**Shelburne Energy Committee – Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, May 18, 2023 7:00 pm Zoom meeting

Present: Tom Johnson, George Boettner, Andrew Baker, Emily DeVoto, Pat Stevenson

Guests: Deb Verhoff, John Walsh, Kate Whittaker

Staff: Cynthia Boettner

**Minutes**: Jeff Boettner moved to approve the minutes of the March 9 and April 20 meetings as amended by Tom. Seconded by Emily DeVoto and approved unanimously.

**MassSAVE Communities First Program:**

Tom Johnson sent out updates to the MassSAVE budget – he reports we are in good shape, having spent $5,830 so far this year with a balance remaining of $6,730. We have an additional $7,700 coming in from MassSAVE for a total of over $14,000 to spend in 2023

In terms of goals, the Hoopla for Heat Pump event projected 50 people attending and 83 turned out. The Senior Center event projected 10 people and yielded 5 people. The Community Action outreach event projected 25 people and 24 actually attended. Revise mailing sent out 250 mailers, they have done door to door canvassing in the village, and 18 residents are so far receiving energy assessments.

CAPV has lost a key staff person – Melissa Gonzalez - who was coordinating fuel assistance. She left for another job. CAPV is turning over their low-income energy assessment outreach to Revise so they may be able to fill that gap.

Cynthia has explored potential collaborations with the Kiwanis Club for a joint ice cream social in the summer – location and date TBD. It should steer wide of the Historical Society’s ice cream social. Perhaps bill it as an Energy Fair with free ice cream. Tom suggested keeping Cynthia’s time focused on achieving resident services for assessments and perhaps do another event later on. The Committee thought the Grange Fair in late August would be a good focal point, as that event went well last year. Andrew suggested putting together a testimonial board of successful installs with local residents. Cynthia concurred and said that a Kiwanis board member offered just that kind of testimonial when she met with them. She said Revise is planning to be at the Grange Fair.

**LED Streetlight Project**: The committee reviewed the Real Term Energy proposal. Tom noted that Real Term Energy had spec’d $29,000 to purchase the street light system and Eversource had clarified that current purchase price is about $14,000. So about $15,000 can be subtracted from their final purchase and installation amount, which would then be adjusted to about $50,000.

The committee then identified several possible funding sources to explore. These include Town stabilization funds, ARPA funds, loan capital, Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant and Green Communities. Tom also suggested CPA funding, though Andrew was skeptical as to whether LEDs could be eligible under CPA. Kate suggested we work with our legislators to renew the DOER funding that provided a 30% discount on LED conversions for a number of other towns, including Northampton, Williamsburg and others.

Andrew noted that the project in front of the Energy Committee is to submit an accurate proposal for ownership and maintenance costs to the Select Board by August 1, using Eversource’s S-2 rate to determine accurate savings. The proposal will also need to identify real funding sources and the timeline for securing those funds. If the Select Board approves that approach, funding can be applied for and when secured, the Town can then go out to bid to get a formal legal bid from Real Term Energy and other bidders. Until then, Real Term Energy’s proposal should be regarded as a preliminary estimate. Tom noted that Real Term Energy’s approach is similar to the ESCO approach of using a loan to finance the project, with the loan payments coming in lower than the energy payments currently going out.

Cynthia reported that both town administrators in Shelburne and Buckland are concerned about securing timely and affordable maintenance, and that Buckland could be interested in partnering with Shelburne if a plan comes together.

It was also noted that as we refine the Real Term Energy proposal, we should ask for installation of demo lights that can show residents what the proposed light quality and technology actually is. Tom added that he and Kate met with Sen. Mark’s aide, Jonathon Gould, and talked about approaching Eversource to buy the current lights for $1 per light, as Peperrell did with National Grid. John Walsh noted that Eversource is arriving at its purchase price by amortizing the lights over 20 years. Tom also got an estimate of $60 per light for adding shields, though whether all lights need to be shielded remains to be seen.

Tom noted that we may need to come up with $9,100 to get a a streetlight audit and formal cost estimate from Real Term Energy. Their audit could help us determine what the desired lighting level is in town, both from residents and public safety officials. John noted that we need to be sure that Real Term Energy’s proposal includes prevailing wage labor costs. Tom noted that Real Term Energy may be a preselected bidder that can work with towns without need for a bid process. Andrew suggested that be firmly confirmed.

There is a bill moving in the Legislature, cosponsored by our reps, (H 3164 and S 2102) that will require Eversource to offer a lower energy rate for lights that are dimmed and to shield lights. Eversource currently charges a flat rate whether the lights are dimmed or not.

**Tax Bill Insert:** Pat Stevenson moved and Emily DeVoto 2nd a motion to move ahead with Cynthia’s insert in the Tax Bill mailing in June. Approved unanimously. Cynthia will present to the Select Board for their approval. Andrew will send her edits about newsletter sign up.

**Cowell Gym**: John Walsh reported that the HVAC installation at Cowell Gym will be completed by end of June, funded by a Green Communities Grant.

**Solar Installation at Pole Barn:** Tom shared a draft letter to Bill Ashley, a resident in Greenfield who is offering to fund solar on municipal buildings. A motion was made and 2nd to authorize Tom to send the letter after receiving any input from the committee in the next 5 days. Motion was approved unanimously. Andrew agreed to talk with Terry about how to move the bid process forward and whether FRCOG will help us design an RFP and evaluate bids.

In regard to the Pole Barn and the 7 acres of town owned land, Andrew made note to clarify the March 9 minutes to indicate that the Committee is interested in exploring the feasibility of creating a ground mount solar array in an appropriate location on the property that does not conflict with its current and ongoing use as an apple orchard. The committee is not proposing installation of a 7-acre solar field. The land is currently leased for an additional 2 years to Hager Farm.

**Renewing Appointments to the energy committee:** Doug Engle has requested to join the Energy Committee – Tom recommended him.

Next meeting is June 15 at 7pm in person at the Town Hall.

Geoff moved and Emily 2nd a motion, unanimously approved and the Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm