



TOWN OF STRATHAM

INCORPORATED 1716

10 BUNKER HILL AVENUE STRATHAM NH 03885

VOICE (603) 772-4741 FAX (603) 775-0517

MINUTES FOR STRATHAM ENERGY COMMISSION MEETING February 14, 2023

Meeting held at the Stratham Municipal Center

Commission Members:

-
- Matthew O'Keefe
- Charlie Case
- Michael Welty
- Joe VanGombos
- Joe Anderson - Select Board Member

All Present

Call to Order: 6:00 PM

1.Minutes from January 10, 2023 meeting were approved

2.Outreach:

A resident recently contacted a Select Board member who was trying to change their electricity company from Unitil to Eversource to save money on their electric bill. Residents may not understand that NH Electric Companies only deliver electricity and are required to offer a default supply rate from a separate electricity supplier with a cost established by a bid process. Relief from the very high default rate we are experiencing is available for residents signing up with a third-party supplier. Information on what Stratham is doing on this important issue was included in the January 13 Select Board Newsletter along with a link showing current third-party electricity supply options:

"Stratham has joined the list of towns looking into Community Power to help stabilize and reduce electricity costs to residents. This process has many regulatory requirements that will likely not have any outcome before 2024, so the Stratham Energy Commission will be regularly sending out tips for saving energy and costs in the upcoming newsletters, so stay tuned. However, with current electric prices at all-time highs, there is no need to wait for those residents looking for alternative supply options for electricity. See the link to NH residential competitive electric supply companies [here](#)."

The first information session will be the "Button Up NH" public information session showing ways to reduce electricity usage as well as an explanation showing how a resident can sign up for a lower cost third party electricity supplier. For those who may need help navigating this



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process, the Wiggin Memorial Library offers technical support for those who need help with computers. Mike Welty will contact Yankee Thermal (who present the Button Up program) for available dates. Dates to be discussed next month. The Library also has a capability that would allow a program such as this to be webcast and recorded so people that can't attend in person can view it on line. One of their tech support staff will be invited to our public sessions to help with these tools.

Public Hearings and additional information sessions will be held soon to include plans and status of Stratham's Community Power Aggregation initiative which can reduce the cost of electricity for Town residents and small businesses while increasing the use of renewable energy. Economies of scale can be achieved by joining with many other municipalities. Public input will be solicited.

2.Community Solar/Net Metering Opportunities

The recent Federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) can provide up to 30% financial assistance to municipalities for renewable energy projects through a program called "Direct Pay". It was agreed hold on this program until a NH process is set.

3.Energy Efficiency Opportunities for Municipal Buildings

Update from 2021 - David Moore said that funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will enable the Town to move up several Capital Plan ventilation projects outlined by Nate Mears at the Energy Commission's July 13, 2021 meeting. These are: Year 2024 – Replace heating and cooling units at the Police Department, and Year 2025 – Replacement of five propane powered roof top HVAC on top of the Wiggin Memorial Library. Mike Welty reported that he had spoken separately with Mike Houghton (speaking as an HVAC specialist) and asked what his recommendation would be for the type of replacement systems. Mike Houghton suggested that Heat Pumps could be a replacement HVAC system at the Police Station, but not at the Town Building. David suggested that the Energy Commission have a separate conversation with Nate Mears (Director of Public Works).

Unitil has a program that can provide some funding for efficiency updates on Town Buildings. An efficiency trade off between propane fired HVAC systems and Heat Pump systems may impact Nate Mears decision on which way to go and whether the Town can qualify for reimbursements.

4,Membership

Matt O'Keefe has agreed to be the Energy Commission chair with Mike Welty as Vice Chair Mike Ream has resigned from both the Energy Commission and the Energy Aggregation Committee and has assured the Town that he can still be available from time to time. Paul Deschaine has agreed to replace him and will submit his application to the Select Board.



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Meeting Adjourned 6:45 PM

Next meeting will be March 15, 2023 at 6 PM. The meeting has been delayed by one day due to a conflict with Town Voting Day on the 14th.

Respectfully submitted – Charlie Case