Energy Committee Minutes

3/29/17

Present: Buddy Behrendt, Bill Dunkel, Michael Simonds, Kord Scott

Meeting opened at 3:07 in the Town Office

Bill reported that the majority of the Select Board prefers that we not submit an application for WCREP funds for a feasibility study for a new town garage. The Board feels that the committee which is being created to study this issue needs time to get its bearings. In addition, the town has not budgeted any money to match the grant, should the town receive it.

The committee discussed Ralph Meima’s responses to the questions we had submitted about the Green Lantern community solar proposal. For the most part, the members were satisfied with his answers.

Buddy raised a concern that the town may not be ready for another debate about the citing of a renewable energy project.

Michael suggested that at an appropriate time we should talk to the town treasurer in Townshend about the PPA they signed with a solar company, which may not have been the best deal for their town.

We discussed the risk involved in signing a 20 -25 year PPA when we do not know the future of the elementary school and therefore how much power that facility may need five or ten years from now. Bill noted that Ralph Meima said that Green Lantern is helping the town of Springfield find additional off takers for a surplus of electricity being produced by their solar arrays. He indicated GLG does not abandon customers when they face a challenge like this.

The committee agreed to forward the Green Lantern proposal to the Select Board and recommend that they meet personally with Ralph Meima and seriously consider entering into an agreement with GLG to construct a community solar array.

The committee briefly discussed the possibility of having the town purchase electricity from the solar array that may be constructed at the site of the old talc mine on White Road. This could be a fall back option if the Select Board decides against a solar array adjacent to the cemetery.

In other business, Bill reported that he had received an estimate from Vermont Foam for adding cellulose insulation to the school’s attic. The committee asked Bill to find out why VT Foam only appears to suggest adding another 8 inches of cellulose, and why they did not recommend using open cell foam instead.

We also discussed why a significant amount of electricity use at the school occurs after hours. We speculated that a possible cause may be that pumps are coming on throughout the night, as well as all weekend, to heat the building because there is no effective way to regulate the temperature settings. The committee agreed that we would provide funds to have a professional evaluate the school’s heating system and make recommendations about how to improve efficiency. Kord volunteered to find someone who is qualified to do this.

The committee decided to defer setting the date of its next meeting until the Select Board decides whether it wants to meet with Ralph Meima.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Dunkel