

Town of Boscawen
ENERGY COMMITTEE-WORK SESSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 18th, 2023 @ 5:30 p.m.

Members Present: Edward J. Cherian, Jr—Chair; Charles Niebling—Vice Chair; Gary Tillman; Nate Preisendorfer; Bill Bevans—Ex-Officio

Guests: Loren Martin—Avitar Associates of New England

Staff Present: Kara Gallagher-Planning & Community Development Assistant & Kearsten O'Brien—Deputy Planning and Community Development Director

Chair Cherian opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

PCD Assistant Gallagher completed roll call.

Minutes:

Mr. Tillman motioned to accept the 3.28.23 draft minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Preisendorfer. All in favor. None opposed.

Old Business:

Solar Assessment Discussion: The Committee invited Mrs. Martin to attend this month's meeting to answer some questions regarding the assessment process of solar arrays. The members were curious how the taxable value was determined, as well as how solar panels are assessed given that some may be brand new, some may be 10 years old, the modules could be different sizes, some may be net metered, some aren't, etc. Mrs. Martin said there is a market modified process. The values are assessed per panel. Avitar does assessing in 70+ communities in NH, and many don't have a building permit process or any valuable information regarding these types of projects. Avitar recognizes that the kilowattage is different per panel, so they looked at the average cost to put in a panel at the time when this began, and the process has been modified over time. In the beginning, a panel cost about \$1000 to install. Avitar then began looking at the different rebates that were being offered (local, state, and federal), to get to what a market-modified cost would be. After the incentives were taken into account, the value per panel was reduced to around \$600. The age of the system is noted every time a property is assessed. Avitar uses a 25 year lifespan for depreciation. Mrs. Martin said this year the value was brought down to around \$400 per panel. Chair Cherian noted that most solar arrays will depreciate the most within the first few years just like a vehicle. Mrs. Martin said the only situation that would be taxed and not qualify for the solar exemption would be a community solar farm. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien asked if the values will be coming down because Boscawen is in a reevaluation year. Mrs. Martin said yes, because the systems currently in place are older and will be depreciated, and the starting point will be less than it was last year. Currently the total taxable value for solar is \$760,000. Chair Cherian said it

is important to help residents understand exactly what this number means. Chair Cherian suggested creating a simple fact sheet showing what the Solar Exemption is for, who's eligible to apply, and how much tax revenue is exempt. Discussion ensued. The Committee thanked Mrs. Martin for the information.

New Business:

CPCNH Boscawen Electricity Aggregation Plan: Chair Cherian suggested going through the document page by page to see what remains to be completed. He said he'd like to get the final draft completed enough to send to Henry Herndon of CPCNH to clean up and to answer any questions, and then present the document to the Select Board within the next two weeks. Chair Cherian discussed his edits for the document and asked the Committee if all were in agreement. All concurred. Vice Chair Niebling presented a list of additions and changes to the EAP. All concurred. Chair Cherian will make all accepted edits and send out to the rest of the Committee. Chair Cherian raised a question about Electricity Assistance participants. In order to be eligible for this program, residents must be on default power. If all default customers are switched to the community power program, will this make all who are currently enrolled ineligible? This will be a question for Mr. Herndon. Another question raised was does anyone with a meter automatically get opted in, or only customers on default power and not those with third party supply. Chair Cherian will add this to the list of questions for Mr. Herndon. Vice Chair Niebling suggested creating a simple document to bring to the Public Hearings. A one or two page summary that explains the purpose, process, benefits and expectations of the EAP would be sufficient. Originally the Committee suggested holding the first Public Hearing for the EAP in June, but Vice Chair Niebling thought that would be slightly premature. He suggested shooting for one in September and the second in November, and using the time in between to educate the public as much as possible. This would still leave time to prepare the warrant article for Town meeting 2024.

Solar Exemptions: Deputy PCD Director O'Brien informed the Committee that Central NH Regional Planning Commission is currently updating their Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) Project Priority List this month. This document is a saving tactic and helps towns receive grants when funding comes around. If you have projects on this list, it shows the officials in charge of allocating funds that the town has planning strategies in place. She asked if there were any projects the Committee would like to add to the list. Chair Cherian said they've been discussing placing a solar array on town owned property but there are very few options available. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien suggested the proposed recreational building expansion/addition. Depending on the size, it could be suitable for a roof array. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Tillman motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Preisendorfer. All in favor. None opposed.

Next Meeting: May 16th, 2023, @ 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.