**Bethlehem Energy Commission**

**MINUTES from Tuesday, January 10**

**Agenda**

**Introductions**

*Attending:* Chuck Phillips, Scott Caisse, Mary Lou Krambeer, David Van Houten, Bruce Caplain, Dan Crosby, and Melissa Elander of Clean Energy NH

*Excused:* Gabe Chilius of Clean Energy NH

**Mission:** Mary Lou motioned to adopt new mission, Chuck Phillips seconded motion. Unanimously accepted.

*The Bethlehem Energy Commission was established for the study and planning of energy resources for the town. The commission will evaluate existing energy usage in the town and suggest possible improvements in energy efficiency and conservation, as well as potential clean renewable energy solutions in order to reduce expenses and increase self-reliance.*

**Minutes** from November meeting, David moved to accept and second by Dan Unanimously accepted.

**Public input** – Barry Zitser suggested we take on the *Complete Streets Program* – this is a transportation program. The Commission suggested Barry talk to Tri-County CAP and North Country Council about their transportation initiatives. Both of those organizations have been working on transportation issues and programs for the region for the last 25 years.

**Town solar project** – the solar array behind the elementary school is almost finished. The contractors are putting transformers in this week. Eversource will then be contacted to turn on the power.

Next, we need to figure out how to help the Town of Bethlehem oversee the ownership and management of the solar arrays – maintenance, monitoring production figures on the web for the public to see, insurance, tightening of bolts periodically. Barrington Power will help us work through these steps and make suggestions for what we should look for on an ongoing basis. Barrington may offer a maintenance contract or suggest such a contractor (e.g.Air Electric).

**Village District** – solar warrant article language due by February 7, 2023.  Ten days later on February 17, 2023 (yes, a Friday at Bethlehem Elementary School) they will hold Budget Hearing.  On FRIDAY March 17, 2023 they will hold Annual Meeting again at BES.  Both meeting take place at 7pm.

agreed to

Village District will also do an energy audit in 2023.

*Draft* Solar Warrant Article

To authorize the village district to move forward with a solar project for the waste water treatment facility if the commissioners deem it to make financial sense for the village district.
The estimated cost of the project is $421,000, with $250,000 funded through a grant.  The remainder will be funded through a combination of additional grants, donations, federal tax credits, low interest loans, or as a last resort, if it makes financial sense, a bank loan.

**Residential & commercial solar** – there are no good programs available right now, but we want to be on the look out. There are probably more benefits in larger projects. For example maybe Gabe from CENH could work with a group of businesses on Main Street to create a commercial solar group. There is now a grant to cover 40% of the expenses related to installing solar at commercial sites (it was 25%). Idea: perhaps do a Bethlehem Solarize project – based on the Sugar Hill, Easton, and Franconia efforts in 2016.

**EV Chargers** – David is talking to Harry Newell Jr. about finding locations along Main Street that can host EV chargers.

**Rambling Woods** – Vermont Law and Energy Clinic folks have been leading the project and developed RFPs for 100 kWh for $400,000 which is the amount available through grants. This group will be going before the Bethlehem Planning Board. Jan 23 is the deadline for the NH Dept of Energy grant. Also, Rambling Woods has 3 street lights that need to be replaced with LEDs. Bruce will ask Mary Moritz for a contact.

**Grafton County** – Tuesday, 9am meetings. David, Chuck and Mary Lou will attend the January 24 meeting.

**Profile project** has been down since early October because of a damaged breaker. Supply chain disruptions has delayed the speed of replacing the breaker. Air Electric is the contractor working on the repair. The financial loss during this period to the school will be covered by Barrington Power. And, the repair will not cost the school as the project is under warranty.

**Bethlehem Town Report** – draft due on 2/23 – Mary Lou will draft a report

**Everything else, including next projects?**

* How about taking on the topic of sustainability – should our Town have a **Sustainability plan**? Sustainability goals. Bruce is talking to the Hanover, NH sustainability group. Create an approach to making us more aware of the environment. Link our various committees – transfer station, Bike community, energy commission…
* As we solarize our buildings, we are going to get more questions as a Commission. Who will answer questions, where do we get that information, and how do we distribute it?
* Recruit more members to Commission

**Next Meeting:** February 7 at 6pm (first Tuesdays of month at 6:00pm at Bethlehem Library)

**Adjourn** at 7:05pm

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Bethlehem Energy Commission (BEC) is appointed by the Select Board. All meetings are open to the public. Clerical Assistant Nicole McGrath ensures that BEC meeting notices, agendas, and minutes are posted as necessary.

To find BEC info go to: www.bethlehemnh.org

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-our committee is listed under the: boards and committees tab

-our meetings are posted through Nicole on: agendas and minutes tab