

Rye Energy Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday September 1, 2020
3:00-4:30 PM, Virtual Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89097659319?pwd=RFdqSjVUYXFIUXdjcXdaNmRXWjJ5UT09>

Meeting ID: 890-9765-9319

Password: 006491

Call-in Number: 646-558-8656

Attestation read by Howard Kalet

Howard Kalet: Present and alone in room

Tom Pfau: Present and alone in room

Carl Nicolino: Present and alone in room

Lisa Sweet: Present and alone in room

Also joining meeting as guests:

Frank Melanson, Jen Tishe and Jay Rushforth

1) August Meeting Minutes:

The group approved the August meeting minutes:

Howard Kalet: Approved

Tom Pfau: Approved

Carl Nicolino: Approved

Lisa Sweet: Approved

Lisa Sweet agreed to take over as secretary for the Rye Energy Committee.

2) Solar Proposal Update

Tom and Howard have continued productive meetings with the finance sub-committee. There has been no progress since last REC Meeting as Revision has been asked to review proposal to reflect recent changes in Eversource pricing.

The original Revision PPA proposed placing solar panels at 5 Rye locations: Public Works Garage, Public Safety Building, Junior High School, Elementary School and the Grove Road Water District land. The School Board has approved the installation of panels on the 2 school buildings and is working with the REC and the finance sub-committee to move toward a warrant article in March. The Water District is not able to prioritize the installation of solar at this time. That leaves the Public Works Garage and the Public Safety building in the mix. There is hesitance to pursue the placement of solar panels on the Public Safety building as it is in the Historic District and would need the approval of the Select Board. Additionally, the original proposal for the Garage has been revised to a smaller system that would better match the electricity use of the garage.

As the price of panels and financing charges have continued to drop, it may make sense to revisit the original RFP and re-issue it for the garage building only. If a 15 kW system cost \leq \$2.50 per watt (which was proposed in a response to the the original 2019 RFP) and if financed with a municipal lease purchase plan, the installation should cost less than the current Eversource charges. The re-issued RFP would be straightforward and no investors or PPA agreements would be necessary.

Tom and Howard will meet with the finance sub-committee to propose this smaller (garage only, municipal lease purchase) project.

3) Community Power Update

Lisa and Tom attended a virtual meeting of the Seacoast NH Regional Community Power Aggregation group on 8/17. The meeting was organized by Lew Hitzrot of the Exeter Energy Committee and representatives from Exeter, Rye, Atkinson, Dover, Stratham, Derry, Portsmouth, Newmarket, Clean Energy NH and the Rockingham Planning Commission attended.

Henry Herndon gave an overview of the Community Power legislation and an update on the progress of Community Power NH (CPNH), the joint action agency formed by Lebanon, Hanover and Nashua to implement the program.

There are other opportunities this legislation provides besides offering lower electric rates. It would also allow members to work together on community solar projects, smart metering and microgrids.

Michael Behrman, from the Dover Energy Committee and Clean Energy NH, worked with Dover High School and ReVision to install a solar array at the high school. Michael said the Dover EC is issuing RFP's for more municipal solar system. Rye REC should follow-up with him to learn more about their experience with PPA's.

Tim Roache from the RPC explained they had done a group electricity purchase for a number of towns, but he said they would not be able to provide the expertise or admin services a group like CPNH could. RPC would be unable to monitor prices, make short term buys and provide customer service as CPNH plans to do.

There's still a lot to learn about CP. We will continue to attend informational meetings, collaborate with other towns and gather the information we will need to decide whether to present to the BOS. Should the Town of Rye decide to pursue participation in Community Power, a committee would be formed to develop a Community Power plan to present to voters.

4. Demand Charge Research and Update

In addition to supply and delivery charges seen on a residential utility bill, commercial utility bills also include demand charges. Demand charges are used by utilities to incentivize commercial customers to spread their energy use out over time. The charge is based on the maximum amount of power that a customer uses in any interval (typically 15 minutes) during the billing cycle. Approximately 30% of Rye's total electric bill comes from demand charges.

The REC is continuing to research the specific formula for Eversource's demand charges and is seeking ways to assess energy usage. The installation of solar and the lighting upgrade should help lower demand charges. At this point, an independent energy audit would cost more than the expected savings from such an audit.

Jay Rushforth suggested that the REC look into Sense units. These units use machine learning to identify various loads. It may be an inexpensive

way to analyze usage to find ways to decrease energy consumption. REC will research sense.com.

5. Lighting Upgrade Update

Lighting upgrade for the town buildings has been slow due to pandemic. There was some additional equipment requested that was not part of the original proposal. The payment plan can be extended to cover the additional costs. Once the payments have been completed, the town will see energy savings from the upgrade to LED lighting. Becky will be working with Carl Edin to finalize the details to minimize costs

6. General Town Update

Howard will follow up on the various municipal energy contracts to ascertain whether money could be saved by switching the supply back to Eversource.

7. New Business

Carl will be monitoring the potential Eversource rate hike for residential distribution charges.

Our guests were thanked for their participation and invited to continue to attend meetings and to consider becoming members of the Rye Energy Committee.

Next virtual meeting is on Tuesday, October 6 from 3:00-4:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 4:11 PM