

Town of Bow

Energy Committee

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

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Time: 6:30pm

Present: Jessica Dunbar (Chair), Dana Mosher (Vice Chair), Chris Moore, Stephen Elgert, Michael Leuchtenberger, Russell Anderson, Chris Andrews (over Zoom), David Hughes (guest from Rutgers University, Department of Anthropology)

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 pm.

1) Approval of April 19th and May 3rd Minutes

Moved by Stephen Elgert, Seconded by Dana Mosher. Motion passed.

2) Municipal Lighting and Other Upgrades

Chris Moore and Chris Andrews attended the Building and Facilities Committee meeting On Tuesday, May 16, 2023. The conversation included a discussion about energy efficiency options in Bow Town buildings. Chris Moore and Chris Andrews also met at the Municipal Building with Peter Dunn, the state contact for electrical supplies. They toured the building and agreed to return for a lighting audit at a later time. They learned about the option to finance projects through an organization's utility bill, by using the difference between the higher, old cost and the new, reduced cost to pay off project expenses over time. Utility companies may offer third party financing with a low interest rate (near three percent). This model may allow a project to be expedited because it may not need board approval. It remains to be confirmed whether the town would allow this type of financing. Chris Andrews will meet with Unitil on Monday (May 22, 2023) to get additional information.

There was a discussion about the possibility of improving the insulation at the DPW (Department of Public Works) building over the next few years. If new insulation is added there will also be a need for ventilation to be installed.

Utility rebate checks are currently deposited into the town general fund. The question was raised whether it would be possible to deposit any energy efficiency rebate checks into a special account that can in turn be used to finance other energy efficiency projects. Until now, the money involved was small (<\$1,000). New lighting updates may increase the expected rebates to more than \$10,000. In the past, this idea was rejected. Chris Andrews will revisit the idea with David Stack.

3) Solar RFP – keeping this moving forward

Jessica passed the incomplete Solar RFP to Duane Ford, the school assistant superintendent, and to the library director. There has been no response yet. Jessica will follow up over the next few weeks. There was discussion whether to focus the RFP on the former landfill location only if the effort involving the longer list of potential locations has not moved forward over the next 2-3 months. Success with the

landfill project may inspire other municipal solar projects to move forward. It was pointed out that the library does not offer a lot of real estate for solar panels, so may not be need to be regarded as a priority at this moment.

Chris Andrews has filled in much of the information needed in the appendix of the RFP. Chris Andrews and Jessica Dunbar will next meet with David Stack to receive his feedback on content and any legal issues related to the RFP. Subsequently, Jessica Dunbar and Michael Leuchtenberger will convene to finish the RFP as far as they can and to assess who else needs to be included to complete the document.

We expect that most of the detailed information about the work on the solar project(s) will come from the solar companies and conveyed in the proposals that identify what they are able and willing to do. A final decision on the RFP will need to wait until the town meeting can vote on a warrant article in the Spring of 2024.

All committee members are encouraged to take a close look at the existing RFP and add comments to the document before the meeting with David Stack.

4) Water Testing Event – able to participate?

Jessica Dunbar received an email from Cynthia Klevens, organizer of the Bow Water Testing Event on June 3, 2023 & June 4, 2023, inviting us back to participate. The Energy Committee decided that we will pass on the opportunity this year, but could imagine participating in future years in combination with other town groups.

5) Energy Plan – getting started

Having a Bow Energy Plan will be a big help in being ready for grant opportunities, to have a clear sense of direction, and to evaluate and generate buy-in from the general population of Bow. We reviewed an email from Karri Makinen, Bow Community Development Director, highlighting energy-related goals from Bow's [2017 Master Plan](#). While there was no specific section that focused on energy, a number of themes and goals could be identified, including the following:

- Strong interest in seeing energy efficient Town buildings and the encouragement to use renewable energy sources in new development within Town
- The survey question on energy showed strong support for renewable energy generation (64%), pursuing energy efficiency improvements for Town facilities (75%) and encouraging this concept in new development (75%).
- Explore options for higher energy efficiency throughout Town-owned buildings.
- Evaluate existing land use regulations periodically to ensure energy efficient development is addressed.
- Research alternative forms of energy for municipally-owned buildings, as well as energy efficient design and products.
- Encourage energy efficient design of new buildings in the Site Plan Regulations for the Business Development District.
- Explore new opportunities to promote sustainable and energy efficient designs
- Explore the possibility of energy efficient lighting for some of the existing fields for nighttime use by Town entities.
- Promote energy conservation measures that can improve air quality throughout the region.

- Ensure that all necessary steps have been taken in municipal buildings to reduce energy use.

These bullets may serve as a good starting place for a discussion of a Bow Energy Plan. In addition, Jessica Dunbar will reach out to the NH Network to ask for suggestions about Energy Plans compiled by other NH municipalities within the last five years. A review of Concord's Energy plan was suggested as a helpful template. The Committee will then identify and adapt aspects of these other plans as it prepares a draft Energy Plan for Bow. A draft will eventually be presented to the general public for input and discussion.

Standards and codes for new buildings are critical along with standards and codes that guide the retrofitting of existing buildings. The May 15, 2023 [article in the Concord Monitor](#) about BlocPower, a firm that “finances and facilitates decarbonization for buildings” was recommended for review. “The town of Peterborough has just signed a contract for it to decarbonize 10 to 15 buildings in town – private, commercial, religious, municipal, whatever – as a pilot to help guide the town in its goal of heating every building, public and private, without fossil fuels by 2050.” Dana Mosher will look at the Durham plan including their energy codes. We will also look at Keene to learn.

6) Other Comments

The next Button Up event is scheduled for September 12, 2023 from 6-8 pm at the Bow Library. This year, the presenter will be: Ted Stiles. Jessica will do registrations, so the Committee has access to names and contact info of registrants for follow up. This will be a shared event in partnership with the library, including advertising by the library. We decided to offer refreshments and to find sponsors for the refreshments if possible. We also decided to provide remote access for the event by Zoom or on the town YouTube Channel. Jessica Dunbar will get more information on what's involved with recording the event and making the recordings available online.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.