

Montague Energy Committee (MEC) Minutes 5/28/2024

Designate facilitator Sally and **scribe** Tim

Present: Sally, Tim, Ariel, David, Jason

Guest: Chelsey Little **Also attending:** Jeff Singleton

Update from Chelsey Little, Supt. Clean Water Facility re: Hydroelectric Study Grant.

META grant application for \$6000 for feasibility study on small hydroelectric turbine, awarded in late Feb. Working with J. K. Muir for study. Will focus on two potential locations, select best one. Also will identify options for equipment, costs. Completed study will go into Gap grant application to DEP for cost of equipment. Clean Water Facility (CWF) would be able to do installation. Chelsea expects study will be finished next January or February.

Approve minutes from April 23, 2024 MEC meeting

Tabled. Committee members will send recommended edits to David, to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Community Planning For Solar with U. Mass. Clean Energy Ext. 4:50 PM

- Report on and response to Solar Forums

Sally reported that the Department Head Solar meeting took place May 15, with Maureen Pollock, Steve Ellis, Brian Camden from Airport, all 3 Extension faculty members, Sally, and Tim attending. Slides are available on our web page under Reports. Good discussion about grid capacity. Zara Dowling has talked with Walter Ramsey about net metering; for example prospective D.P.W. solar could net meter to schools or other entities so contract with Kearsarge would still be observed. Sub station development elsewhere such as one planned in Whately could increase Montague capacity if on the same line.

Ariel asked at the May 22 Solar Forum for residences and businesses if the Clean Energy Extension's projections for increased demand for electricity include potential for energy efficiency. Answer was vague. Possibility of community solar discussed.

Sally also reported that state has received big grant for Solar For All, aimed at solar for low income residences.

• Ongoing planning and outreach

Tabled.

Schools and Energy.

- Update on helping Gill-Montague School District apply for Mass Clean Energy Center BETA pilot program creating decarbonization plans for Turners Falls High & Middle School, joint effort with Gill Energy Committee. No news to report.

- Elementary School ventilation. No news to report.

Update on Green Communities Grant Projects. No news to report.

Energy Related Town Facility Updates.

- Information on net zero & energy efficient techniques, including embodied carbon.

Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN) meeting recommended towns institute “Buy Clean” policies, such as concrete manufactured with lower carbon emissions.

- MA Building Electrification Accelerator (BEA) offer to help Montague explore town building electrification: ideas of buildings to explore with them? Tabled.

State & federal level energy-related policies & legislation updates.

- Discussion of Town opting into Specialized Net Zero Stretch Code.
- Legislative and technical issues, special projects.

Ariel spoke in support of a public meeting of the Select Board and Airport Manager with an Eversource official about grid connection issues that are inhibiting solar energy development. Sally said that Matt Lord has been in touch with someone at Eversource. Tim recommended we ask Select Board where things stand, how we could help. Ariel will contact Matt Lord.

Sally looked into status of Act to Expand Modern Grid, sitting at House Ways and Means Committee. Has just asked Natalie Blais where that stands, and if her read of the bill is correct. Also asked if letters of support would help.

Recruiting more Energy Committee members.

- Opportunity for recruiting at solar forum, May 22nd: results?

No one has expressed interest yet. Tim reported that he reached out to the approximately 40 people on the email list for the daily singing on the Town Common combined with the announcement for the Solar Forum.

Helping Town Prioritize Energy-Saving Projects for Upcoming State & Federal Grants. Tabled.

Discussion Re: Energy Committee Taking July and/or August Off From Meeting.

We agreed to take July off, and to decide about August at the June meeting.

Adding missing approved minutes to the Town web site.

Tim says he hasn't been able to pursue this yet. Will continue to try.

Announcements (no discussion)

Tim said next zoom meeting of Franklin County Energy Committees will be on Thursday Aug. 1 at 6 PM.

Action Items:

Ariel will speak with Matt Lord about status of conversation with Eversource re: barriers to connecting for solar.

Tim will look for missing minutes to upload to the MEC web page.

David will check with Heath Cummings about the status of the schools BETA grant application status.

Sally will get back to the Building Electrification (BEA) folks about how they can support the MEC, such as exploring geothermal heating and cooling for Town Hall.

Any members with suggested edits to the minutes for the April MEC meeting will send them to David by June 8.