



# TOWN OF STRATHAM

INCORPORATED 1716

10 BUNKER HILL AVENUE STRATHAM NH 03885

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

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## **MINUTES FOR STRATHAM ENERGY COMMISSION MEETING December 13, 2022**

### **Meeting held at the Stratham Municipal Center**

#### **Commission Members:**

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

**Not Present:** Michael Ream

**Also attending:** David Moore – Town Administrator

**Call to Order: 6:05 PM**

#### **1. Approved minutes from July 12, 2022**

#### **2. Community Power Updates**

The Stratham Energy Commission has been looking carefully at the possibility of recommending that the Town adopt Community Power which allows municipalities and counties to aggregate retail electric customers and provide them access to competitive markets for supplies of electricity, thus reducing cost, improving price stability over time and providing innovative options such as renewable energy. This program would be voluntary for residents and incorporate mechanisms to accommodate those with Solar already installed with Net Metering agreements. The State requires municipalities to submit an Energy Aggregation Plan (with prior approval by Town Meeting) to the PUC before launching a Community Power Program.

The SEC invited the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH) and Standard Power to meet with us. CPCNH has signed up 24 municipalities so far including Exeter, Rye, Newmarket, Durham and Dover to participate. It is believed that by aggregating their combined electricity requirements, municipalities can lower rates, improve price stability over time and provide innovative options such as renewable energy. Standard Power and their partner Good Energy have substantial experience in Massachusetts and are working with Keene NH.



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Stratham municipal facilities currently participate in a similar aggregation mechanism with other towns through the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC). See discussion below.

The legislature took action last year to make Community Power more favorable, but the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has taken months to agree on Community Power rules which caused municipalities to wait for approval of their Electric Aggregation Plans (EAP). Those rules were formalized and approved by a Legislature Committee in September 2022 and a number of EAPs have been approved including Exeter. Exeter has planned a mid 2023 launch and Dover a mid 2024 launch. A program launch must achieve a rate lower than the Standard Offer that the Utility has negotiated, or it will be delayed.

This opportunity is becoming more important as electricity rates continue to go up. The SEC agreed to meet with the BOS at their next meeting and ask them to appoint an Energy Aggregation Committee to generate a Stratham Electric Aggregation Plan by early February to include educational presentations for residents in both late January and early February. Joe VanGombos will put together some charts for the BOS presentation. The intention is that our plan be ready for Town Meeting approval in early March and PUC approval after that. We do not plan to start from scratch in generating our plan, but will borrow parts of existing plans and add Stratham specifics. Charlie and Joe VanGombos agreed to meet with the Exeter folks involved in their Community Power effort, and Matt O'Keefe will communicate with Dover.

An article on Community Power will be included in an upcoming BOS newsletter.

If the Town decides to consider CPCNH as their aggregator, it will need to sign a CPCNH Joint Powers Agreement as 24 Towns have done so far.

### **3. Review of Rockingham Planning Commission rates from recent power aggregation renewal**

This is a new three year contract with Constellation Energy that has some risk sharing with the Constellation in years two and three. Stratham saved approximately \$27,000 in the previous contract. The first year rate is 13.9 cents per kwh (meaning 12 cents per kwh less than the Unitil Standard Offer of 25.9 cent per kwh).

**5.Discussion of Police Station Solar Array buyout plan:** David Moore verified that the town's capital plan allocation includes \$5K prior to 2022 and another \$5K in 2022. The Town plans to include \$5K per year in the Capital Plan until there are sufficient funds to buyout the system. Total buy out reserve after the 2023 Town Meeting will be \$15K. The buyout price will be determined at 50% of the value of the system at the time of purchase. Matt will communicate with ReVision Energy on a projected value for planning purposes.



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## **Items from David Moore for discussion**

-Mark Connors, Town Planner has asked the SEC to support the Town initiative to install Electric Vehicle charging stations in Stratham with funding from a competitive federal program known as Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality. Potential sites are Stratham Municipal Center/Wiggin Memorial Library, Stratham Hill Park, Stratham Fire Station/Historic Society, Stratham Memorial School and Cooperative Middle School. The SEC has discussed this possibility over the past year and agreed to support the Town Planner's initiative.

-Unitil proposed to reduce their charges for the Town owned LED street lights. All agreed that was fine.

**Adjourned: 7:55 PM**

**Next meeting will be January 9, 2022 at 6 PM**

Respectfully submitted – Charlie Case