

**TOWN OF BEDFORD  
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES  
May 25, 2023**

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, May 25, 2023 in the Town Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road.

**I. Call to Order:** Chairman Russell opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Present: John Russell (Chair), Chris Bandazian (Vice Chair), Jeanne Walker (Assistant Town Manager), Matt McLaughlin, Bill Foote (SB Liaison), Bing Lu, Carolyn Mahoney  
Absent: Chuck Nettleship, Sue Thomas (TC Liaison), Lori Radke (TC Alternate), Andrew Gillis, Mindy Bator (SB alternate)

**II. Approval of March 23, 2023 Minutes**

**MOTION by Mr. Bandazian to approve the minutes of the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Seconded by Mr. Foote. Vote taken – Motion Passed unanimously.**

**III. Approval of April 27, 2023 Minutes**

**MOTION by Mr. McLaughlin to approve the minutes of the April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. Seconded by Mr. Foote. Vote taken – Motion Passed unanimously.**

**IV. Acknowledgement of Successful Passage of Warrant Article for Solar Facility**

Chairman Russell recognized people who helped including Ms. Walker, Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Foote, Mr. Bandazian, Mr. Nettleship, Ms. Mahoney, Mr. Lu, Shana, Katy, Senator Ricciardi, and three people from the Bedford high school. He appreciated everyone for all they did. He handed out ‘Vote Yes on 5’ signs to the Commission members.

**V. Election of the 2023-2024 Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

**MOTION by Mr. Bandazian to nominate John Russell for Chair. Seconded by Mr. McLaughlin. Vote taken – Motion Passed unanimously.**

**MOTION by Chairman Russell to nominate Mr. Bandazian for Vice Chair. Seconded by Mr. Foote. Vote taken – Motion Passed unanimously.**

**VI. Reports of Members and Committees**

**a. School projects progress and planning**

**1. Progress with systems upgrades**

Mr. Foote stated that when school is out, the construction will start at all the schools where construction would occur. He thought McKelvie might be wrapped up with the sprinkler stuff.

## 2. Portfolio Manager

Mr. Foote thought Mr. Bandazian had left off with Todd Zollman; they were going to get the cheaper EPA version. Mr. Bandazian stated that it sounded like it was set up; they're entering data manually. Mr. Zollman was going to contact Eversource to do it. Once it's set up with Eversource web services, there's no human intervention required. He's not sure where Mr. Zollman was in the process. Mr. Foote stated that he would follow-up with him.

Chairman Russell thought it was another successful year with the schools. Mr. Foote stated that it's more like normal. With COVID and problems before that, it had been five years of upheaval. This year had been really nice they're looking to make it even better next year.

Chairman Russell stated that Mr. McLaughlin had an interesting idea of having the kids try and become aware of energy type issues. Observing portfolio manager or visibility into how we use our power. He thought just introducing the concepts was an interesting idea. Mr. Foote stated that the high school community senate talks about that. Bill Carter has them involved in a composting project. The students instituted a take it or leave it table, so if you're not going to eat your apple then put it on the table and some other kid might eat it, so they could cut down on food waste. That's all student led. Mr. McLaughlin thought if they could get a webcam on every meter; when they build the solar field, geothermal at the Library. Mr. Foote stated that was the beauty of Solmart. They can call up the meters and watch the progress. Mr. McLaughlin thought the science and economics teachers can find a way to use the data; work it into lesson plans. Chairman Russell stated that it wasn't just scientific, it's also financial. Mr. Lu mentioned a sign at the Transfer Station and they could post X amount of money was saved from this project. Chairman Russell thought tying together the idea of 'they focus on energy, they save money, they become efficient.' One thing that came out of Article 5 was process efficiency. He was trying to get a few students interested in that. Business students might take an interest in it besides the technical ones. Mr. McLaughlin thought even computer students who want to learn how to make a spreadsheet.

Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know what Portfolio Manager. Mr. Foote stated that it shows consumption over time. Mr. McLaughlin clarified that it's not a financial portfolio; it's an energy portfolio. Mr. Bandazian added that it compares against benchmarks. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if a person did that and Mr. Foote stated that it was automatic; right off the meter into a spreadsheet. It has graphing capability to, so it can show trends. It educates people on how power is built. They've got the power consumption, delivery charges, and demand for commercial operations like schools and businesses. Mr. Bandazian wasn't sure that Eversource added demand.

## VII. Old Business

### b. Solar Project Update

Ms. Walker shared a link to the RFP for the design-build for the solar photovoltaic system at the capped landfill. Yesterday was the mandatory pre-bid conference and there were 7-8 firms there

and they asked some excellent questions. There is a base bid, and then firms have the option of giving them other options in terms of financing, so they can get the best deal. They went to the landfill and they were taking pictures and looking to see if they could expand it.

Mr. McLaughlin wanted to confirm that there was a time limit to get their bids in and Mr. Bandazian stated that it was June 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Foote thought it was a short window. Mr. Bandazian stated that their consultant said the longer they give them the longer they procrastinate. Ms. Walkers stated that it had been out on the streets for two weeks prior to the mandatory pre-bid.

Ms. Walker stated that the Eversource 3-phase power was continuing on its progress. The goal was to have all of that done by the end of this year. Mr. Foote saw that they dropped the poles.

Mr. Bandazian stated that in terms of getting proposals for larger projects, the 750 kilowatts was keeping in mind an ISO NE limit of 1 megawatt and at that point, you have to do something extra special to get that capacity, but they could easily add another 25% to what they put on the ballot. Hopefully they get at least that as an option. Ms. Walker stated that they heard from the vendors that they were thrilled that they had done all of the 3-phase work ahead of the project.

Mr. Foote wanted to know what ISO had to do with it. It's local consumption; they're not going to see any of it. Mr. Bandazian stated that it's not logical, but it makes it an easy cut point for ISO. Mr. Foote wondered if ISO could reach into your home solar panel. Mr. Bandazian thought there was a nuisance level and ISO made this arbitrary decision why wasn't it 5 megawatts. Mr. McLaughlin thought there was legislation this year proposed to make it up to 5. Mr. Foote thought that was last year. Mr. Bandazian stated that there was something additional this year, which hit some speed bumps and that was for small municipalities. Bedford can do group net metering up to 5 megawatts, but small communities don't have a need for that. That legislation was to let small communities do one group net metering. Right now it's per political subdivision, so they can do the Town of Bedford, the School District; they can serve all of those people with 5 megawatts. If you're a small town you have land and surplus power, but you can't use it. This was to allow a group of communities to group net meter. He thought that legislation was either dead or dying.

Chairman Russell thought they might have good news at their June meeting. Mr. Bandazian stated that there would be something to evaluate as of June 16<sup>th</sup>. He didn't know what the date was for the Town to accept or reject. Ms. Walker thought the bids were valid for 90 days after the bid due date. Mr. Foote wanted to know how that works when the bids are opened on June 16<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Walker stated that there would be a bid comparison. They will look at all of the base bids. There's a 2<sup>nd</sup> page of various options if they want to do other things, different funding mechanisms. The 3<sup>rd</sup> page talks about operation and maintenance. There are additional services that they could be providing. They put all of that into one giant spreadsheet and they will compare, contrast and evaluate those alternatives and see what's best for Bedford. Then it's elevated to the Town Council and they would award the contract. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if the Energy Commission gets to see it before it goes to the Town Council and make a recommendation. Mr. Bandazian thought they probably would. Ideally they would read, evaluate and make a recommendation; probably have a formal vote on what that recommendation is, but it's not a binding recommendation.

Chairman Russell thought it went to the Council three months after the bid opening. Ms. Walker responded no. When you solicit a bid, they have to hold those bid prices to give the Town time to award the contract. They typically ask between 60 and 90 days that they hold those bid prices.

**c. Eversource 3 Phase Power update**

Chairman Russell wanted to know if they had a timeline from Eversource and wanted to know if it was going to happen in 2023 and Ms. Walker confirmed that it was.

Chairman Russell wanted to know if there was any feedback from Jeff Foote regarding the compactors. Ms. Walker stated that he talked a little bit about that in the pre-construction meeting; about all of these things happening at the same time. Chairman Russell thought they needed to make sure that from the perspective of the taxpayers that there is no tax increase. That was one point of objection. There was a question of why two different projects into one warrant article. He thought there was some merit to that objection.

**d. Community Power Initiative: Discussion regarding RFP vs. CPCNH**

Mr. Bandazian stated that his only reservation with CPCNH was how they fulfill the renewable part of what they were offering by purchasing REC's. Otherwise, he was very comfortable recommending them to the Town Council or do RFP. Chairman Russell liked that CPCNH and Standard Power were offering multiple options. There's a lower alternative energy and if you want almost 100% alternative energy, there's a price option for that.

Chairman Russell thought that CPCNH is a cost of about 2% and wondered if Eversource would ever come down on a competitive basis. Mr. Bandazian didn't think on a competitive basis, but thought on a seasonal basis they would.

Mr. Bandazian wanted to know if they wanted to do something to move it forward and Chairman Russell thought they should. Mr. Foote wanted to know if that was based on the Exeter presentation. Chairman Russell thought yes, and also Standard Power was doing something with Keene. Mr. Lu wanted to if they pick one were they stuck with them for many years or can they switch. Chairman Russell was pretty sure they could switch. He didn't know what the timeframe was. Mr. Bandazian was thinking the 2-5 year range. Mr. Lu thought they should pick one and if they don't like it they can switch over. Chairman Russell pointed out that people could opt out if they don't like it. Mr. Foote thought the only hold up was the organization part where you have to opt most of the Town in. For the size of Bedford he thought that would be a big effort. Mr. Lu stated that you would have to convince people that the one they pick is better than the other one. Chairman Russell wanted to know if they had to go to the ballot with it in 2024 and Mr. Bandazian responded that they did. Chairman Russell wanted to know if it was a 50% or 60% passage and Mr. Bandazian and Mr. Foote thought it was 50%.

Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if CPCNH could come in and give them a presentation and Mr. Bandazian thought they could do that. Chairman Russell liked that they were offering up to four different options and thought it made their job much easier.

**e. Solsmart**

Ms. Mahoney stated that the solar landing page was up and running and that Ms. Walker had been incredible over the last few weeks moving their advisor along to take a look at all of their documents. Unfortunately, he was only recommending bronze right now, but the application was put together and he has forwarded it on. They should get a response back in two weeks. Once they've got bronze, they'll look at what they need to do to move to another level. Ms. Walker has a scoring sheet, so they know where the points are. They can take a look at it and decide if there were some places where they could beef up the points or go for some additional points. Chairman Russell thought from a Town point of view, they want to sell the concept 'Bedford was going green; they have their bronze designation.' He thought they could get that message out especially to the realtors; the idea of selling the Town. They've got great geothermal, great solar, and they are bronze designation. They're progressing forward as a town; they're making the effort.

**f. Website Review**

Mr. Lu stated that there hadn't been any progress since the last time he reviewed it. He had a list of issues. Ms. Mahoney stated that Ms. Walker had been making changes.

Ms. Walker stated that at the last meeting they decided to put the first sentence of the mission summary on the landing page. Under Related Documents is the complete Energy Commission Mission Summary. They also updated the members and terms and removed the Green Business links. She mentioned the 'Property Tax Exemptions for Renewable Energy Systems' link under Quick Links; it didn't send you anywhere. She will work to reconnect that. The Solar Resources link takes you to the solar landing page. The NH Office of Strategic Initiatives was the other link. If it is supposed to go to a different landing page then let her know. Chairman Russell wanted to know if they could put something up there about the Library geothermal project. Mr. Bandazian thought there was still a link on the Library's website. Mr. Lu liked the idea of having a landing page that showcases all of the energy efficient projects they've done. Mr. Foote stated that the LED street lights was a big thing and it was under the radar. Chairman Russell stated that he would like to see the 3-phase power project. Mr. Foote suggested a running history of energy improvements. Chairman Russell wants to showcase what they've done and where they're going. Ms. Mahoney thought they could add something under Quick Links like 'Bedford's Progress' or 'Bedford's History' and list out some of those projects and for the future, this is what they're looking at. Chairman Russell mentioned that Jeff Foote had a resource who did the drone coverage of where the landfill is. He would like to see an ongoing 'here's where we're going, here's where we stand.' If they have a resource, a drone shot always sells. He thought it was a selling point.

Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if there was a high school media club and Mr. Foote stated that there was. They deal through BCTV, so Bill Jennings might be the point of contact. Chairman Russell stated that the DPW presentation was excellent and if the Commission could do more of that. There's a resource within Jeff's organization, so they should use him.

Mr. Bandazian thought it became an issue of how to drive traffic there. Chairman Russell thought him and Mr. Foote would drive the traffic and promote the idea.

**g. Messaging Signage at Transfer Station**

Ms. Walker stated that there's about \$1,300 of grant money available. She did some research, but kept coming up with variable message boards, which she knows they don't want. She needed more direction on exactly what they would like. There are a lot of different graphic signs that could be purchased and installed, but didn't know how weather proof they were. Chairman Russell was thinking that they've got a number of projects ongoing and being able to display those; show people where they're going and what they're doing. Mr. Bandazian stated that for a device he could send her some information. There are commercial outdoor monitors that get used for advertising that were much less than the School District paid for their outside message board. The question becomes how you get content into it. The product he was thinking of was one of those commercial outdoor monitors. They have special levels of contrast so they will actually fulfill their purpose in an outdoor setting. Chairman Russell wanted to know if they would be able to get that for \$1,300 and Mr. Bandazian responded no. It won't be a 5% of what the cost is; it's probably more like 25% of what the cost is, not including how you get data to it. Chairman Russell thought showing people what they're doing was a big takeaway; interacting with folks was very productive. Mr. McLaughlin thought a good place for the message board was under the roof where the recycling was. He wasn't sure if the Town would let them put it there.

Mr. Bandazian stated that he would email Ms. Walker the information and thought they would need to find another source of funding. Mr. Lu wanted to know what size they were thinking about. Mr. Bandazian stated that it was going to be price driven; there are products in that range that might be more in the \$10K-15K area. If it's in that recycling area they wouldn't need something so huge. He thought the quality of the images was very good. Chairman Russell wondered if there was a business willing to sponsor it. Mr. Bandazian stated that there was one in Town that had the successful bid for the AV system in the Library that they could at least talk to. If it's the Town spending money above a certain level, it's going to have to go through the Town Council and three bids. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if they had to reach out to somebody about where to locate it. Ms. Walker stated most definitely. They would need to coordinate that very carefully with the Transfer Station operations. They wouldn't want to impact their operations adversely.

**VIII. New Business:**

**h. CENH Updates** – No updates, but they can check out their ongoing programs.

**i. Other new business**

Ms. Mahoney stated that when she joined the Commission back in the fall, there was an event called 'Drive Electric'. They had talked about trying to do something in Town for that. If that's in the fall, they may want to start looking into when it is and what packages were available for that. Mr. Foote wanted to know if that was promoting electric cars. Ms. Mahoney thought it was. They talked about it in October but there wasn't enough time to pull something together for that day, but there information packages available. She could take a look to see what she could find out about it or if there are other information sessions they could run that might help out around Town. Mr. Bandazian stated that at some other point in the year there's a bicycle to work or carpool to work week. There are a few driving related programs.

Chairman Russell wanted to know if they could look at NHSaves and highlight things for residents. Mr. Bandazian stated that there was help available for low income people and even renters. The people that have the least resources to find information like that were the most in need of it, so it's hard to suggest a good way to it. NHSaves has a link to programs for seniors. When you click on it, the agency that actually does the work is another click away. If you go directly to that one it's not so easy to find the programs; it's challenging. He thought it would be very nice to get that word out. He met with people from that agency at the Energy Solutions conference, and thought they would come and speak to the Commission; it might be a good way to get information out to people.

Chairman Russell would like to see the Commission promote some of these ideas like the ButtonUp program and wondered if they would do that again. They've connected with so many people, maybe try and invite folks into the meeting. Getting engagement might be a good idea.

Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if they still did Old Town Day in the fall and Mr. Bandazian responded no. Mr. McLaughlin thought that would have been a good place to put a booth. Ms. Mahoney thought maybe an open house where they have a couple of different vendors or discussion groups. Mr. Bandazian thought maybe Town election time. He thought the primary would if the moderator has the space and would allow them to be there. It might be a good chance to get some groups present. Mr. McLaughlin thought they might get some pushback on that. He's on the Charter Commission and they are concerned about the time voters spend in the parking spaces. If they stall people leaving they may not be happy.

Chairman Russell stated that a big takeaway from the Article 5 campaign was how condensed their timeframe is. The extra two weeks was an absolute blessing for them and got them the win. He thought they needed to think about how they push the message much earlier. Especially with community power. They need to be engaged and talking will before January. They need to communicate three months out that this is coming. He wants the visual; more than just links. He wants links that go to nice graphics. He really wants them to be presenting like that; constantly ongoing. Just by reaching out and talking to people they garnered a lot of respect. He thought the same was true for the Town. If they can show everything the Town was doing; people don't really know that. The constant communication. It's not marketing, it's more like progress and visuals.

Mr. Foote thought part of the reality of any election was many of the people don't pay attention until right before the election. That's when they choose to engage. If you give them three months it's background noise until it's actually time to vote. Chairman Russell thought it was the idea of 'you're getting value for your money.' He thought there was potential with the drone footage idea. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if the Energy Commission should put out a newsletter once or twice a year. It would cost them money, but it could have links and QR codes to the things they want. Chairman Russell stated that the DPW spring newsletter was excellent for them and putting flyers in people's hands was helpful. He would like to think about how they push messages out, because there's a lot of work going on. As Mr. Foote pointed out, there's a small group of people deeply involved doing a lot of work. There are some people who come in and point fingers. There are others who have objections, but you can reason with them. You can develop their respect. He loved the idea of what they're doing with the website.

## **IX. Reminders:**

**j. Next upcoming meeting June 22, 2023**

Chairman Russell stated that Mr. Bandazian would be chairing that meeting, because he'll be in Costa Rica.

Mr. Bandazian stated that perennially down on County Road and Nashua Road, lights were on, on recreation facilities. He didn't know if they were leaving the lights on, on Sportsman Field for security. He drove to Lowes and there was nothing going on there and then he drove back from Lowes and there was nothing going on there. Mr. Foote stated that the tennis courts were on a timer; if there was not motion they would go off at 10:00 PM, which was the absolute cutoff. Ms. Walker stated that she didn't know what was going on there. Mr. Bandazian stated that the full lights were on at Sportsman Field and it didn't seem like that was what should be intended. Ms. Walker responded that it's definitely not. Mr. Bandazian stated that it was Tuesday night. Ms. Walker stated that she would follow up on that. Mr. Bandazian thought that they would have controls for Sportsman. The tennis courts had always been a challenge. Ms. Walker stated that someone could have been there earlier and neglected to turn off the lights. If they do have control over it, sometimes they are asking the people that were using it to turn them off and they forget.

Chairman Russell stated that he had been tracking the cost of recycling over the years and it was highly variable; most people don't notice. They've gone as low as \$18/ton up to \$133/ton for the cost of recycling. He thought that was an interesting chart that could be thrown up on the webpage. Maybe add a link or maybe at the Transfer Station stating 'here's the cost of MSW, here's the cost of recycling.' Rick Sawyer had made a point at the Town Council meeting of 'this was cheaper than that.' He thought the variable cost of recycling was very interesting. He thought that would be an interesting thing to throw up on the webpage and communicate that to people. Ms. Mahoney stated that there was a recycling link. Chairman Russell stated that he had been taking snapshots of it over the last two years. Ms. Walker stated that they try and update that. Chairman Russell stated that you don't see the graph over time. Mr. Bandazian stated that it was market driven. Chairman Russell stated that when they went to the MRF there was a market for 1's, 2's and 5's and the rest was just discarded. The question now was is there still a market for 1's. Even the 1's like the Coca-Cola bottles were not really 1's they're some kind of biodegradable 1. Mr. Foote stated that if it gets mixed in with the 1's it makes the 1's unusable. Ms. Mahoney wanted to know if people were throwing those into the recycling bin if that whole load wasn't usable. Mr. Foote explained that they shred 1's and can use that again, but PLA gets mixed in with it turns it into a gummy mess. Ms. Mahoney wanted to know if they were sorting it somewhere. Mr. Foote explained that at the MRF there was a belt that goes about 50 mph and they have little cameras, so it identifies the plastic on the fly and then blows them off into different buckets. It can identify the ones from the PLA. Chairman Russell wondered if they should do another visit to the MRF. Mr. Foote thought it was worth the trip; it's Disney for facility managers. Chairman Russell stated that in 2024 he would take on a visit to the MRF again and thought maybe Councilors and even the Town Manager might be interested in going.

Chairman Russell acknowledged Ms. Mahoney's reappointment and Mr. McLaughlin's appointment. He wanted Mr. McLaughlin to introduce himself. Mr. McLaughlin stated that he was born and raised in Bedford. He was in the navy for about 8 years, moved back and has been in Bedford ever since. He's married, three kids, and five grandkids. He's happy to be there and



thought this was one of the most important commissions in Town government, because this was the world going forward. He has a horizontal loop geothermal system and 13.1 kilowatt solar array.

Ms. Mahoney wanted to know if they were going to try and get a presentation on the ground solar and Chairman Russell responded no, that wasn't going to happen.

**X. Adjournment**

**MOTION by Chairman Russell to adjourn at 8:05 PM. Seconded by Mr. McLaughlin. All in favor.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Boufford