

Town of Dublin Energy Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 25, 2022
7 PM in person and via zoom, Town Hall, 3rd floor

In attendance:

In person: Allen Hearn, Jack Munn, Susan Peters (Select Board), and Henry Herndon (Contractor to Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire)

Susan opened the meeting and explained that the Committee is looking to learn more about Community Power opportunities that could benefit Dublin.

Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire

Henry Herndon explained the background and work of the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (the Coalition). He shared the Coalition's Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), and provided an Invitation for Dublin to join the Coalition. Eighteen communities and Cheshire County have adopted the JPA. If a community chooses to join the Coalition, it is necessary to appoint a Town resident to serve on the Board, and a second resident to serve as an Alternate. Approving the JPA gives a community a seat at the Coalition's table, but does not obligate a community in any way with respect to community power. Coalition members can withdraw from membership at any time, in accordance with the terms of the JPA.

Henry explained some of differences between the non-profit Coalition and for-profit brokers, in terms of governance, transparency, revenues, and oversight. The Coalition may serve as the service provider, similar to for-profit brokers, and each member community has its own Electric Aggregation Plan (EAP). Members of the Coalition control revenues and margin reserves. Eight of the 19 Coalition members have approved an EAP, either by vote at Town meeting or City Council, and are ready to go once the State legislative and rule-making processes are complete. EAPs offer a choice of pricing/sourcing options for residents: (1) cheaper than Eversource; (2) Green (more green sourcing than the cheapest option); and (3) Green Plus (even higher percentage of green sourcing). EAPs are typically voluntary, and any resident may opt out. The 19 members of the Coalition represent about 20% of New Hampshire's population.

For communities interested in community power (and the Coalition), there is a multi-step process: (1) form a community power committee under RSA 53-E, which can be a subcommittee of a Town's energy committee; (2) consider whether to join the Coalition, including careful review of the terms of the JPA by the Town attorney and approval by the Select Board; (3) develop a community power plan, holding two public hearings, and subject to Select Board review; (4) take the community power plan to Town Meeting for a vote; and (5) the Select Board may then choose a community power partner/broker. Potential benefits of joining the Coalition can include lower energy pricing as well as its support for new energy initiatives. The Coalition has been working collectively to support regulatory reform and eliminate regulatory obstacles. The Coalition works to empower communities, and put them in control, without overwhelming them. This is a transformative process giving communities greater control over energy sourcing and costs. Understanding the Coalition business model is an important step.

Solar Power on Town Land

There was discussion of committee members' visit to the old Transfer Station landfill as a possible solar site. Jack pointed out that the RFP process can be complicated. He offered to look into other possible sites on Town land in addition to the landfill. It was agreed that we need to learn more about the Town's energy needs and infrastructure as well as about the process of identifying a solar company to work with.

April 27, 2022 minutes

With only three committee members present (not a quorum), review and approval of the April 27, 2022 meeting minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

Action items::

1. Bob Hayden of Standard Power is scheduled to speak at the next meeting.
2. Allen will research the NH Saves program and energy audit opportunities.
3. Jack will look into the RFP process for putting solar on possible Town land sites.
4. It would very helpful to engage other members of the committee as well as other Town residents in the process of researching and developing energy solutions to benefit the Town.
5. Susan will look into inviting Andrea Hodson, a member of Harrisville's Energy Committee, to speak at a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 8 at 7 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Susan W. Peters