

Approved

Gilmanton Energy Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 15, 2020

Remote Meeting via Teleconference

Gilmanton, NH

7 p.m.

Present: Sarah Thorne, Sue Hale-de Seve, Aimee Ruitter, Vincenzo Sisti, Dick de Seve.
Nate Abbott had an excused absence due to conflict. Cyndi Ruitter absent.

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

Review and approval of September minutes. Aimee asked for a couple of small changes. Vincenzo Sisti moved approval as amended, Aimee seconded. Approved.

Vincenzo: update on presentation to Selectmen. They were somewhat concerned about having a company do both the audit and the implementation, so we might want to stay away from that. Discussed doing one building as opposed to an overall audit, but the Selectmen seemed positive about the program. We should get a better idea of their reaction when we return to them with bids on the audit. Sarah noted they approved all the work, and we should be able to save the Town money with a good bid. The selectmen hoped to receive 3 bids, but would be comfortable with 2. Sarah has received a third bid, so we will discuss tonight. The selectmen hope to receive all the information prior to the next budgetary season. Patrick Bore, town administrator, did not believe we would need to have competitive bidding for the process. There was discussion of an earlier warrant article about tracking energy usage, but it apparently failed. Sarah will discuss this with Patrick next week. Difficult to understand why we are not monitoring the town’s fuel usage at pumps. We learned that Patrick Bore will be leaving his position at the end of the month. We will be exploring having two warrant articles, one for funding the energy audit, the other for funding a metering device for town vehicle fuel usage at the town highway department pump.

Sarah: discussing the audit proposals submitted. RBG submitted a proposal. This was an amended proposal from an earlier one, with several buildings eliminated from the second proposal. Level II audit that provides a reasonable amount of detail. Discussed contents of the proposal, compare our building usage with other similar buildings in other towns, do energy use analysis, then propose estimated cost per building. Nate liked the proposal, provided a payback over 10 years. He thought we might want to spend this money in years when the economy is improved. Joe Lejewski of the NH Cooperative also liked that proposal, said the company does good work. RBG based in Concord, works exclusively in NH.

Next, the EEI proposal. Work in several states, have done work in NH, including Newmarket. Audit is free, Level I audit is a “walk through”. They believe they can gather enough information from that to then put together a more complete proposal. They do financing, although Nate is a bit cautious about

using a company's financing. Looked at the Newmarket proposal for comparison. Not as much detail as RBG, learn what they think needs to be addressed. Suggestions for retrofits for each building included. No explanation of potential return on investments, or total costs. Aimee asked for clarification on level of information provided. Sarah explained the difference, including that RBG doesn't provide financing.

Next, the GDS. They are based in Georgia, office in Portsmouth. M. Siska heads the NH office. Good response to our request. Strength in energy procurement, asked where Gilmanton gets its power, asked if we would be open to obtaining power from a less expensive provider. Not the least expensive firm, but have a long track record. No examples of their reports, will provide in a week or so. Vincenzo questioned the numbers provided by GDS for our power. Sarah will review that with M. Siska. Scoping phase, "shallow review" of our energy use. Comparison of use with other towns' energy usage. Could do a renewable energy conversion estimate, as well. Meet with town representatives, site survey, higher than EEI audit estimate, less than RBG estimate. Vincenzo believes that GDS might match the EEI estimate. Sarah not sure how the selectmen want this information, all of it, or a recommendation from us. We discussed what should be submitted, possibly give them all of it, but summary of each report and our recommendation might be best. Sue suggested getting references from clients of these companies. Vincenzo discussed which of these companies are partnered with various energy companies, that might affect recommendations. Sarah said we could give recommendations now, or look over the proposals a bit further and then give her our further ideas. Aimee asked if we are asking for a warrant article for an energy audit at a suggested price (\$15,000 or so), and then we could make a recommendation once that is adopted? Sarah wants to determine how satisfied these firms customers have been with these companies' work. Vincenzo raised some potential issues with how a firm might recover costs avoided in the initial pricing by suggesting possibly somewhat more expensive items in the implementation phase. RBG and GDS prices are comparable, but it appears that RBG might offer more for the price.

Solarize program: Sarah and Aimee had worked up a Solarize Campaign Checklist for various tasks when various parts of the program begin, and who would be leaders for various aspects of the program. We also discussed timing for implementation and review of the program segments.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, November 24, 7:00 p.m. Location will again be via remote teleconferencing. Dick moved, Sue seconded adjournment. Approved at 8:28.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick de Seve, secretary.