

Town of Bow

Energy Committee

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

Time Meeting Began: 18:28

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, February 15, 2023

Attendees: Jessica Dunbar, Dana Mosher, Stephen Elgert, Chris Moore, Russell Anderson, Chris Andrews, and Ryan Polson

1) Approval of January Minutes

Stephen Elgert motioned to approve January minutes; Dana Mosher seconded; all in favor.

2) Solar RFP

Much discussion revolved around the speed of moving ahead without all needed information and the group's discomfort with the most recent revision of the proposed warrant article. All agreed it was best to slow down.

Dana Mosher motioned to recommend to the Board that the warrant article requesting long-term contracts for renewable projects be tabled for this year; Stephen Elgert seconded; all in favor. Jessica Dunbar will call David Stack and Harry Judd to inform them of the decision.

Chris Andrews suggested forming a subcommittee with representatives from the Energy Committee, School, and Library who could meet regularly to review questions and prepare responses to proposer inquiries while the RFP is active.

Dana Mosher suggested Stephen Strong from Massachusetts as a possible resource for solar questions.

3) Energy Monitor at the Library

Jessica Dunbar mentioned that library has acquired a kill-a-watt energy meter and is working out its borrowing policies; it should be available soon. She suggested that it would be nice for the committee to provide a pamphlet to go with the monitor that explained generally what these monitors are and how they can be used to assess energy usage and improve energy conservation efforts in the home. Chris Moore offered to start working on a draft of this. He also suggested that a thermal gun, which is a sort of laser thermometer, would be another inexpensive tool that would be good to add at the library.

4) Community Power (Ryan Polson of Standard Power)

Ryan Polson introduced himself and gave an overview of community power. He is a consultant working Standard Power which was organized in 2010. 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. Any resident can opt out at any time or change tiers within the program.

Ryan Polson explained that a first step is to form a community power committee, which can also be the members of the energy committee or can include new volunteers. This committee, with help from Standard Power, develops a community power plan. Standard Power begins the process by surveying the community to see what they want in the program. They have seen consistent results from these surveys with the most popular rate option being to have more “green” power with costs that are less or not much more than current rates. The final plan will provide pre-selected options from which each resident can make their own choice. “Green” is accomplished by buying RECs.

Chris Moore asked how they can achieve a lower price with fewer customers than the utility? Ryan Polson answered that when you buy is important; also, buying directly from a third party supplier is cheaper. He said rates for the renewal contract can be sought out earlier and incorporated into the renewal.

Ryan Polson added that their main competitors are Freedom Power and the Coalition. Freedom Power is similar, but is only working with two NH towns so far. The Coalition is more different. He suggested the Coalition comes with unnecessary risks, as they are taking loans they will need to pay back. Keene did an RFP to make its choice, but he did not think any other of their eleven towns had used an RFP to decide on a community power broker.

Stephen Elgert inquired as to the steps 1, 2, & 3 that would need to be followed to begin the process. Ryan Polson answered:

Step 1- Appoint a Community Power Committee

Step 2- Being working with Standard Power

Step 3- Survey community and draft Community Plan with public input

Step 4- Submit it to the Select Board and then PUC for approval

Step 5- Work with Standard Power to select and enter into a service agreement with a supplier
Time to develop the plan varies, but if started by June, would be in good shape to be ready for a 2024 launch.

Chris Moore asked about fees. Ryan Polson said their was no cost to the Town budget. Standard Power does not get paid until launch of the program; then gets a tenth of a cent per kilowatt. They will also pay for things like newspaper ads as needed to keep the public informed. Chris Moore asked if residents get a separate bill. Ryan Polson said billing stays with the Utility. Standard Power partners with Good Energy.

Stephen Elgert motioned that the energy committee devote the April meeting to working on its recommendations regarding community power; Russell Anderson seconded; all in favor.

Meeting Adjourned at 21:02
Respectfully submitted by
Jessica Dunbar & Dana Mosher