

Joint Thetford Energy Committee Meeting DRAFT MINUTES
April 6, 2023, 6:00 to 7:30 PM

Online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84273611185>

Meeting ID: 842 7361 1185; Passcode: 975342

By Phone: 646 558 8656

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JTEC Present: Alice Stewart, Chuck Cole, Tom Ward, Nolan Reigler, Stephanie Daniels, Mary Bryant

Guests Present: Bob Walker

Call to order: 6:15 pm

6:15 Review and Approve February 2, 2023 and March 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Minutes Available Here:

<https://www.thetfordvt.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/3892/638109528999200000>

March and February minutes approved

6:20 Updates:

Town Meeting Day

Attendance was light. Tom was there, we didn't have a table.

Next year we should plan more in advance, discuss in January, and find the trifold

Nolan will ask Bob about trifold

TES Solar

The hearing didn't go so well for the JTEC interests. PUC disagreed with our perspective, although they are in favor of the expansion happening – the issue is the rate. In consultation with Norwich solar, the best strategy would be to attempt to get the 2020 rate (which is not as good as the 2014 rate). We would get this rate for a few years and then it would move into a blended rate. The math works best is if we transfer the RECs to the power company and they would retire them in the short term. We would have no control over this. If we wanted to keep the RECs, we would pay a penalty on our rate to retain the RECs which would dilute the benefit for offtakers. For offtakers it is solar power but cannot be 'claimed' as renewable because the RECs will be transferred to the utility to meet the state renewable standard. They may also sell the RECs to other states.

Once we have the certificate of public good we can have a conversation with GMP to try to get some sort of claim around the 'renewable-ness' of the power.

Bob: If our goal is to try and get the best rate for offtakers, concerned about Thetford not being in the drivers seat, and have Norwich tech leading this. Do we have any chance of attracting funders? It's another reason for us to raise this issue with Jim Masland, etc. so the legislature can push to change this.

No update on funders/investors.

ACTION: Nolan will send the final submission to the PUC to all committee to review; post online also

MERP Mini-grant

From Erica by email: Bryan told me he is preparing the application for the MERP mini grant - if you could approve for formality as well as discuss what use you might like to suggest for the grant at tonight's meeting that would be great. If nothing comes to mind, I suggest we use it to contribute to the cost of the IREC position.

Mary: Bryan will fill this out, and then Tracy will be the contact person going forward and will be discussed at SB next Monday

If we are approved, we can develop a plan for this.

<https://bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-program>

Moved to approve our application to the MERP mini-grant

Grassroots Fund/WD

With the short deadline, we missed getting SB approval to apply for this grant.

Stephanie: Write a short summary of the grant application for the SB to approve. And request a way to have a general approval to apply for this grant every year as long as it is for the same amount and same activity.

6:45 Backup Battery Event

Good attendance and feedback; the speakers didn't address the life cycle of the environmental impact. There were a lot of emails of interest, and people asked for the link to the recording. Tom has spoken to Martie about being able to record the visuals of the webinar.

6:55 No Mow May

Lawn signs are ready!



We need to convince schools, town and residents to have the signs in all the villages.

<https://val.vtecostudies.org/newsfeed/no-mow-may/>

All: Email Alice to pick up signs
Stephanie: ask TA
Nolan: Ask TES

7:05 EV Charger Next Steps

Geoff Martin has let us know about state grants with low matching requirements. Things have been slow with elementary school and town sites so she doesn't know if the proposals are waiting for state grants to come in. We're not sure what the status is, and need to get an update from the new IREC Jeff.

What's the price tag on EV Charging station?

It depends on various decisions that are made, but

One proposal: \$15,626 after rebates

Another proposal: \$17K

Bryan has the proposals from Norwich EV until the state program was released (so that the town wouldn't have to pay much at all) and gave to Erica last week.

Mary: will take \$15K as a ballpark figure for ARPA funds, SB feels that businesses should invest but few can afford it.

Alice: Will email new Jeff and Mary about state programs, and Ask Erica for an update on next meeting

7:15 AHA Public Statement Discussion

Discussed the request for signature to AHA letter

(https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdccbKStxd6XDI_Ux6DPMXQ4CTIum1IG5kJOIdd9WKi_UGx4w/viewform)

- Dick McCormack and Becca White both on the natural resources committee both voted this through. Should we be getting more involved in policy? As well as doing research that could help our lawmakers who have no staff to do the research.
- Can we, as a town committee, sign onto this letter? Yes we can. SB doesn't put censure rules on any committee
- We do need to be following these issues at the state level more closely, and perhaps have a legislature liaison on the Committee. We could also have our legislators and/or local experts like Stuart Blood come to speak to the Committee.

While the committee wasn't versed on all the details in the proposed letter, we discussed and agreed to write our own letter.

Stephanie to draft letter and circulate to all, for submission on April 7.

Draft developed and discussed during the meeting:

We have been charged by the Town of Thetford to support low carbon energy and we carry out a range of activities to build the resilience of our town. While we believe our actions are important, we need these actions to be in the context of strong low carbon energy policy at the state level. We strongly urge our leaders to support policy that moves Vermont closer to our statewide goal of a transition to a low carbon energy future. We applaud the legislature's efforts to incentivize real climate solutions like weatherization, energy conservation, heat pumps, geothermal networks, and properly placed solar. Expanding the use of biomass, liquid biofuels, and RNG, as currently called for in the

Affordable Heat Act, is not consistent with the goals of long term climate resilience. We urge you to remove biomass, liquid biofuels, and 'renewable' natural gas from the measures eligible for clean heat credits in the AHA.

Future Meeting Topics

Decision making criteria for efficiency investment (Marc Chabot)

Next Meeting May 4, 2023

Adjourn 7:49 pm