

Windham Energy Committee Minutes  
July 18, 2024

Members Present: Vance Bell, Bill Dunkel, Michael Simonds

Members of the Public Present: Cathy Fales

The meeting opened at 4:38PM.

We began by discussing whether the town should apply to the VT Department of Public Service for an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. Individual towns may request up to \$50,000, and two or more towns may jointly apply for a maximum grant of \$100,000. Cathy Fales has researched this grant and talked with Margo Ghia at the WRC about it. Margo is currently on vacation until July 29th. The deadline to apply for the grant is August 9th. Cathy is willing to do the application and thinks that it is not too complicated to meet the deadline.

In particular we discussed whether to apply for funds for the following purposes:

1. To pay for architectural drawings that will be needed if the town decides to do energy savings improvements to the interior of the Meeting House.
2. To install one or more electric vehicle charging stations at a public location in town.
3. Purchase an electric vehicle for the town.
4. To hire an energy consultant who would gather data about energy usage in Windham and perhaps perform other duties for the Energy Committee.

Bill noted that only level 3 chargers would be practical in public places in town because level 1 and level 2 chargers take much too long to charge a battery. Multiple chargers would be needed in order to perhaps incentivize residents to switch to an EV. Level 3 chargers need Phase 3 power lines which would be expensive to install. Cathy wondered if GMP would be able to provide a price estimate within the next week or ten days on the cost of extending the Phase 3 lines in Timber Ridge to central Windham. Michael said that based upon his experience dealing with GMP, it is very unlikely they would act that quickly. Vance doubted that GMP would be willing to absorb any of that cost.

Cathy has asked Kord Scott about possibly getting some kind of electric truck for town use. She will follow up with him about that. Vance pointed out that an electric truck would need a charging station in, or near, the town garage.

Vance also was skeptical about the value of hiring a town energy consultant. Bill was, too, because we already have a fair amount of data about energy consumption in the town's enhanced energy plan, along with ambitious target goals. Bill felt the most practical use of money from this grant would be to pay for architectural drawings and similar professional services that would be required before physical improvements could be made to the Meeting House. Michael agreed. Cathy will try to find out if money from this grant may be used for such purposes.

Next, Vance moved to adopt the minutes from our last meeting on March 21. Michael seconded the motion. Unanimously adopted by a 3-0 vote.

Michael updated us on the progress that is being made on the construction of the community solar array on the land that he and Mac own on Old Cheney Road. A work crew has been busy drilling and filling the holes that will be used to anchor the panels. He is hopeful that within the next three or four weeks the array will be completed. He noted that the solar array in Wardsboro is finished, though not operating just yet.

Cathy then updated everyone of the status of grants pertaining to the Meeting House. The Paul Bruhn grant, along with \$40,000 of ARPA funds and money that the Friends of the Meeting House has on hand, should be sufficient to cover the cost of scraping and painting the building and also make other external improvements. We hope to receive the report from the MERP intensive energy audit within the next month. Then Cathy will be able to apply for MERP money for internal energy savings work, such as cold climate heat pumps, insulation and/or a more efficient hot water heater.

Finally, we discussed whether members of the EC would prefer to keep our community-build of Window Dressers storm window inserts from Oct. 31 -Nov.7 and move the location to the elementary school, if possible, or build the inserts at the Meeting House from Nov. 14-20. Bill has emailed the members of the School

Board to ask if we can use the school building because we cannot build inserts at the MH in early November due to a conflict with election day on November 5. Vance and Michael would prefer to use the school and stick to our original schedule, but they could be available if we have to move the community-build to the latter part of the month. Michael volunteered to call Dan Roth and ask if we can tour the school to assess whether it will accommodate our equipment and work stations. Bill mentioned that he will meet with Bruce Frauman, Jonathan Bigeow and Tove Stigum in early August to talk about preparations for the community-build. Bill will let members of the EC know about this meeting in case they want to attend.

Michael moved to adjourn the meeting; Vance seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:25PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Dunkel