

APPROVED

Gilmanton Energy Committee Meeting

Tuesday, June 23, 2020

Remote Meeting via Teleconference

Gilmanton, NH

5 p.m.

Present: Dick de Seve, Sue Hale-de Seve, Cyndi Paulin, Aimee Ruiter, Vincenzo Sisti, Sarah Thorne, Nate Abbott excused absence.

Chair Sarah Thorne called the meeting to order at shortly after 5 p.m.

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Review and approval of April minutes. Cyndi Paulin moved, Sue Hale-de Seve seconded approval. Adopted.

Sarah Thorne has spoken to Joe Irving, who is working on the energy systems and other maintenance of the Gilmanton School. He has worked at the school since 2017, and is very excited about the potential for solar energy use at the School. Sarah suggested that one of our members might interview him and then upload the interview to our website, when it is available. Joe is presently working on the energy control and monitoring systems at the School. He has been able to improve the School's boiler efficiency. Most of the lighting in the school has been, or will be converted to LEDs. Joe is hoping to obtain a NH Saves grant to help further improve the School's energy efficiency. Presently, the School is saving energy due to the closing of the School due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Joe stated that a new air circulation system will be installed soon. He is interested in looking into a rooftop solar array, and water system improvements. He is a licensed electrician. We hope to work with him to work with the School Board to implement the above-mentioned improvements.

Sarah is looking for various committee members to lead on various projects that may arise with the School.

Energy Audits: Cyndi noted that there has been a very encouraging start with energy monitoring to get baseline data for town buildings

Vincenzo led a discussion on the energy use research he has been working on. He has received accurate propane usage numbers, but no numbers for exact oil and gas usage as yet. The data shows the Town has used about \$300,000 worth of energy over the past 3 years, which he stated is actually fairly low for a town. He noted heavy use of gas, diesel and propane, with propane use doubling every year. We all need to work with Vincenzo to develop questions for the Town, based on the information he has gathered to date.

Sarah has had contact with Chelsea at the NH Electric Cooperative, who has agreed to work with us to collect more data. We discussed developing a spread sheet to track energy usage changes in the Town buildings over time.

We also discussed how to share this information with the Town, what future steps we could take to do that. Vincenzo believes we need a third party audit to really identify the Town's energy usage. Sarah noted that the Academy Building had been audited for energy use in the past. Also, the Town of Gorham completed an energy audit last year for all its Town buildings. We would need to obtain estimates/bids from several companies for such a complete audit in Gilmanton. Sarah noted a couple of entities that do these audits.

Sarah asked if, after a bit more work on this issue, we could/should present our findings to the Board of Selectmen. Cyndi and Aimee will work with Vincenzo to further update his work.

Further reactions to the Solarize program – the Town is working on some issues with this. Sarah submitted a series of questions to Patrick Bore, the town administrator, relative to this program. Sarah noted that property tax assessments should reflect the value of a residential solar array, but those arrays should not be taxed. Vincenzo believes that the Town needs a new, clear definition for the distinction between residential and commercial solar systems. The Town of Sanbornton, for example, has a present limit for residential systems of 10kw, and we all agreed that is much too small. Dick will review the Clean Energy website for a template. We also need to discuss this issue with the Planning Board.

We had hoped to get started this year on a Solarize project to take advantage of the Federal tax exemption, which is due to reduce to 22% in 2021, and then expire in 2022. Vincenzo suggested that we focus on residential systems, as the exemption for commercial systems will continue into 2021. We will have to delay some action with the School, due to significant changes in the administrative staff. Cyndi will work with Joe Irving as he continues to develop energy efficiency plans. Sarah suggested focusing on residential and some town solar systems, while still working with Joe Irving on the School.

Conflict of Interest policy - we had a problem with a reference to a section of the RSA's in the draft policy, so we will work to correct that and take the matter up at our next meeting.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, July 21, 5:00 p.m. Location will likely again be via remote teleconferencing.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick de Seve, secretary.