

Town of Bow

Energy Committee

Location: 10 Grandview Road, Bow, NH, Room C

Time: 6:30pm

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

Attendees: Jessica Dunbar, Dana Mosher, Chris Moore, Alex Grene, Stephen Elgert, Chris Andrews, Angela Brennan, Harry Judd

- 1) Welcome and Approval of Minutes
 - a. Harry Judd – arriving about 7pm

Dana Mosher motioned to approve the September minutes, Alex Grene seconded – all in favor. Minutes approved.

Dana Mosher commented that the meeting agenda includes a lot of short updates that make it difficult to move forward on new topics. Angela Brennan that Jessica Dunbar send out an email (BCC to recipients) a couple days in advance of each meeting with a summary of these updates. Jessica Dunbar agreed that this approach would be helpful.

- 2) NH Energy Expo – reflections

Jessica Dunbar thanked all involved in the NH Energy Expo. She noted that every one of the Bow Energy Committee members helped in some way with setup or on the day of the Expo. She felt the event was a success and remarked that many people lingered for a long time, talking, attending workshops, etc. She wondered if they might consider moving the Expo a few weeks later next year, since she noticed that some people who might have come were busy with fall traveling. She also suggested that a few weeks into school might be a prime time for illness, though that is hard to predict. There is still an interest in moving the event to Bow next year.

- 3) Business Expo – reflection/highlights

Jessica Dunbar said that she, Chris Moore, Chase Pennoyer of Resilient Buildings Group, and Andy Duncan of Lakes Region Community College all attended the Business Expo.

- a. Website

Jessica Dunbar shared that a website designer, Meme Exum, at the Business Expo offered to draft the committee its own website for free. The draft is done and ready for review, but will only be accessible for 13 days. Also, while the design is free, the platform does require an annual fee. Right now, the committee does not have a budget. Stephen Elgert reminded the committee that, even if the committee's submitted budget is approved, the earliest the money would be available would be July 1st. Jessica Dunbar encouraged the group to look over the website and take notes on their impressions; meanwhile, she

would ask the website designer how long the website could be left on hold pending available funds. Chris Andrews also suggested looking into grants that might be able to be used for this purpose. Portsmouth may have received such a grant.

b. Real Estate Seminar

Jessica Dunbar described how a real estate agent, Munise Ulker, who recently moved here from Bedford, had said that she gets many questions from clients about how to lower their energy bills. She is interested in our help to provide a seminar for her clients. Chris Moore mentioned that real estate agents are a great way to reach homeowners. The committee would like to follow through with this project and, once we have developed a workshop for this set of clients, we could share with other local real estate agents and their clients as well. It was also suggested to look at the MLS listing for home energy ratings.

c. SCORE NHSaves webinar with Andy Duncan

Jessica Dunbar said that Andy Duncan spoke at length with SCORE, a nonprofit that provides support to businesses. They may collaborate on a NHSaves webinar, and the Bow Energy Committee could help promote that.

d. Geothermal Study

Jessica Dunbar said that she was approached by a man who suggested the committee study the possibility for geothermal near the coal plant because it was a prime location for that. Chris Moore asked on what did he base this assumption? Dana Mosher offered that there is a huge aquifer running underneath that area. Jessica Dunbar acknowledged that the committee was too busy to take on a project like this right now, but it was an interesting consideration.

4) Quick Updates/Mentions

a. Portfolio Manger

Jessica Dunbar relayed that Resilient Building Group is still working on inputing the Town's data into Portfolio Manager. Chris Andrews had a phone call on this with Tori Gerlt last week. Chris Moore thought that Tori Gerlt was out for a few days, but suggested checking back in with her soon to see if they've made progress.

b. Budget Request

Jessica Dunbar reminded the committee that she submitted their budget request, and the Town Manager would then know the next steps.

c. Senior Projects

Jessica Dunbar said she contacted the school about inviting seniors to discuss and seek support energy-related senior projects with the committee. She was told that the fall projects are already underway, but the school would share the invitation with students considering their spring or summer projects.

d. Bow Rotary Club collaboration/presentation

Jessica Dunbar informed that group that she and Rob Werner of the Bow Rotary Club plan to meet to discuss how the Rotary Club can combine efforts with the Energy Committee. Then they will present to the Rotary Club on December 14th.

e. Safety Building – solar data

Jessica Dunbar asked if we had any new information on solar production from the Safety Building. Dana Mosher had asked the fire chief, but he didn't have the data. Chris Andrews thought it was being stored on a resident computer and will look into that.

f. Neighbors Warming Neighbors

Jessica Dunbar suggested this might be a good project on which to collaborate with the Rotary Club. Dana Mosher added that another town has a program where cut wood is stored for people to take for free to help with heating costs; he would like to look into that more.

g. Kill-a-watt for Library

Chris Moore took note to identify a good energy usage monitor to recommend to the Library.

h. Local Energy Solutions – what do we need?

Jessica Dunbar attended the Local Energy Solutions Conference on October 14th. The organizers, Clean Energy NH, are interested in knowing what town committees need most from these conferences. She asked the committee to consider any thoughts on this that she could pass on.

i. Community Power

Jessica Dunbar mentioned that Selectman Matt Poulin had attended a meeting in Concord in which Community Power was discussed, and he'd expressed interest in finding out whether this would be a good approach for Bow. The committee agreed it was a good time to learn more about Community Power; Jessica Dunbar will send the group some informational links/videos to get them started. Then, she will see about having Henry Herndon of Community Power Coalition of NH come to a meeting to discuss in more depth. Jessica Dunbar expressed some concern about fitting this project into their workload and would like to seek additional volunteers if this becomes something the Town wants to pursue. Angela Brennan remarked that, if more volunteers cannot be found, lesser projects could possibly be set aside to make this the priority.

5) Future Workshops/Events

a. Series?

b. Topics

c. Negawatt Community Data Collection? – This part skipped due to lack of time.

d. Approach (subcommittee?)

Jessica Dunbar expressed interest in putting together educational workshops for next year, and the group shared that interest. She thought the most efficient way to keep this effort moving

forward was to assign it to a subcommittee. Chris Moore and Dana Mosher said they were interested in working on that subcommittee.

Harry Judd arrived and introduced himself. He lives in Bow, was a Selectmen, and he has a firm, Accion Group, that does solicitations for renewable energy projects. He ran Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the solar now on the Safety Building and the proposed 1MWh solar array for the old landfill next to the high school. The old landfill got some attractive bids, but was never completed. He noted miscommunication with the school as part of the reason for the project being abandoned. He offered to donate his website again for putting out another RFP for that site.

Harry Judd noted that the cost of panels and inverters has dropped, and a solar array would be a meaningful contribution to the Town.

Dana Mosher asked if it had to go through the school. Harry Judd said there may have been some confusion in the past about whether the Town or school own the property, but it has been confirmed to be the Town's property. He added that the electricity could either be fed to the school behind the meter or back to the grid. He said developers would advise on which way was better, and it would be a good idea to request multiple options through the RFP. The ultimate directive would come from the Select Board.

Chris Andrews asked if any other Town buildings or land had been considered in the original RFP process. Harry Judd said no, the Safety Building and old landfill had been the only ones under consideration.

- 6) Municipal Efforts and Solar Opportunities
 - a. Municipal Buildings
 - b. Old Landfill near High School
 - c. Other Possibilities
 - d. Connecting with School on solar and other
 - e. Dunbarton's Experience
 - f. Process/Steps

Chris Andrews said that the Town Hall roof is new and other buildings are solar ready as well. He asked if an RFP would include all properties at once. Harry Judd answered that they could be done sequentially over several years or at once.

The school may be putting on new roofs. Stephen Elgert mentioned that the school roofs have a lot of HVAC equipment in the way.

Dana Mosher noted that the originally proposed solar array for the old landfill was projected to be 1MWh; could it be larger now? Harry Judd said that they did not ask for 1MWh, that was just what was offered in the bids.

Harry Judd also mentioned parts of the sand pit may be useful for solar. Angela Brennan noted that that spot could be important for future water supply due to aquifer and that it is important to communicate to neighbors that solar panels would not contaminate the water. She also said that people have spoken out against construction of a ball pit there because of concern for the

aquifer. Harry Judd said the Town originally bought the property to protect it from development. All agreed communication was especially important for this site.

Chris Andrews said the Town has a new Town Commons Study Committee. He has mentioned us to them and suggested energy efficiency be considered in any new construction.

Harry Judd offered that there could be potential for ground mount solar behind the Safety Center.

Stephen Elgert asked for clarification on the best course forward. Harry Judd recommended going to the Board of Selectmen. The proposed timeline would involve the Town releasing one or more RFPs in January, waiting a couple months for bids to come in and work out back and forth with companies. If the Town selects and approves any bids, construction could begin next summer. He suggested talking to the Select Board first, then approaching the school for their preferred involvement and to ask if they are interested in including any other properties.

Chris Andrews said he could provide list of properties ready for solar. He also asked if the solar for the old landfill would need to be approved at Town Meeting. Harry Judd believed it did not. Jessica Dunbar said she'd spoken with Dana Lavoie of the Dunbarton Energy Committee about the solar array on their transfer station, and he'd said that the Town leasing the panels, rather than buying them, meant they did not have to put it to Town meeting.

Jessica Dunbar will request going before the Board next Tuesday with a request to look into Town solar opportunities. Angela Brennan said the request would need to be submitted by Friday. Stephen Elgert will attend the November 3rd school board meeting to open the conversation with the school.

Chris Andrews provided a brief update on municipal buildings. He said they were waiting for colder weather to perform the energy audit of the Municipal Building and would be doing a heat distribution study. Chris Moore asked how close they were to implementation of capital improvements. Chris Andrews said they wouldn't be doing anything energy related prior to 2024-25; at some point, they would need to discuss lighting for the Municipal Building and Recreation Building.

7) Closing Comments

Chris Andrews raised the question of whether the Town might need to bring in an expert later in the process to evaluate proposals and long-term impacts. Angela Brennan said she thought there might be need for a Town Meeting vote on the length of a solar contract, as the Board of Selectmen is only authorized to enter into contracts no longer than five years, and solar leases are typically much longer.

Alex Grene motioned to adjourn; Chris Moore seconded; all in favor. Meeting adjourned 8:45pm.