**Minutes of Bethlehem Energy Commission**

**January 7, 2025**

Present:  Dan Crosby, Mary Lou Krambeer, Chuck Phillips, David Van Houten, Josh Lieberman, Scott Caisse

Excused: Bruce Caplain (Select Board Liaison)

Also attending:  Marni Hoyle, Jim Fitzpatrick

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

**AGENDA**

-December minutes moved by Chuck Phillips and second by Dan. Approved.

-**Village District Waste Water solar project** turned on by Eversource as of October 29. Final installation walk-through in December (by David Van Houten with Ted and Jack of Barrington Solar. Jack installed a wifi setting to monitor the output.)

-**Village District Water Treatment plant audit** was completed in December (cost to Town $0 through an NH DES grant). Both buildings, the filter building and the UV building, were reviewed. If we follow all the recommendations we will save 31% or $13,157 a year. Primary recommendations -- bring down water temperature setting from 55-45, install heat pumps (payback estimated at 10 years), and install solar array (payback estimated at 14.2 years). Propane usage is currently at about $20,000 a year. DES has offered to help us with any future grant applications. DES Energy Evaluation (audit) available at the Village District Office.

To Do: Dan and David will go to Village District – talk water settings and heat pump installation as first steps. David with talk to auditing firm, Process Energy Services, about geothermal opportunities. Next step: create an RFP if Village District wants to pursue the purchase and installation of heat pumps.

-**Main Street Solar Initiative**: winter here. Not much happening at the moment.

-**Rambling Woods solar project**: Dan and Melissa will go to a Rambling Woods board meeting to further discuss the project.

-BEC report for the 2024 annual Town Report.

To Do: David and Dan adding some numbers to the report

Mary Lou will circulate draft report with BEC members.

-BEC meeting guest on Feb. 4:Dan and Bruce invited Bob Francis, Bethlehem Building Inspector to talk BEC at at our next meeting about his work and what he may be seeing around energy efficiency and renewable energy projects as he works with contractors.

-Battery project: Eversource has approved underwriting 50% of the cost of battery storage for municipal building up to $200,000 (this number originally was set at $10,000).  Participants will also be able to apply for an additional 30% tax credit from the federal government.  To Do: Mary Lou will ask Melissa Elander of Clean Energy NH for a follow-up

-**Community Power Coalition of NH (CPNNH)** new 6-month rate, starting February 1, set at 8.9 cents per kWh. Eversource rate is 10.4 cents per kWh.

***Please see CPCNH annual report to the Town of Bethlehem*** on page 3***.*** Between March – Sept 30 residents of Bethlehem saved $14,000 by changing to this 3rd party supplier!

To Do: Mary Lou will ask local REC vendors to consider selling to Community Power Coalition of NH.

- To Do: Dan will request the Selectboard appoint Marni Hoyle as a Commissioner to the Board of Selectman

- To Do: MLK connect with CPNNH about 2024 Bethlehem Annual Report (if possible retrieve CPCNH savings to Bethlehem residents Dec. 2024).

Marni reported that chargers have to be within 1.5 miles of Interstate, so Village of Bethlehem is not eligible. CFI funding initiative coming in early 2025 to some New England states.

-**OTHER:** Bethlehem Budget meeting on Jan 13. Deliberative Session Feb 3 6pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15.

BEC Meetings in 2025 (first Tuesday of the month):

Feb 4 Lieberman will run the meeting.

March 4, April 1 (really!), May 6, June 3, July 1, Aug 5, Sept 2, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2



Community Power Coalition of NH

2024 Annual Report to Bethlehem

In March 2024, Bethlehem Community Power was adopted by Town Meeting vote.

Our non-profit Community Power program launched service in June 2024 and has been saving Bethlehem electric customers money while also offering expanded energy choices.

To date, Bethlehem Community Power has provided 2,000 megawatt-hours of electricity, and resulted in **$14,000 of savings for electric customers in Bethlehem (as of September 30th, 2024)**.

This program provides electricity to approximately 1,435 electric accounts in our Town. Of these accounts, 13 have chosen products with higher levels of renewable energy.

Bethlehem is part of the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH), a statewide non-profit power agency serving over 50 Community Power programs statewide (as of October 2024). The Coalition has created $20,000,000 in savings for customers in Community Power programs statewide. This local control model empowers us to collaborate regionally and statewide to develop beneficial local energy programs and projects.

There are approximately 56 residents and businesses in Bethlehem who generate their own renewable electricity and utilize net metering. While problems with utility regulations are currently preventing these customers from choosing to supply power to Bethlehem Community Power, the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire is working to resolve those issues to enable more local power options.

Mary Lou Krambeer and Dan Crosby are the Member Representative and Alternate from Bethlehem to CPCNH. CPCNH is governed by its municipal members who elect its Board of Directors.

Residents and businesses can visit https://CommunityPowerNH.gov/bethlehem to learn more, see our rates, opt into or out of Bethlehem Community Power, and choose a cleaner energy option.