**Bethlehem Energy Commission**

**February 1 at 7:00 pm**

**In-Person at Bethlehem Library**

**Attending:** David Van Houten, Mary Lou Krambeer, Bruce Caplain, Dan Crosby, Josiah Chamberlain, Melissa Elander (Clean Energy, NH advisor); Chuck Phillips

**Guests:** Megan Schleck, Scott Caisse

**Agenda**

Mission: The Bethlehem Energy Commission was established for the study and planning of energy resources for the town. The commission will evaluate existing energy usage in the town and suggest possible improvements in energy efficiency and conservation, as well as potential clean renewable energy solutions in order to reduce expenses and increase self-reliance.

**Review minutes from last meeting**

Approve 1/4/2022 meeting minutes. Motion to accept, Dan; Second David; Unanimously approved.

Spelling correction -- Barry Zitser

Chuck first, Dan second, passed unanimously

This is our first Zoom meeting.

**Clean Energy NH update Guest Speaker: Sam Evans Brown**

Sam spoke to us about **the NH Public Utility Commission’s Decision to discontinue NH Saves and other energy efficiency programs** on December 12, 2021. NH Energy Resource standard went through a single 3-year cycle. When new cycle came up at end of 2020, PUC took 11 months to review the program and then discontinued it without public input. PUC members Diane Martin (resigned immediately after the publishing of the order) and Dan Golden (chair) voted against the State standards. The BIA came out against the cost of the systems benefit charge PUC has the authority to set systems benefit charge. But there was no input. The response was immediate and intense with a united front by the utilities and energy groups in NH. Clean Energy tried to get an injunction. Got lots of press, some positive comments from the Governor. Injunction was not allowed, but a broad coalition of folks came together. Clean Energy NH worked with legislature to put back into place the funding and policy structure of the last 3 years in a bill HB549. Energy efficiency vendors have lost all of their work as NH Saves programs were all shut down. Hope to have an answer and reversal soon. ***(POST SCRIPT on February 10 the PUC reversed their policy and went back to 2020-2021 funding of the NH energy programs.)***

On another front, there is a Clean Energy Fund which was created in 2015 and is called Eversource Settlement Fund . The $5m – should be funding a battery storage program to offset the grid. This too is a pending program in need of the PUCs attention.

**Town Hall energy audit**

Next meeting will be at Town Hall to discuss potential Town Hall improvements

TO DO Bruce will reserve room for Tue, March 1

**Profile solar project update**

Celebration of “start” of solar production will be in Spring. Earth Day – April 22.

Article in Green Energy Times about this project.

**Town solar project**

Contract is with Town attorney and PRIMEX has seen it. They are putting the proposal into a contract format.

USDA RD won’t allow us to sign contract without having the engineering studies completed.

Barrington needs to be contacted. Get an estimate to pay up-front engineering costs and have them take it off the contract.

USDA RD Contract Team is: Melissa, Bruce, Mary Lou and Tim

Solar Project Construction Team will become: Bruce, David, Tim

To Do:

David will ask contractors to conduct engineering studies.

**Village District**

Solar assessment done. Cost: $556,000 $838,665in kW savings.

What is the agency of Village District. They have 3 commissioners (Bruce Brown,:Dick Robie, Sr; and Russ Mardin, Jr.). They are independent from the town. They can go after their own funding and request dollars in warrant article. Do they have ARPA funding; can they access Infrastructure dollars? A catalyst for this project was the DES energy audit and the biggest saving. Barrington would do a PPA for Village District.

TO DO: share audit with commissioners. Think towards Spring 2023.

To Do:

Bruce and Dan to approach.

TO DO: look into Infrastructure Bill opportunities and USDA RD. Melissa

**BES**

Bruce and David went to BES January meeting. Talked about energy audit and possible contingency funds for solar.

To Do:

Scott and David will go to February Meeting

**NH Rural Renewables – Lakes Region Community College**

Andy Duncan – offers energy consultancies for small businesses, mainly do solar site assessments, etc. Will even write a grant to USDA RD. They do not do municipalities or nonprofits. How can we do this for small businesses in Bethlehem? Clean Energy NH is hiring someone to work with businesses too, coming on board in late spring.

**Public input --**Megan Schleck was at the meeting and explained her work with municipal solar projects that are funded with some crowd sourcing funds. Used to work with *Raised Green*.

**Next meeting date, March 1 meeting at the TOWN HALL**

Chuck Phillips will be asked to set the agenda and run the meeting.

 Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89981050504?pwd=NWt3S1F3QzZrQ1BjQzBSdGJ6dmZlZz09>

**Adjourn 8:08**

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Bethlehem Energy Commission (BEC) is appointed by the Select Board. All meetings are open to the public.

Clerical Assistant Nicole McGrath ensures that BEC meeting notices, agendas, and minutes are posted as necessary.

To find BEC info go to: www.bethlehemnh.org

-go to government tab

-our committee is listed under: boards and committees’ tab

-our meetings are posted through Nicole on: agendas and minutes tab

 Nicole also posts a hard copy of meeting notices in the Town Hall and at the post office.