

DRAFT

Gilmanton Energy Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Remote Meeting via Teleconference

Gilmanton, NH

7 p.m.

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

Chair Sarah Thorne called the meeting to order at shortly after 7:00 p.m. Members shared various “good news” items.

Review and approval of November minutes. Nate motioned approval, Aimee seconded approval as slightly amended. Approved.

Sarah: Town report due on Dec. 21. Sarah asked for any suggestions to add to her draft. Sarah asked about publishing the Gilmanton Baseline Energy Report (2017-2019) on the GEC website. Nate will upload the report to the website.

Municipal Energy Audit – Sarah had several meetings with the Selectmen, who sent the proposed warrant article on to the budget committee. Sarah spoke with Ann Kirby, who agreed to make our discussion in the absence of a ZOOM meeting option. The committee did not discuss any of the proposed warrant articles at that meeting. The budget committee will meet again on town business on December 30. Sarah found an old energy audit that targeted the old Town Hall and the old fire station as most needing energy improvement.

Nate – update on meeting with Fire Chief Hempel about the Iron Works fire station energy situation. There was an old audit by the Jordan Institute discussed. The chief seems supportive of these energy efforts. While the Town does not own the fire station, there is no problem with the Town spending money on it, as there is no other purpose to which those funds can go. The Town leases the building for a nominal fee. Any savings from those funds go back to the Town. The fire station is considering investing in a new system for removing emissions from diesel engine start up from inside the station. The station rapidly loses energy upon opening the large doors. The station will get a new roof this year. No new insulation provided for in the signed contract for the roof. Any energy improvements will be added on, if approved. They can save some funds by replacing most of the lighting with LED lighting. LED is increasingly less expensive. The chief supported an audit, and a blower door test. All of this can be done in 2021. This will need to be folded into the 2022 budget, especially given some losses due to reduced income. Sarah believes that NHSaves program may be able to help with these costs.

School Audit – Joe Irving (school facilities manager) called Sarah about moving ahead with another energy audit for the school. The last one was done by the EEI firm. There may be a discussion about the audit at the next school board meeting on January 12. Joe Irving has a solid background in energy

issues, so can be the lead on the audit at the school. This audit would be free, so would not require a warrant article. Since the school can save a great deal of money through use of LED lighting, and can use those funds for other energy needs. The school will be getting a new roof next year, and Joe would like to see solar panels included with the roof.

Sarah: our appointments began last December, for one year. We need to ask for re-appointment. We will apply for staggered terms. We can email the form to Heather Carpenter, the acting town administrator.

Nate – attended a conference on Municipal Land Use Regulation. Municipal policy and votes of town meetings across NH are the responsibility of the Department of Strategic Initiatives. They developed a very thorough system to include information on energy regulation, town ordinances, and what is and is not allowed for energy systems, among many other items of information.

Vincenzo reported that the Planning Board approved roof mounted solar systems be available by right, but ground mounted systems will need a special use permit. Most of the rationale dealt with aesthetics.

Solarize Campaign: (Vincenzo recused himself from this discussion). Aimee discussed proposed RFP (request for proposal). The model came from the Vital Communities group. We discussed some names for the campaign. Need people for Community Publicity and Landowner Outreach groups. Sarah spent a good deal of time talking to several solar installers about our proposed program. Discussion about tiered pricing system. If we got 10 people, the price would be one thing. If we got 10+ people, the price would reduce further, etc. The one issue with that system is that it can extend the time for the program to get up and running, based on how quickly we could get people to sign up. Installers said that the increased number of sign ups doesn't really lower their costs all that much. We need to do some more research on that. Aimee stated that folks in Canterbury liked the idea of tiered pricing as they could see that they saved money with more folks involved. We have to be a bit careful not to get in a situation where we are seen as more than simply a broker for the program, not involved with the actual installations in any way in case problems arise. We have to be clear about that distinction in all our materials and outreach.

Sarah was working on the overall timeline for actions. Dick moved that we support some level of ground mounted solar by right. Nate seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. We decided to keep reference to tiered pricing in our campaign document.

Our goal for initial numbers of participants will be 15 participants to start.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37. Next meeting will be January 26, 4th Tuesday of January.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick de Seve, secretary.