

Rye Energy Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

3:00 PM

Town Hall

Recording: https://townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location_id=32&id=56597

1. Attendance

Committee Members: Howard Kalet, Tom Pfau, Carl Nicolino, Frank Melanson, Lisa Sweet, Rob Spork (via Zoom)

2. November meeting minutes

Minutes from the November meeting were approved unanimously.

3. School solar update

Howard provided an update on the status of a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for the elementary school solar project, mentioning that the latest revision has lower costs. This is primarily due to a reduction in the cost of solar panels. Expected installation to be next summer. The junior high solar system has resulted in savings of approximately \$2,500 year to date compared to 2022, primarily due to reduced demand charges.

4. Community Power update

Lisa outlined the schedule for new rate implementation for community power, starting February 1st, and highlighted the need for an update for the Select Board on this process. The CPCNH CEO will release a rate recommendation on December 15th, followed by a joint meeting of the Risk Management and Finance Committees on December 21st. The Board of Directors will then meet on December 28th to approve the rate.

Nine new towns plan to join CPCNH.

All the town facilities (water district, transfer station, town hall and annex, PSB) electric accounts have been switched to Rye Community Power. The schools continue to be on Direct Energy contracts which run until the end of 2024. When they expire the schools should be encouraged to switch to RCP if the price for RCP is lower than what is otherwise available. There was discussion of the desirability of longer-term RCP contracts. CPCNH is hoping to offer longer term rates for the rate period that will begin in August 2024.

5. Building code

Tom discussed the building code with the building inspector and then met with the Rules and Regulations Committee. He proposed an amendment to the Rye Zoning Ordinance that would require builders to provide a report certifying compliance with the current building energy code. This would document that the project met the existing requirements. This would require a builder to hire a certified home energy inspector. The Rules and Regs Committee recommended discussing the wording with the building inspector to ensure it was acceptable. The potential costs for builders to comply with this requirement was estimated at \$1,500-\$2,500. The builder would have to pay this fee or could enroll in the NH Saves program which would pay the fee plus reward the builder for meeting requirements.

6. Offshore Wind update

Carl discussed the latest Bureau of Ocean Energy Management plans for Gulf of Maine offshore wind. BOEM has proposed three spots far from shore for potential leases. They have also proposed an area off Portland, ME. There was a discussion of various wind projects and the potential cancellation of some due to difficulties with financing and supply chain.

7. Breakfast Hill solar project update

The potential purchase of Breakfast Hill landfill was discussed, and it was explained that this would not happen in the near future. Should a solar array be developed on the land, the Town of Rye will have oversight in the development process and will have the opportunity to purchase power from the developed array.

8. New Business

No new business.

Next meeting will be January 9 at Town Hall. The meeting was adjourned at 4:27.