

LEE ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 4, 2023

ATTENDANCE: Don Anderson, Louis Grondin, Katrin Kasper, Carol Doering, Mary Woodward, Erik Johnson

GUESTS: John Tappan, (Lee Resident and Trustee of the Town's Trust Funds),

The opening discussion noted that The Community Power Committee is now disbanded after the successful Town Vote and PUC submission by Standard Power. It was also noted that the warrant article received the highest positive vote total, so the committee members felt their efforts on behalf of the town were very successful.

The minutes of the 3-7-23 meeting of the committee was circulated and approved by all in the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. The present meeting opened with the introduction of the guest, John Tappan, by Katrin Kasper. Katrin first discussed her role in the committee as becoming less of a Liaison with the Select Board and more as a common member of the committee. She also discussed her new role as an Energy Circuit writer at Green Energy New Hampshire for our understanding. She felt that the changes John will present, proposing the Committee become a Commission, would better serve the town in the following manner: As a commission backed up by RSA 38 of the State (attached) we would be taken more seriously, have more influence on town energy usage to save money, and open more doors within the town to get things done. John had presented this possibility to the Select Board in their meeting of 3-20-23 and the BOS felt it was important to present to the committee. (Although not presented at the meeting this commission influence could tie into the New Business discussion of the Energy Committee meeting of 2-27-23 on how to influence Lee's State representatives toward Energy Initiatives. (RSA 38-D:6)

John then presented the present situation of the Town Buildings and their possible future costs:

- Library renovations greater than \$500,000 that could expand upwards to \$2,000,000.
- Town Hall restructure that will cost over \$500,000.
- All the Town's buildings add up to close to 10,000 ft² and little is being done to consider long term costs such as energy.

Using the library as the most recent example, John indicated it is moving forward soon with \$530,000 in two funds including over \$200,000 of approved planned spending in 2024. There seems to be a breakdown between the Library Trustees and the BOS as the Library Trustees are the only ones with sole control of Library infrastructure. An energy *commission* could require them to account for long term energy usage as part of their plans and not just the appearance and function that is the present focus. The concern is that Energy costs of the future are not part of the planning of today. A Commission "has the duty to research energy use and make the information available to the town" and "can make recommendations on energy conservation, efficiency, generation, and zoning practices. (RSA 38-D:4)."

Lou Grondin felt an independent review might help the Library make a more informed decision on the renovations, bringing in contractors experienced in energy conservation as much as the architects for appearance and function.

Katrin Kasper indicated there are many energy grants available and a commission can establish an Energy fund for the betterment of the town's energy conservation efforts that would carry over year to year, as well as take in gifts toward conservation of up to \$500. (RSA 38-D:5)

The Committee agreed that this would be the next step and it was so **Moved** and Unanimously **voted Affirmative** by all present to ask the BOS to establish the Energy Commission for the Town of Lee, for which the committee members can volunteer and be sworn into service. It would also expand the number of members that can serve on the commission (3 to 10 members). It was felt this was important as becoming a commission has duties assigned to it on an annual basis.

Mary Woodward volunteered to look into how other towns implemented Energy Commissions and let us know the next meeting in May.

2. Solar Tax Exemptions: It was noted that Lee does not have a formal exemption for solar implementation while 50% of NH towns do. It was stated that the assessors were asked to not include Solar in their appraisal, but one member noted that when a heat pump was being put in the assessor did come to make a note of it as part of the heating system for taxation purposes. It was noted that for an exemption on Wind energy in Durham you have to actively ask for the exemption.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Consumer Power PUC application is expected to be implemented in the Fall of 2023 and it was felt a Thank You by the committee sent to the E-Crier, sent to Denise Duval, would be in order. Since no member volunteered at the meeting Don will send out for approval.
2. Solar Power Initiatives:
 - a. Three members presented the concept of implementing Solar on Mast Way School during public comment at the 2/1 school board meeting and requested their support.
 - i. No actions yet defined for possible implementation.
 - b. Transfer station solar implementation was completed by Revision Solar although not yet known to be functional. There was a concern voiced by a volunteer of the Swap Shop that melting ice created a flow of water onto the main electrical panel that Revision should check out.
 - c. Regarding Solar Power Farms on Town property or private entities:
 - i. Based on the Webinar attended by Barb and Mary NH does not yet have the 3 phase power poles readily available for a known installation in Lee.
 - ii. Regarding power lines, and the use of animal husbandry **no discussion**.
3. Regarding energy cost savings for town buildings:
 - a. There were no active updates.
4. Regarding archiving items on the town web site—no update. **Don to follow up with Denise.**

- a. The Committee still needs to update the CIP improvements (2017-2024), Energy Handbook, Homeowner guides and Energy Efficiency Road Map for the town buildings.
It was not decided on how best to do so as the information is not readily available. It is hoped that becoming a Commission will enable this to move forward faster.
- 5. Regarding an expert on heat pumps Matt Rusteika, and the possible tree expert for education.
Katrin Kasper is learning a great deal from her contacts at Eversource and NHEC.
- 6. Regarding the whole house monitor there was no update, and regarding funds it was felt that
becoming a commission with a continuous fund available that carries over year to year might make the prior discussions moot.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.