

# Town of Bow

## Energy Committee

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

Time: 6:30pm

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Attendees: Jessica Dunbar, Dana Mosher, Stephen Elgert, Chris Moore, Chris Andrews, Harry Judd, Henry Herndon (via Zoom)

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Approval of October, November, and December Minutes  
Stephen Elgert motioned, Dana Mosher seconded, all in favor.

Jessica Dunbar requested others in the committee help with minutes and proposed committee members take turns if one person was not willing to be secretary. Dana Mosher offered to do minutes next meeting, and Chris Moore offered the meeting after that.

- 3) Community Power (Henry Herndon) – joined via Zoom

Henry Herndon introduced himself and gave an overview of community power. He is a consultant working under contract with the Community Power Coalition of NH (aka the Coalition), which was organized in 2020. Community power allows towns to control their source of power and achieve lower electricity rate. Getting community power involves developing a community power plan and getting that plan approved at Town Meeting. If approved, residents are sent a “welcome to Bow Community Power” explaining the change. The economy of scale provided by the majority of residents on the plan help keep prices down.

Stephen Elgert asked, what are the up and down sides? Henry Herndon answered that the benefits include saving money, using longer-term thinking to keep rates down over time (eg. by developing local generation sources), and having more choice for incorporating renewable energy. He said the downside is the time commitment involved to get the program up and running. If going through the Coalition, each town assigns a Coalition representative and must develop the plan, hold two public hearings, and prepare a warrant article.

Chris Moore asked who is managing the power supply decisions, and how does Bow get lower rates when major utilities like Unitil have higher buying power. Henry Herndon answered that the Coalition actively manager the portfolio of contracts over different time periods, rather than being confined to every six months. Chris Moore asked if the Town would need any other resources to manage the program? Henry Herndon answered that this is the purpose of the Coalition; it manages so the Town doesn't have to add staff or become their own experts. The Coalition is its own energy supplier, which is owned and controlled by member Towns.

Jessica Dunbar asked, what if we want don't have the option for large-scale generation on local properties, can community power still be a way to increase amount of electricity coming from

renewable sources? Henry Herndon said that multiple member towns can join into a project contract for a project in another town.

Harry Judd asked whether a warrant article could be put forward this year. Henry Herndon said that would be very ambitious because of the time required to write the plan and hold the public meetings. Town Meeting 2024 would be more realistic for Bow.

Chris Moore confirmed with Henry Herndon that some other towns have had their community power plans approved, but none have yet been launched. He then asked, have these rates been tested, and will they actually be lower? Henry Herndon said that the rates will be announced in February, but most plans are written so that they have to meet or beat utility rates.

Jessica Dunbar asked, what is the advantage to pursuing community power through the Coalition versus a private company. Henry said that the broker model takes a fixed price for an extended period of time, but the nonprofit Coalition, controlled by members, can adjust the rate over time through active management. The Coalition can also develop its own energy generation projects.

#### 4) Solar RFP

Harry Judd passed out an outline of tasks that need to be done. He recommended dividing up responsibilities among committee members. He also suggested referencing appendices within the RFP, so changes can be made to appendix without revising the main document.

Chris Andrews recommends a small group put together the RFP draft, show it to the Town Manager, then share with the school and library. Jessica Dunbar will work with Chris Moore to start.

Chris Andrews will put together site specs to include in the RFP. Harry Judd suggests including pictures and having the option on the website to directly open the site in Google Earth. He mentioned that the website can be set up to show all sites in one group or separate town, school, library sites.

Chris Moore asked how selection of bids would be coordinated among the three entities. Harry Judd said we can just pass the data to the school, or we can evaluate the data and make recommendations. He said some proposals may include a better deal for a combination of, for example, town and school properties. All parties can look at everything together to reach decisions.

The warrant article for giving the Board permission to enter into long-term contracts also needs to be drafted, given to the town manager, reviewed by Town Counsel, and then shared with Dean Cascadden and Duane Ford at the school. Jessica Dunbar will check on this.

Alex Grene would be a good person to work on the RFP website and bid form. Jessica Dunbar will ask him and connect him with Harry Judd to get started.

Harry Judd noted that the website has a distribution list of 5000 companies, but might not include some smaller local companies. He requested the committee send a list of local companies to include. He also said that the RFP website can be released before the RFP is ready, with notice that the RFP will be issued soon.