

Northfield Energy Committee

Meeting Notes for Tuesday, August 31, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Attendance of Energy Committee: Susan O'Connor, Andrew Vernon, Scott McCusick, Judy Wagner, Alex Strysky. Guests: Julia Blyth, Bee Jacque.

Agenda

Meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Review and approve minutes from August 10

Andrew Vernon made motion, Jim Vannatta seconded, and unanimous vote.

Green Communities grant

- NES re-bid result. At this point, we have \$275,000 to spend on NES (\$140,000 Green Communities and \$135,000 in CARES). We held another bid conference on received 2 bids. The two reference checks were very positive on the company with the lower bid. We have contracted with Royal Steam Heater, Co. from Gardner, MA. We had to deduct 3 of the 455 HRV units @ \$16,000 each to get under the amount available which equals \$267,000. To complete all the work outlined, we would need to add back in those 3 HRV units, and all the add alternate work at \$235,700 for a total of \$283,700. Andrea Llamas asked how much to complete the work as she may have more funds available.
- Next steps on scheduling the work: Royal Steam is completing their CORI checks. Megan Desmarais will meet with us once school starts and settles down. She has been particularly busy and school opening has been complicated by the turnover of Superintendent, Finance Director, as well as resignation of Kevin Seaman, Facilities Director.
- Questions? Alex Strysky asked about any changes we could make now that there will be a new facilities manager.
- MEI data and annual report. Andrew will take the lead on this report

Preliminary Discussion on Energy Committee Focus for 2022-2024

- Andrew is interested in going all electric with ASHP and solar. He is also interested in idling and more information about police cruiser and publicize that.
- Julia Blyth said Open Space Committee wants to work with us and hire a consultant on a zoning proposal on Solar. We want solar development yet concerns about forest cutting. We need to be in the conversation with Public Safety complex and it should be net zero or at least stretch code items. Interest in a town tree planting program.
- Bee Jacque talked about the solar farm. I know very little about Planning Board process on this and expect this will come up again. Having more of a tree and pollinator climate along Main Street is good for aesthetics and business-wise. I am happy to help more cross-committee work.
- Susan said we need to be aware of how to access ARPA funds, as well as Infrastructure bill that has funds for schools and for school buses. Judy reminds us that we need to be getting projects "shovel ready", knowing that the META grants aren't big enough to do a good study. The next Green Communities grant is in March, but won't cover solar. There might be an appetite in town to spend money to be ready for using this money. Take time to total the \$\$ we have brought the town and the amount we save the town in energy savings.
- Bee asked what other Franklin county Towns are doing, and Susan will ask Bob Dean to reconvene the Energy Committee chairperson group. For example, the FRCOG included state representative on mosquito issue.
- Susan is also interested in a project to support individual households access MassSave.

- Alex suggested a resiliency committee as a way to do cross-committee work, including the big issue with water services that we have. Susan feels that if a combined group has a master plan, we could get ourselves ready to access the stimulus dollars to do some good work, with less bureaucracy than with the Green Communities Group. Combine the Planning Board, Open Space Committee, Energy Committee and at large members. Andrea Llamas has set us up so we can go after some grants for water system.
- Julia likes the idea of working with a company to work with individual households and MassSave.
- Next steps
 - Susan will ask Bob Dean about holding a meeting at FRCOG with Energy Committee Chairs to chair ideas
 - Judy will talk to Andrea Llamas about a Resiliency Committee and about accessing stimulus funds
 - Jim will explore Air Source Heat Pumps with Eversource and Susan will ask Mark Rabinsky about connecting us.
 - Jim will check with the Highway Department about what energy system

Additional items for discussion

- Additional committee members: The Open Space and Stewardship Committee have not been able to find people. Susan will ask Scott if he knows anyone, and Andrew will ask Seth Hansell.
- Other items
 - Julia: Susan will be awarded the Citizenship Stewardship award Tuesday, September 7 at 6 p.m.
 - Annual Report on MEI data is due November 1. Susan will email Alyssa LaRose and Allison Gage at FRCOG about getting started with this report.
 - META grant is due September 24. Should we apply? Jim will find out what they put in this last winter. It is probably too short a time period to get a quote before the due date.

Next meeting: Tuesday, September 28, 6 p.m.