

Approved

## **Gilmanton Energy Committee Meeting**

Wednesday March 16, 2022

Academy Building

Gilmanton, NH

6:30 p.m.

Present: Sue Hale-de Seve, Aimee Ruiter (via ZOOM), Dick de Seve, Cyndi Paulin, Nate Abbott, Sarah Thorne, Elise Smith, Vincenzo Sisti.

Nate opened the meeting at 6:35.

We reviewed the minutes of February 16, 2022. Sarah moved approval as amended by Cyndi, Elise seconded approval. Approved.

Election Review – Nate stated that overall the results were very good for GEC. The town voted for our energy upgrade article. Mark Warren was reelected as selectman. Nate reviewed the special meeting regarding making up the operating budget shortfall due to the failure of the proposed town budget. Vincenzo stated that, while our article passed, the vote showed the Town is more likely to review future budgets more carefully, so we should be careful to assure that any future requests from GEC are closely tailored to the demonstrated need for the expenditure. Sarah congratulated the Committee on its work to build support for our efforts. Nate said that citizens are balancing their home expenditures versus their taxes. Cyndi asked if some part of the reason for the vote on the budget was a reaction to the Selectmen moving funds between budgets? Further discussion on various reasons for the results.

HB 549 – Nate. NHSaves re-funded. The legislature overrode the PUC's elimination of funding for this program. This bill preserved the program, but didn't necessarily show any progress for funding for energy conservation and efficiency. Sarah believes this bill was a stopgap, and it is likely a new bill will be introduced to further develop these programs. Nate suggested inviting Sam Evans Brown, from Clean Energy NH to a future meeting to further discuss.

Plan for this next year. Unfortunately, Sarah is leaving us before the next meeting. Sarah would still like to work with the committee for the implementation of the warrant article. Elise informed us that we will all need to retake the oath of office again, due to some administrative issues. Dick moved Nate as chair, seconded by Elise. Nate pointed out that we need some new goals, including following through on the warrant article. The committee unanimously elected Nate. Nate nominated Dick for clerk, seconded by Vincenzo. Unanimously approved.

Sarah – implementation of the warrant article. Sarah contacted RBG, Chase Penoyer, about the warrant article approval. She discussed the shortened list of projects, given the reduced approved amount in the article. RBG suggested to do the air sealing and the insulation of the Public Safety building at the same time. Other items: lighting in various buildings, \$18,000. Sarah talked to Joe Lejewski at NHEC about these issues. Joe said find vendors, bring NHEC a proposal. Joe would then let us know if the energy savings are sufficient relative to the investment so that NHEC would fund one half the total

cost. of those projects. Cyndi asked if those buildings might need updated wiring to accommodate this new lighting. Sarah, or someone on the committee, will check on that. Need to find some good electricians who know what work would need to be done and are willing to bid on the projects. NHEC could set things up so they would pay their half of the cost directly to the contractor. Vincenzo asked if that would be legal, and Nate suggested talking to Joe and Chase as an RFP such as this does need to be overseen by the Selectmen. We should check with the Selectmen to determine how best to move forward in the appropriate manner. Vincenzo suggested having a draft RFP developed before we meet with Selectmen. The original warrant article contained additional funds to have RBG manage a large part of this project, but a good amount of that fund was reduced prior to the adoption of the final proposed warrant article. RBG is willing to do some of the work on this project with us. Cyndi will check with a contractor her business worked with when they updated the electrical work in their building. Nate developed a note to Heather Carpenter, outlining the issues we'd like to discuss with the Selectmen. Vincenzo noted that we need to do this quickly, as the electrical industry is facing supply chain issues similar to other industries. The Town needs to have a contract in place, and the purchase order cut, prior to the end of the year.

Sarah: Joe Lejewski of NHEC said there may be rebate funds available for some of the weatherization work if it meets their investment return criteria. This is a fairly quick process.

Next meeting is April 20, 2022 at 6:30. Nate says our committee size is 9 members. We lost Graham Wilson, and now Sarah Thorne, so we need to check with friends, neighbors for interest in committee membership. We also need to try to ease off the political opposition.

Vincenzo – large push in planning boards across the country to include energy efficiency requirements in new buildings. Vincenzo will propose to our Planning Board. We need to further research this. At least one town in NH has tried this, there was some resistance, but need to check into this. Sam Evans Brown Clean Energy NH may have some good information on that issue.

Dick moved, Elise seconded adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick de Seve, secretary

Nate summarized the discussions and decisions made during the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00. Next meeting will be Monday, Feb. 21 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick de Seve, secretary.