Shelburne Energy Committee

Meeting Minutes – March 30, 2022 5:00 pm

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

Also Present: Mark Burton

Absent: George Boettner

Agenda

Interview with Mark Burton for Energy Advocate 8-hour per week Mass Save Communities First Program position.

Tom Johnson opened by noting that George Boettner recused himself from this meeting – George is the spouse of Cynthia Boettner, another candidate for the Energy Advocate position.

Tom welcomed Mark to the meeting and the committee members introduced themselves to the candidate. Mark mentioned that he had keen interest in the Energy Advocate position, having participated for many years in forest conservation groups, expressing concern about our changing climate, and his current interest in developing an aviary on his farm in Ashfield. Mark recently moved to his farm after retiring from the banking/mortgage industry, most recently with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston.

Mark expressed concern about his lack of experience in home/business energy conservation and was assured by committee members that this was not a serious drawback, as he would learn much about this from our access to Mass Save expertise. We explained that the main role for the Energy Advocate would be reaching out to the community to promote weatherization and electrification of rental property, residences, and small businesses, and to learn from and communicate our progress to All In Energy (our Communities First management team).

Mark had reviewed the proposal we had submitted to Mass Save Community First Program. He found that it answered key questions that he had about the position. He stated that his many years of experience in the home mortgage business involved working with people he did not know initially, and subsequently developing strong, positive relationships. He felt that his people skills would be an important asset for our Energy Advocate, a view that we on the committee shared.

Mark expressed concerns regarding the “deliverables versus hours,” i.e., how much was being promised to Mass Save versus the very few hours of employment per week (8) that The Energy Advocate would be expected to work. We agreed that his concern was valid and explained that the budgetary constraints imposed by the Mass Save program guidelines in terms of the number of buildings likely to be affected in our small community resulted in our funds available for the Energy Advocate salary to be limited.

Once all questions had been answered, we thanked Mark for his interest in the position and he left the meeting. Subsequent discussion among committee members revealed that we were impressed by his reasons for applying to our position, his response to questions that we posed to him, and his many years of experience in the business world that would add a unique strength to our team. He interviewed well. Nevertheless, we concluded that Cynthia Boettner was the stronger candidate for the position, given her many years of living and serving in the Shelburne community, her personal experience with home energy improvement, and her extensive outreach experience. A motion was made to offer the position to Cynthia, was seconded, and passed unanimously. Tom stated that he would contact Cynthia to make the offer and see if she would accept and, if so, would contact the Town Administrator to determine how to officially make the hire. We agreed that if Cynthia decided to not accept the position that we would then offer it to Mark.

Upon conclusion of the discussion regarding the Energy Advocate position, George Boettner was invited to join for a discussion of a proposal by U Mass to the U.S. Department of Energy Rural Energy Pilot Program (REPP) and it was decided to ask U Mass reps to meet with us the evening of April 4 to discuss details.

Adjourned at 6:05 pm.