

Northfield Energy Committee Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2023. 6:00pm
Town Hall

Present: Judy Wagner, Co-chair
Jim VanNatta, Co-chair
Andrew Vernon
Spirit Joseph
Seth Hansell, Secretary

1. Minutes from March 2023 Meeting reviewed, amended and approved unanimously.
2. Quick Updates:
 - 2.1. Update on info from Eversource assessments
 - 2.1.1. They have written for more information on the HRVs that were installed, we passed along the information we have, which is the amount that was deducted, but not the actual price of the unit.
 - 2.1.2. We don't know when a final report will be completed and eventually sent to Eversource for the final look.
 - 2.1.3. The actual price which we paid was significantly higher than the original quote, partly due to supply chain issues.
 - 2.2. Progress on implementing plans with FRCOG and Green Communities
 - 2.2.1. Spreadsheets can be uploaded and we don't need to re-enter everything by hand. Erin's existing spreadsheet has all the data and some columns just need to be shifted. This eliminates possible error as well as saves tremendous amounts of time
 - 2.2.2. The process can start earlier than we realized, possibly as early as mid August, as long as the report isn't finalized until everything is ready in October
 - 2.2.3. We should be using retired vehicle data once the vehicles are no longer being used.
 - 2.2.4. A problem with the fact that department use for vehicles is combined and needs to be separated remains.
 - 2.2.5. All electricity, except street lights, is automatically loaded into the spreadsheet. This is an anomaly which we don't fully understand.
 - 2.2.6. Overall, things should be smoother and the whole process should be more efficient.

2.3. Aggregation bidding outcome

- 2.3.1. Between the test and the final bid, the rates went up.
- 2.3.2. Colonial Power still recommended that we take the bids, since the price can still fluctuate a lot, and will likely continue going up in the future.
- 2.3.3. The bid was accepted for the 15 towns that go through this process.
- 2.3.4. This time around, it will only be a two year cycle, rather than the current three year cycle that is ending.
- 2.3.5. The current cycle continues through December and we can wait to make a final decision on announcing the bid once we see where things are later in the year.
- 2.3.6. Talk to Colonial Power in the future about the process for new accounts to learn about the aggregation opportunity when they move to town.

2.4. April public meeting review

- 2.4.1. Claire Chang did a great job
- 2.4.2. There was a good discussion about Electric Cars and Home Solar as well as Induction Cooktops.
- 2.4.3. We would like to do more of these, particularly once it becomes more clear what the state will be providing in terms of incentives which are coming soon
- 2.4.4. Continuing to get the word out about what has been decided

3. Solar Planning Project update and next steps:

3.1. Update

3.1.1. Timeline revision

- 3.1.1.1. Closeout meeting will be fairly soon, before the UMass course officially ends.
- 3.1.1.2. Survey results summary will be available in the week of June 5th though we are not sure how that information will be relayed to us.
- 3.1.1.3. UMass meeting with us to address next steps during the week of June 26.
- 3.1.1.4. August or September, there should be a community forum which UMass staff will help with.

3.2. Committee actions

- 3.2.1. We are still reviewing what this assessment is and can do for us.
- 3.2.2. We are interested in seeing what they come up with in terms of recommendations, and not just a list of possible solar projects that exist.
- 3.2.3. We think that a lot of the recommendations will depend on the results of the survey.

3.3. Meet with other town committees

- 3.3.1. Can we formally get together with other Northfield Town Committees such as Open Space, Planning, etc, who might have a vested interest in knowing about what UMass is doing.
- 3.3.2. We can go a long way towards letting people know about what we think we will be getting, but we don't yet know what it will be that UMass will be recommending, and won't know for a month or so.
- 3.3.3. Updating the Select Board on all of this is equally important, depending on what comes out of this project.

4. Green Communities

4.1. Can we do a fall application?

- 4.1.1. Ben Weil is enthusiastic about meeting and discussing possible future steps.
- 4.1.2. Add mini-splits to rooms that are partly done (and possibly all rooms)
- 4.1.3. Finish the school project by adding HRVs to the rooms that we didn't get to in the previous cycle.
- 4.1.4. Last year was capped at around \$175,000, we've heard it will be increasing this year.
- 4.1.5. Proposals are due Oct 20th

4.2. Focus and tasks

- 4.2.1. Ask Gretchen Licata to provide a report on the impact/function of the HRV systems installed in the previous NES project.
- 4.2.2. There was a school district wide building assessment which was launched by the superintendent and was expected to take over a year. We don't know how this will impact the timing of anything we were thinking of applying for.

- 4.3. There are multiple possible funding grants we can apply for: competitive and a meta grant, but both will require the kind of engineering we have not yet had done.

5. Energy Planning for Northfield
 - 5.1. How can we help Northfield prepare for the next five years?
 - 5.1.1. There is an energy reduction plan adopted by the town in 2011
 - 5.1.2. There is an update in 2017
 - 5.1.3. We would like to go through these documents in our next meeting and spend some time seeing what has been done, what hasn't been done, and what has changed over the years with an eye towards updating it for release.
 - 5.1.4. We will likely want to add planning for electrification and also renewable energy generation to energy reduction planning.
6. Topics not anticipated at the time of posting
 - 6.1. The library staff has been in touch with us about the community meeting space in the basement.
 - 6.1.1. They would like to see if we can help them get a mini-split for that room.
 - 6.1.2. This would require doing some work on a visible part of the building, but we think it might be possible without going through much of the historic brick-work.
 - 6.1.3. Ben Weil had some ideas, which we didn't follow up on, back when we were looking at the NES project, and we might be able to go back to him and see what current thoughts he would have.
7. Adjourn
 - 7.1. Next meeting set for June 13th