

## Meeting Notes Energy Committee January 2, 2020

Present: Jim VanNetta, Alex Strysky, Judy Wagner, Annie Chappell, Susan O'Connor

Guests: Alyssa LaRose and Alison Gage from FRCOG

The Meeting was called to order at 6:02. People did introductions and shared highlights from the past year.

Review, revisions as suggested and approval of October 15 and November 19, 2019 meeting minutes

### Analysis of MEI data and Green Communities priorities by Alyssa LaRose, FRCOG.

- First page is an overview of data by MMBTUs.
- With weather normalized, we have an increase of 8% in energy use in Town Buildings or 5% decrease weather normalized.
- Street lights have gone down by 53% as well as water and sewer 28%.
- She didn't include PVRSD because our portion is 50%. We requested she add that to our summary.
- NES decreased by 43%
- Fire department increased 133% but that is because added ladder truck garage, which was separate previously.
- Highway department has increased by 70%
- Did a more detailed analysis of Town Hall as it decreased by 15% from 2011. It spiked in 2018. 710 MMBTUS in wood pellets. Decreased oil by 95%, 33% propane. It increased electric by 50% (which includes electricity usage). With solar we have to figure out over course of the year and we have to add in any electricity that was generated.
- What jumps out about high users in terms of Green Communities grant?
  - Highway Department: outdoor cord wood boiler has meant an increase in MmbTUs, and air quality may be a problem. Could look at building envelope, but they have big doors. Might want to do an audit to see if there is a better option. Earthlight has done an audit, but with a focus on electricity. Ask them to look at heating system. Maybe Ben could take a look at Highway Department.
  - Fire Department is also high use and has gone up 220 MMBTU's and 70%. If we close a building within 5 years, we would have to pay back any repairs, so it might be better not to do work there.
  - EMS has gone up but they are serving other towns.
  - Heath had audits done and suggested radiant floor heating for highway garage.
  - Transfer station is also increased, low use, so we won't focus on it.
  - Vehicles: see what Mark Rabinsky, Green Communities regional coordinator, can share with us. Maybe do some education with those who drive vehicles and find



out what they might be interested in. Ashfield got a hybrid vehicle and see what they think about it so far. The police replace 1 vehicle a year. EMS went up but that happened because it regionalized and they are doing a lot of trips for Bernardston and perhaps other towns.

- Still want to focus on NES. Sunderland has put solar at elementary school.
- Charging stations. Alyssa feels it would be very helpful as there aren't many in Franklin County. Alison has info on charging stations. Eversource has Make Ready program and they would pay for the infrastructure. Alyssa will check who to contact, probably not Kim. Montague has gone through MA EVIP (electric vehicle incentive program). Green Communities has covered \$7,500 (once you have applied for other incentives). Carol Collins is sustainability manager for Greenfield and would know about charging stations in garage. Montague is doing this. Alex asked about MA Evolve. Volkswagen funds went into EVIP. Alex says we could see if any businesses want to apply. Ask business association. There are ongoing costs as Montague is finding out. Alyssa will find out and send that to us.
- Alyssa will send PVRs information with updated summary.
- Alex mentioned that the MVP program (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program) would have some overlap with what we are doing. Montague got a META grant for a study for a microgrid.
- Susan suggested a conference about promising Municipal Vulnerability Plan and Green Communities strategies.
- We should select projects based on positive relationships, where large #'s children and staff are, not just on highest user.

#### Next steps

- Reach out for audits for the work at NES with air source heat pumps, heat recovery ventilators, and thermostatic valves to replace pneumatic.
- See if Ben Weil from Clean Energy Extension might be available to check out the highway department, as well as the control systems and heat ventilators at NES prior to audits (see Ben's email from November 22).
- Meet with Andrea Llamas about charging stations and check in with her about reviewing MEI data with various departments that have shown an increase in energy use (Highway Department, Police department on vehicles, and EMS (increase may be due to regionalization and increased use). Susan and Judy will craft information and questions to ask these departments and we will go out in teams.

Preparing for Green Communities Grant application (e.g. audits needed to get cost estimates, Eversource incentives, payback period) on possible projects



- Northfield Elementary School
  - heat recovery ventilators
  - Air Source Heat Pumps
  - Thermostatic valves (replace pneumatic)
  - Winserts
- Other possibilities
  - Vehicles: Data collection effort or Educational effort
  - Community outreach

## Updates

- November 21 walk-through with Judith O'Brien, the electrical project consultant for NES: I shared about the Energy Committee work and that the data showed an 18% decrease in energy use from last year. We talked about the plan to apply for Green Communities again to do Air Source Heat Pumps, heat recovery ventilators and thermostatic valves. Judith feels there is enough electricity capacity to handle the increased load.
- Earthlight's contract and electrical work ahead. Marc Riel, Sr. indicated that the work at PVRS is 50% complete and will be done January 10. Then they will work at NES during second shift, and when that is completed they will tackle the smaller projects at Dickinson Library and Town Hall. He encourages the Committee to visit the high school as the new lighting has a clearer, warm tone as opposed to the old lighting that was yellow and cast shadows.
- Additional items since agenda submitted.
  - Susan explained that our aggregation application is still at the DPU and has been there for over a year. Northfield Town Meeting approved aggregation May 5, 2018. Colonial Power Group has talked to the legal staff at DPU who didn't know what the holdup is. No applications have been released since Worcester's in September. Other Energy Committees suggest calling our Senator and Representative to explore the delay. Alex Strycky made a motion for Susan to call Rep. Mark and Senator Jo Comerford to express our concern about the delay within DPU on aggregation. Annie seconded the motion. The vote to make the calls was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 8: 46 p.m. The next meeting will be Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.