Shelburne Energy Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 24, 2022 7:00 pm

Present: Tom Johnson, Andrew Baker, John Walsh, Pat Stevenson, George Boettner

Guest: Andrew Belden, VP of Solar Programs at Eversource

Eversource Solar Presentation: Andrew Belden reviewed recent MA legislation authorizing utilities to own solar and energy storage. The legislation encourages partnerships with towns and with environmental justice communities.

Andrew Baker asked about Eversource investments in system capacity upgrades to allow for more solar generally. Andrew Belden noted that Eversource is working on a docket 2075 with the DPU that will allow the utility to invest in system upgrades that will allow for more solar installation and will also allow Eversource to do cost sharing across the system – part will allow them to rate base the cost sharing across all customers for the upgrades, and then charge future solar developers pro rata for the amount of new capacity they use. Eversource needs to go to the DPU for authorization for each solar project it develops, including seeking authorization to construct the projects as community shared solar that could be sold to benefit env. Justice populations.

When asked about the regional cap on net metering for solar installations, George Boettner mentioned one local businessman who had his newly constructed storage facility wired for solar, but could not get net metering for solar from Eversource because of the cap for western Mass having been exceeded. Mr. Belden mentioned the “AOBC – Alternative on Bill Credits” – that could be used instead to achieve net metering.

Partnerships with towns – Eversource interested in projects that relate to critical infrastructure: police, fire, emergency shelters that could use backup power. Must follow procurement – can’t jump ahead of other developers. Eversource has a hosting capacity map that can show at a high level what the system capacity is on different circuits. For exact numbers need to do an interconnection analysis. Eversource is now hiring a consultant to study its properties and look for quick win opportunities and longer term projects. Will have answers in about 4-6 weeks. Tom agreed to follow up then.

February 10 Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved with amendment to change the Geoff Boettner references to George Boettner. John Walsh abstained due to absence.

Energy Advocate job posting ad: Terry Narkewizc advised us that we need to wait to advertise until MOU on grant is signed by Bob Manners, select board chair – he should do that on 2-25. Agreed to post in Recorder with a March 15 application deadline. Online posting is $200 for 30 days. Committee authorized spending up to $800 on advertising the position. If Bob signs, Andrew will put it into Shelburne e-newsletter. John W will talk with Terry about advertising in Recorder, Mass Job Quest.

Mohawk Solar Project: John Walsh attended and concluded that the Building Committee members had already made up their minds that they didn’t want anything put on the Mohawk roof. John suggested following up with our School Committee reps. Tom agreed to talk with Julie Dubreil. Andrew will talk with Jason Cusimano. John will check in with Terry and Robin about Mohawk utility costs.

Cowell Gym heating system: Energy Resources is the Eversource preferred vendor for municipalities – said initially that they could do air source heat pumps for $135,000. A revised proposal adjusts price down to about $88,000. Terry N. said we could use remainder of Green Communities 10k allocated for Cowell Gym analysis. And for preparing a new Green Communities application for mini-splits. John W. feels that estimates so far have lacked a lot of specifics and are sizing the system for Worcester area heating degree days (5,000) – should be 7,000 for our region. John W. will follow up with energy analysts and with getting the GC app submitted by April 8. FRCOG has offered help with grant writing.

Franklin County Energy Committees Meeting: John W will attend meeting on Tuesday, March 1. Others are welcome to attend these bi-monthly meetings

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm. Minutes by Andrew Baker