

c. Landfill solar – engage with Jeff Foote

There was quite a discussion about 0.5 megawatts and that being the number to avoid 3-phase power. Mr. Bandazian stated that they have a commitment from Senator Shaheen's office through Congressional directed funding; a half million dollars to bring 3-phase power. Eversource has continually moved those goalposts, so that funding covers one-third to a quarter of the actual cost, not including the cost of PV. It seems to be about a century before there's payback, so not really viable. Rather than do nothing, the information that Jeff has, it is feasible to do half a megawatt PV project there now, and do the conversion to 3-phase to run compactors. Get out of using a backhoe to smash trash and not have to do 3-phase power. He still thinks big picture they are looking at battery storage. Councilor Radke wanted to know if having solar at the old landfill was still an option. Mr. Bandazian stated that that's the thought. It's to do a smaller project that can get power out on a single phase line and dovetailed with that to put it to some use. Use that as an opportunity to get out of using a backhoe into using a trash compactor.

Mr. Lu wanted to know if they plan to do a PV and then put the energy into the battery and then convert to 3-phase. Mr. Bandazian stated that there was no discussion of battery. Using the single phase. Apparently able to net meter half a megawatt with the single phase line at the Transfer Station. It's total speculation, because they haven't talked to Jeff Foote. Mr. Lu didn't understand Mr. Bandazian's comment about 3-phase and wanted to know if they were going to convert their single phase to 3-phase to use the compactor. Mr. Bandazian stated that that is what's done right

now. They have converters. It's not for the trash; it's for the recycling. The Transfer Station does use converters to get that to 3-phase.

Mr. Elwood thought is sounded like they were dancing around in circles. It didn't make sense to say they want to run that equipment, but they don't have what they need to run the equipment, so they are going to use the power they have and put converters in there. There's no cost analysis. Also, if they don't have batteries and you have solar power, he wanted to know if that meant that the compactors don't work when it's cloudy out. Mr. Bandazian stated that it is net metered. It goes back into the system. Chairman Russell thought it begged the question of should they just do batteries as well. Mr. Elwood thought it was better to net meter it. Batteries have a limited shelf life and they're non-recyclable. Mr. Bandazian thought short term if the Town was to do anything, it would be an installation that produces enough electricity and not more than you can net meter over a single phase. Ultimately, that's going to grossly under develop the potential of that site. Then you are either faced with battery technology or doing nothing, because he didn't think 3-phase was ever going to be financially feasible.

Mr. Lu questioned the 3-phase, which is what's needed for the compactor, because it's too expensive to bring in 3-phase. Mr. Bandazian stated that 3-phase was to fully develop the site for two megawatts. That's why you need 3-phase brought in on a utility line. You can convert what is already there in single phase into 3-phase and run the compactor. Mr. Lu stated that if you just look at the 3-phase itself, it didn't make sense to bring in the 3-phase, because it's too expensive, so the only option left for them is to use the single phase and see how much solar the panel can push back to that single phase. Mr. Bandazian responded initially, then some years down the road they will fully develop the site and have battery storage and use the stored energy. Mr. Lu wanted to know if they are just bringing the half megawatt PV if that was financially feasible. The response was they don't know yet.

Mr. Bandazian stated that before they can get to justifying to the Town Council what's needed, they have to do a Request for Proposals.

Chairman Russell stated that they also had discussions about the potential of roof projects, but thought they were stalling on that discussion. Mr. Bandazian stated that at the meeting, Rick (Sawyer) had indicated some interest in exploring the Town Office Building roof and since then DPW has said that it's not something that they would advise. He thought the shingles were way older than 10 years. There is some hesitancy about the Highway Garage. He didn't understand if it was structural or it simply needs to be maintained or repaired. Councilor Radke mentioned the pool house. Mr. Bandazian stated that there were six items on it; it just needs to go out for an RFP. The Safety Complex is part of that, but only the apparatus bay. They had a problem with ice this past winter falling off the cell tower.

VII. Reports of Members and Committees

d. School projects

Mr. Foote stated that it looked like the District was going to engage with Freedom Energy to reduce their total energy bill. As far as ventilation, they are working their way through the budget and they think that if they get a 20-year bond, they can reduce their capital expense this year by about \$1m and bond all four School projects at the same time. It would be a nickel per \$1,000 hit on the

tax rate. Using the same calculation, they can do the same thing with sprinklers too. They could accomplish quite a lot of capital improvement for a very small tax hit. He would hate to see taxes go up, but this actually reduces their net tax change by quite a bit. Councilor Radke wanted to know how much of a bond they were looking at. Mr. Foote stated that it would be a \$4m bond that would take care of all of the schools and then a separate bond for \$1m for the sprinklers. The bond would square away the ventilation equipment in all elementary schools up to McKelvie. They are trying to accomplish it this summer of 2022. Councilor Radke wanted to know if they could get grants for any of the projects. Mr. Foote stated that they had \$800k left of ESSER funding that they were going to commit to Peter Woodbury and then use \$400k of tax money, but if they can bond it all, the bond would be reduced by the \$800k.

VIII. Old Business

- e. **Solsmart** – www.thesolarfoundation.org

Councilor Radke stated that she didn't have a report on that. The last time she mentioned it, it was in the hands of the Planning Department. She will have something for next time.

- f. **Meet with TC and Rick Sawyer to discuss below topics on 11/5** – already discussed.

IX. New Business

Chairman Russell mentioned that at the Transfer Station, comingled is down from \$22/ton to \$21/ton. The Commission discussed composting. Councilor Radke stated that the whole reason for composting was to lighten the load. It's important to get that heavy stuff out.

X. Reminders: Next upcoming meeting Dec 23rd or Dec 30th

The Commission discussed possible dates for their December meeting and the consensus was December 16th and Councilor Radke will check to make sure there were no conflicts.

XI. Adjournment

**MOTION by Councilor Radke to adjourn by at 7:38 pm. Seconded by Mr. Foote.
Vote taken – All in favor.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Boufford