**TOWN OF SHELBURNE**

**Meeting Minutes**

**BOARD/COMMITTEE: SHELBURNE ENERGY COMMITTEE**

**DATE: July 27, 2023**

**LOCATION: This meeting was held in person at Town Hall**

**PURPOSE: Monthly committee meeting**

* **Call to Order:** 7:05 by Chairman Tom Johnson
* **Members present:** Tom Johnson, Pat Stevenson, George (Jeff) Boettner and Doug Engle
* **Others Present:** Cynthia Boettner, Shelburne’s Energy Efficiency Advocate
* **Approve minutes of June 29, 2023, meeting**

The June 29, 2023 minutes where reviewed. A motion to approve was made by George, seconded by Pat and the motion was unanimously approved.

* **Old Business:**
  + Community First Partnership: Small business Program Update:
* An update of the Small Business Program was provided by Cynthia. See Addendum attached.
* Buckland will be included in the small business initiative Aug. 14-25. Cynthia attended the Buckland Energy Committee’s meeting last night and one member said he would distribute handouts. Cynthia will be checking in with businesses as she is able, and she encourages our committee members to also raise awareness of the program when they visit local establishments.
* A motion was made to approve a draft joint letter from Eversource and the Town of Shelburne regarding the program. The letter would be sent by Eversource. Pat so motioned, George seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
  + Committee Facebook Page:
* Laurie Wheeler(as a community volunteer) offered to post information about the Small Business Program using her personal FB account since our own page is semi-defunct. Going forward, she encourages us to revive our page and offered to post to it announcements that we provide her. She would need to be added as a manager and have the passcode. A motion was made to allow Laurie Wheeler to have access to the Facebook page to facilitate updates. Pat so motioned, George seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
  + Other Community First Partnership Updates:
    - Tent at the Grange Fair on August 26th (see addendum for topics) Cynthia and Jeff intend on being there to answer questions and to route people to Revise (tent next to ours) for people who want to know about home energy assessments.
  + LED Street Light Update:
* George attended the July 17th Selectboard Meeting to present the request for $9,100 from the ARPA funds to have Real Term Energy provide an audit of the current lighting situation and to provide a report on the best approach to move forward with the LED project. This request was not approved by the Selectboard.
* It was noted that the decision of the Selectboard was possibly swayed by several misstatements by Selectboard member Rick LaPierre. A few of these misstatements include:
  + - “Finance Committee met and could not support it” (the ARPA Fund request) “and they recommended staying with the previous Eversource vote.” There has not been any meeting between the Energy Committee and the Finance Committee, nor had the Finance Committee made any decision regarding LED streetlights. The Energy Committee is scheduled to meet with the Finance Committee on August 7th.
    - He claimed that he sent the 6-point memo from the Energy Committee to the Finance Committee “several weeks ago” (before the Selectboard meeting) when in fact the memo was sent no earlier than 12 days prior to this meeting.
    - He stated that if the Town used Real Term Energy for the audit we would be obligated to use them for the conversion. There is in fact no requirement to use Real Term Energy simply because they did the audit. Any qualified contractor could be contracted to perform the changeover and maintenance of the lights.
    - Rick stated “If I am not mistaken, it would take 10 years to pay back the initial $55,000 investment.” In fact, the payback is expected to be less than 7 years.
* It was noted that the Selectboard was leaning towards moving forward with the Eversource proposal and assessing any proposed changes at a later date. It was noted that this decision would likely preclude any opportunity for grant funding.
* A discussion was had on the effectiveness of a Smart System (with the ability to control individual lights) versus having simpler dimmable lights with established periods during the night when dimming would occur. If using the latter approach Eversource would account for the reduced usage periods at night in their billing. No conclusion by the Committee was reached and it was noted that this is a topic for an energy services company to help the community grapple with
* The Committee learned through the Cowell Gym mini-split project that when multiple parties are impacted, outreach is necessary to seek the input of all parties involved. (The Recreation Committee felt left out of the discussion and decision-making process).
* A suggestion was made by Cynthia that a community information meeting be offered by the Committee regarding the LED project. Committee members suggested that an evening between August 8-11th using the Grange or Elementary School, which would enable residents to learn the details of the committee’s report before the Selectboard vote on the topic scheduled for Aug. 14.
* Tom provided new information from the Green Communities coordinator for central Massachusetts regarding the utilization of funds from a Green Communities grant:
  + - Money from the grant cannot be used to purchase the existing lighting from Eversource.
    - Senator Paul Mark is going to approach Eversource about the possibility of Eversource selling the lighting to the Town of Shelburne for less than the current proposed $14,000.
    - Pending an adjusted price from Eversource the committee will need to now request ARPA funds in the amount of $23,100 to fund both the audit and the purchasing of the lights. It was suggested that should the Selectboard deny this request that the proposal be presented at the Annual Meeting for approval by the citizens of the town of Shelburne. It was further suggested that the funding could be provided by a Loan or through other grant opportunities.
* A motion was made to approve the final Committee Report for Recommendations for Streetlight Conversion to LED’s to be submitted by August 1st. It was further motioned that the Committee authorize Tom and George, as a subcommittee, to modify the current draft as needed prior to submission. Doug so motioned, Pat seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
* **New Business:**
  + Solar Forum:
* Pat informed the committee of a four- session Solar Forum that is going to held electronically on September 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th. The Solar Forum information is available at [https://ag.umass.edu/clean-energy/solar-forum](http://ag.umass.edu/clean-energy/solar-forum).
* A discussion was had on whether the committee should pursue its own community information forum devoted to the solar topic which was discussed at a previous meeting. The committee chose to forgo a solar forum at this time until current issues being addressed by the Committee have been resolved.
* **Next Meeting: August 17th, 2013**
* **Adjournment:** A Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:03. George so motioned, Tom seconded, the motion was unanimously approved.

**Addendum to Minutes: Notes provided by Cynthia:**

**Community First Partnership Notes**

**for Shelburne Energy Committee Meeting of July 27, 2023**

**Small Business Initiative**

* **August 14-25**. Shelburne and all of Buckland, not just Shelburne Falls (See handouts)
* **Mailer from Eversource:** Postcard to all businesses before Aug. 14. Businesses can sign up for appointment.
* **2nd Mailer from the Town and Eversource collaboratively**: see draft sent today. VOTE NEEDED.
* **Business Networking and Social Group**: Vendor (Darek Chomiak) and I visited with the group on July 19. Pat attended, too. I’ll ask for them to send the newer information (document available at this SEC meeting)
* **Direct visits with businesses, past:** Pat, Jeff and I chatted with 10 businesses and gave them a handout about the initiative and the 7/19 meeting.
* **Buckland Energy Committee:** I attended their meeting on 7/26. One of their members will help distribute the handout. (Not sure how much he will cover. He mentioned Bridge St.)
* **Direct visits with businesses, future:**  Any businesses you feel comfortable visiting? Houses of worship? Farms? Non-profits? DISCUSS
* **Town Websites:** Town Administrators have been asked to post information.
* **Facebook:** Laurie Wheelier (Arms Librarian) offered to post it using her personal FB account. She encourages us to revive our page and offered to post to it announcements that we provide her. She would need to be added as a manager and have the passcode. VOTE NEEDED.

**Grange Fair**

* **August 26:** Cynthia, Jeff. Others?
* **Topics:**
* Small Business program
* Assessments with Revise (they have tent as well)
* Streetlight questions answered
* Municipal Aggregation Rate
* Spin to Win game to draw people in