**MINUTES**

**Bethlehem Energy Commission**

**Tuesday Jan 2, 2024, 6:00 pm at the Bethlehem Library**

**Agenda**

Attending: Chuck Phillips, Dan Crosby, Scott Caisse, Mary Lou Krambeer (on Zoom), David Van Houten, Excused: Bruce Caplain

Meeting chaired by David.

Mission: The Bethlehem Energy Commission encourages and supports economically and environmentally sensible energy practices in Bethlehem, NH.

**Minutes** from December meeting: Motion to accept by Chuck (after correcting a typo), seconded by Dan; unanimously accepted.

**Public input** - none

**Community Power** Hearings on Thursday, Dec 7 and Dec 14 at 6PM at Profile High School went well. 15 people at first meeting; 13 at second meeting. Information positively received. Sugar Hill, Franconia, Bethlehem offered a joint presentation.

Bethlehem now has a link on our website which posts the with the Community Power PowerPoint and the emerging aggregation plan.

To Do: Perhaps run another Letter to the Editor explaining Community Power to the public. Mary Lou to ask Mark to submit letter before the March 12 election.

**Community Power warrant article**
To see if the Town will vote to adopt the Bethlehem Community Power plan, to authorize the Select Board to implement the plan, and to take all action in furtherance thereof, pursuant to RSA 53-E. The Bethlehem Community Power plan is an opt-out program that offers more flexible electricity procurement. The plan will initially provide lower electricity rates for residents, or it will not launch.  Initial participation in the plan can be declined, after which enrollment becomes voluntary. The Board of Selectmen recommends this Article 5-0). Estimated tax impact 0.0

Motion to accept by Chuck, seconded by Dan; unanimously accepted.

**Solarize Main Street ---** Report from Gabe Chelius: Solarize Main Street saw its first REAP application submitted from Super Secret Ice Cream. If awarded funds construction would begin in Spring 2024. We are currently working to gather financial information on the next set of businesses, find a contractor through Ted to do roof assessments on the lonesome woods building and the condo on the west side of main street. Now that we have one application down and CENH now has access to contractors to help provide more assistance on REAP applications, Chuck, Bruce and I are feeling more confident to do more than one business for the next REAP deadline on March 30th. Additionally I had a few conversations with PMR and it seems like they want to use their own contractors for their ground mount array. I haven't heard from them in a while but I am under the assumption that they will be pursuing their project outside of the solarize main street initiative.

**Street Lights** – someone asked why we are still paying for street lights. We cannot net meter street lights as that bill is a unique bill, Eversource charges us a flat fee for each light. We must still pay that bill monthly until the end of the year when we get reimbursed for our excess solar generation which will go to payback some of the street light costs.

**Village district progress** posts in ground just waiting for solar panels. Should be finished by spring. Array is 100 kW.

In December, 2023 Bethlehem Village District was named as the most energy efficient wastewater treatment facility in the state! And that's before the solar installation. Credit goes to BEC and Melissa Elander of Clean Energy NH for encouraging the Village District Commission to participate in energy audits and to Josh Welch a real pro in charge of engineering and maintenance at the facility. Coming in 2024 the installation of a solar array.

**Solarize Main Street –** Chuck reported this project is moving forward with several businesses. Project Coordinator, Gabe Chellis, sent in this update.

**Solar Energy Property Tax Exemption warrant article** – *Solar Energy Systems up to 100kW AC will be exempt from property valuation assessments.*

Motion to accept by Chuck, seconded by Dan; unanimously accepted.

To Do: Mary Lou will talk to Bruce about the warrant article and ask for Selectboard support. She will then submit warrant article.

**EV Chargers:** Bruce to update us at the next meeting

**Solarize North Country** – Lots of tours and meetings planned for the future with perspective solar consumers. 80 people signed-up for estimates. Hope to get 140 signed-up for estimates. We hope to get 25-30 installations solar in 2024.

**Other** –

* To Do: BEC write-up for Bethlehem annual report – Mary Lou will draft report, David will edit and hare with group for edits

**Next meeting**: **Tuesday, February 6 at 6PM** at Bethlehem Library. Dan will run meeting.

**Adjourn –** 6:54 pm