

## **Montague Energy Committee, Tuesday, May 30, 2023**

By Zoom, 4:30-6 PM

---

**Present:** Ariel Elan, Tim Van Egmond, Jason Burbank, Sally Pick.

**Tim facilitating; Sally taking minutes.**

**Minutes from April 25, 2023 MEC meeting will be amended and voted on next meeting.**

### **Community Planning For Solar with U. Mass. Clean Energy Ext.**

- Students wrote Action Plan, updated Action Plan recommendations based on solar survey.
- Solar Planning Committee will receive final action plan after students graduate.
- Discussed where process going from here as reports are finalized and how they may be used by Town and community.

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

- Review energy project ideas compiled by MEC for Town in preparation for new funding sources, including ARPA monies already distributed to Town but not yet fully allocated, additional ARPA funds to be distributed to Towns by a MA bill, & federal Infrastructure & Inflation Reduction Act funds assigned to the state. Tabled except for idea of PV installations with ARPA funds already assigned to Town.
  - Discuss where process is for exploring PV for Town Hall Annex, Department of Public Works (DPW) building and Safety Complex.
  - Select board considering using ARPA funds in hand for PV for installation on at least one municipal building.
    - Solar on Town Hall Annex on list of primary recommendations of projects from Capital Improvements Committee (CIC).

Tuesday, May 30, 2023

- Considered DPW but some technical issues with that:
  - Kearsage Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) requires significant % of that solar production to be used by Town. Could be a challenge regarding what to do with power produced by DPW solar array given Town requirements to use power produced under Kearsage PPA.
  - Also concern about getting it done by ARPA deadline.
  - Idea raised to share DPW solar power with low-income residents.
    - Could give away power but concern raised about cost of PV to do that.
    - May be possible to have residents pay lower price for electricity with a share of DPW solar.
- **Motion** (moved by Ariel, seconded by Tim): MEC supports the CIC's recommendation for solar on the Town Hall Annex roof to be chosen as an ARPA project with current ARPA funding. Passed unanimously.

### **Update on Proposed Green Communities Grant Projects**

- Walter will work with MEC on ideas sent by committee for applying for September grant.
- Ventilation for operations building of Clean Water Facility?
  - Not clear if they currently run ventilation. If so, an ERV/HRV would be more efficient.
    - May be a mechanical problem with current ventilation.
    - Will ask Chelsea about ventilation when she attends next meeting.

Tuesday, May 30, 2023

## **Energy Related Facility Updates.**

- Outdoor lighting upgrades to LED
  - Montague Center Light District was preparing a Green Communities grant application to submit recently to cover transition to LED lights in MC.
- Elementary School ventilation – check-in w/ Heath Cummings: ventilation running all the time? No report.
- Information on net zero & energy efficient techniques, including embodied carbon.
  - 3 bills in MA on embodied carbon. Sally talked about the bill that Sen. Jo Comerford presented, S.2090.
- Turners Falls Airport ground mounted PV proposal.
  - Sally emailed Maureen Polluck, Town Planner, about MEC's concerns that PV proposal on land at airport overlaps with key habitat identified by state. Maureen says that airport is aware of this issue, and that any proposed activities within MA's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program's Priority Habitat for Rare Species will require a MA Endangered Species Act project review.

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

- Discussion of Town opting into Specialized Net Zero Stretch Code. No report.
- Other legislation & policies, including Green Bank, Inflation Reduction Act updates. No report.

**Gas companies' efforts to rebrand methane as clean and renewable.** No update.

Tuesday, May 30, 2023

## **Possibility of transitioning to biodiesel for heating Town buildings using oil & for Town trucks that use diesel.**

- Tim emailed contact at Northeast Biodiesel with information that Walter provided on Town oil/diesel use.
  - Possibly start with DPW because they use 50,000 gallons of diesel a year.
  - Are there added costs, issues with biodiesel such as gelling in cold weather?
  - Are other Towns already using it? If so, how? What issues, if any, are they experiencing?

**Adding Missing approved minutes to the Town web site.** Tabled.

**Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting**

### **Announcements**

#### **Action items:**

- Sally will explore possible models for using PV on DPW as community solar resource for low-income.
- Tim will send to Wendy Bogusz motion recommending use of ARPA funds for PV on Town Hall Annex roof.
- Tim will email Chelsea to ask about ventilation system, problems with it, if it is currently functioning.
- Jason will talk with Northeast Biodiesel and Tom Bergeron about the idea of using biodiesel for Town buildings and vehicles that currently use oil/diesel.
- Tim will send Jason his contact at Northeast Biodiesel.
- Tim will explore minutes missing from webpage.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, June 27, 4:30-6pm.