



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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DRAFT

ENERGY COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, December 6, 2023, **5:30 p.m.**, Syd Crook Conference Room

Committee Members Present: Viggo Fish, Jamie Hess, Lisa Hess, Peter Vedova

Committee Members Absent: David Paradis, Tim Paradis, Robin Rainie-Lobacz

Guests Present: John Ellis, Karen Epstein, Rich Epstein; Samantha Carus, Dryden Eliassen and Peter Gribbin from Colby-Sawyer College

Meeting called to order by Peter at 5:30 PM.

Brief description of matters discussed and votes taken (if any):

1. Colby-Sawyer Presentation: John Ellis introduced the three Colby-Sawyer students, who took turns discussing the projects they're involved in under the guidance of Professor Nicholas Baer.

Samantha Carus discussed the ongoing water quality study of Pleasant Lake measuring pH, fluoride, phosphorus and septic outflows. Interim findings will be presented December 7th.

Dryden Eliassen described working with Prof. Baer on maple sugaring as well as a garden table and apple orchard on campus with solar panels.

Peter Gribbin discussed efforts on composting and waste reduction. Colby-Sawyer students try to separate food waste but need to do better. Karen suggested they contact New London's Waste Reduction Committee. Jamie suggested contacting Kearsarge Climate Action.

2. Minutes: The November minutes were approved by unanimous consent. Approval of the October meeting minutes was deferred until the next regular meeting.

3. Subcommittee Reports: There were no subcommittee meetings in the past month.

4. New London Community Power: A mass mailing will go out in January to all New London residents and small businesses who are on Eversource default service – except for customers with net-metered solar. A public information session will be held in late January, as required by state law, which stipulates that the session must be held within 15 days after the mass mailing goes out.

5. Energy Conservation Capital Reserve Fund: This fund has a current balance of approximately \$120,000. The additional \$15,000 appropriated for fiscal year 2024 has not yet been deposited, but there will be \$135,000 in the fund by the end of the current fiscal year on June 30. The Town has the ability to spend appropriated funds even if they have not yet been deposited.

In fiscal year 2026 the Town will be granted an option to buy the two investor-owned municipal solar arrays. At the current rate of replenishment, the capital reserve will not have enough money to buy those arrays.

The Energy Committee's goal is to have \$300,000 in the fund by the end of FY 2026. This will require two annual contributions of \$82,500 each in FY 2025 and FY2026. The purchase price will be determined by a fair-market-value appraisal; if the appraisal comes in under \$300,000, the money left over can be applied to solarizing the Fire Station roof or installing a ground-mounted array at the Stump Dump.

Viggo met with Budget Committee chair Chris Lorio, who recommended discussing our request with the Board of Selectmen before we propose it to the Budget Committee. Peter suggested preparing some visual aids to illustrate the need for this increase.

Discussion then moved to achieving our goal of 100% renewable electricity by 2030. This will require an additional 330 kilowatts DC of solar panels, at an estimated cost of \$990,000. Of that sum, 30 percent or \$297,000 is eligible to be reimbursed by the federal government under the provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act, which will reduce the Town's net outlay of \$693,000. Rather than attempting to raise this sum through the capital reserve fund, it was suggested that we ask Town Meeting to approve a bond issue. A low-interest loan can then be secured through the Community Development Finance Authority.

Jamie will contact Kim to request an appointment with the Selectmen. Jamie will also prepare a summary of our position and send it to Kim in advance of the appointment.

6. Municipal Solar Expansion: Jamie reported that the fire station roof is suitable for 30 kilowatts of solar now, and perhaps an additional 20 kilowatts 10 years from now. The Stump Dump can accommodate 50 kilowatts.

Conservation Commission chair Bob Brown has volunteered to talk with his colleagues to identify possible sites for solar arrays on town property.

7. Adjournment. Peter moved to adjourn the meeting. Viggo seconded. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Hess

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