

TOWN OF BEDFORD
June 25, 2020
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, June 25, 2020 via the Zoom Meeting Platform.

Present: John Russell (Vice Chair), Denise Ricciardi (Town Council Liaison), Lori Radke (Town Council Alternate), John Schneller (School Board Liaison), Bill Foote (School Board Liaison Alternate), Andrew Gillis, Bing Lu, Sarah Braese, Tim Paradis, Bart Fromuth, Tom Elwood, Rick Sawyer (Town Manager)

In absence of an elected Energy Commission Chair, John Russell (Vice Chair) acted as Chairman at the outset of the meeting.

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

Chairman Russell read the following statement:

- *Due to the state of emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.*
- *Please note that there is no physical location to observe this meeting which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's emergency order; however, in accordance with the emergency order I am confirming that: A) We are providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access live on BCTV Comcast Channel 22, or streaming online by going to the town website and choosing "BCTV" under "Departments" and clicking on "Channel 22". We are utilizing an online platform called Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform. The public has access to contemporaneously listen, and if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone number: 1-646-558-8656 and entering the meeting ID: 82642943143#. Password: 616448#; B) We have previously given notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using the telephone which is listed at the top of the agenda on the town website; C) If anybody has a problem accessing the meeting via the phone, please email us at rsawyer@bedfordnh.org. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.*
- *Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.*

Chairman Russell took roll call attendance and each member stated whether or not they were alone in the room due to right to know laws:

Denise Ricciardi (alone), Lori Radke (alone), John Schneller (alone), Bill Foote (alone), Andrew Gillis (alone), Bart Fromuth (alone), Bing Lu (alone), Sarah Braese (alone), Tim Paradis (alone), Thomas Elwood (alone), Rick Sawyer (alone).

II. Quorum Count: (5)

III. Approval of Minutes – May 28, 2020

MOTION by Mr. Schneller to approve the May 28, 2020 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Paradis.

Roll call vote: Denise Ricciardi-aye, John Schneller-aye, Andrew Gillis-aye, Bart Fromuth-aye, Bing Lu-aye, Tim Paradis-aye. (2 abstentions Ms. Braese and Mr. Elwood who were not in attendance at the May 28, 2020). All in favor – Motion Passed 6-0.

IV. Welcome new Commission Members

a. Bart Fromuth

Mr. Fromuth has lived in Bedford since 2012. He runs an energy company called Freedom Energy Logistics and has been there since 2008. He served 2 terms as State Representative for the Town of Bedford from 2014 – 2018 and served on the Commerce and Consumer Affairs committee, helped write a decent amount of energy legislation, and was involved in crafting the recently passed Bill 286 which deals with community choice aggregation (which the Energy Commission has been discussing quite a bit). Now that he is no longer involved in the political side of things, he is looking for ways to help out and wanted to join the Energy Commission and bring to bear his experience in the energy sector and get involved in discussion on how we can move Bedford forward with various energy projects. Mr. Fromuth stated he is happy to be here.

b. Tom Elwood

Mr. Elwood is a retired (since 2013) securities lawyer who started his career with the SEC doing enforcement and then spent the next 20 years keeping the SEC away from his employers. He is a retired Lieutenant Colonel with the National Guard, who was a JAG officer in New Hampshire in the end. He is interested in giving back to the Town and is happy to be a member of the commission.

V. Special Orders

a. Election of the Chair

There was discussion about whether or not to hold off voting on a Chair until July. Mr. Fromuth, Mr. Schneller, and Ms. Ricciardi thought putting it off until July would give new members a little time to get to know the others before voting on a Chair. Mr. Elwood thought the Commission would not function well without a Chair and that it would be more advantageous to vote for a Chair this evening. Ms. Braese suggested putting forth nominations this evening and voting in July.

Chairman Russell nominated Tim Paradis. There were no other nominations.

MOTION by Mr. Russell to nominate Tim Paradis as the new Chair of the Energy Commission. Seconded by Mr. Schneller.

Roll call vote: Denise Ricciardi-aye, John Schneller-aye, Andrew Gillis-aye, Bart Fromuth-aye, Bing Lu-aye, Tim Paradis-aye, Sarah Braese-aye, Tom Elwood-aye. Motion Passed 8-0.

b. Election of the Vice-Chair

Newly appointed-Chairman Paradis nominated John Russell to continue in his roll as Vice-Chair. There were no other nominations for Vice-Chair.

MOTION by Chairman Paradis to nominate John Russell to continue serving as Vice-Chair of the Energy Commission. Seconded by Mr. Gillis.

Roll call vote: Denise Ricciardi-aye, John Schneller-aye, Andrew Gillis-aye, Bart Fromuth-aye, Bing Lu-aye, Tim Paradis-aye, Sarah Braese-aye, Tom Elwood-aye. Motion Passed 8-0.

VI. Direction of the Bedford Energy Commission

a. Roundtable discussion

Ms. Ricciardi mentioned the Town Charter in the last meeting and Chairman Paradis did some research and found that there is a Town Charter on the Energy Commission and on January 26, 2017 there was a vote for rules and procedures, which both seem to outline the direction of the Energy Commission. Chairman Paradis thought it would be good for the group to have discussion of ideas about what the expectations for the Energy Commission are and what the direction of the Energy Commission should be; then he would like to meet with Dave Gilbert, Town Council Chair and Ms. Ricciardi Town Council Vice-Chair about what they think the direction of the Energy Commission should be. That way we get a fresh perspective of the expectations for and direction of the Energy Commission.

Mr. Russell felt some good things the Energy Commission has done in the past year include identifying any energy efficiencies in our various town locations; various exciting ongoing projects; municipal aggregation; optimizing the transfer station and what projects might be done with the space there; and other initiatives such as Beautify Bedford which allow for community outreach and are very positive.

Ms. Ricciardi said that Mr. Gilbert wanted to wait until the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Energy Commission were solidified and then he wanted to sit down with the new Chairman to discuss the direction of the Energy Commission. She said the goal would be to concentrate efforts on energy conservation.

In looking at the Town Charter and the notes from the January 26, 2017 meeting when the rules and procedures of the Energy Commission were voted on, Chairman Paradis said that duties were identified. He would like to compile some of the things that the commission members would like to focus on and then talk to Mr. Gilbert and Ms. Ricciardi to see if that fits with what they believe the mission to be. He thinks we should focus on a direction for municipal aggregation, and we now have Mr. Fromuth on the commission and his company came in and spoke with the Energy Commission at the October 24, 2019 along with Henry Herndon from Clean Energy New Hampshire while the Energy Commission was still learning about municipal aggregation. Chairman Paradis opened the floor for a discussion on how the Energy Commission members see

The Commission's role in municipal aggregation within the Town.

John Schneller feels the commission should be interested in municipal aggregation because it has to do with energy and should put together a cohesive thought and consult offline with Town Manager Rick Sawyer and Jeff Foote from the Department of Public Works to determine what their plan and vision is for energy and also talk with Town Council to make sure we are dealing with issues that we should be dealing with. Mr. Schneller said what he has seen since joining the Energy Commission (if you were to draw a Venn diagram) is crossover between what the vision is for the Energy Commission and what the purview and vision is at the Department of Public Works (DPW) and activities at the Transfer Station and these two things should not conflict. He thinks DPW will know what they can and cannot do, what they are already working on, and their vision that is laid out over the coming years and we should be clear on that before we get our collective thoughts together and bring them to Town Council.

Mr. Russell said that the charter for the Energy Commission points out the role of the Energy Commission is "the promotion of energy efficiency, conservation, sustainability, reliability, and affordability and answers the health, safety, and welfare of Bedford residents, businesses, and public and private institutions within the town." This is a very broad vision, and he said what he is hearing is a very narrow vision.

Chairman Paradis looked back 5-years to the library project and other projects and it seems that the Energy Commission got looped into energy and environmental and that is why the Transfer Station and other things overlapped. For example, you can recycle for oil which helps energy costs; there is overlap. Going back to at least 2005 the Transfer Station has been part of the agenda and it is a worthwhile conversation to have to make sure we are doing things within our charter but also being there to support DPW. The lines between energy, environmental and how it all plays together have been blurred. He asked if the Energy Commission wants to have a discussion with Mr. Sawyer the Town Manager, Mr. Gilbert the Town Council Chair and DPW about whether it should be in our purview to work in conjunction with them since things do seem to overlap.

Mr. Gillis feels if the word "sustainability" is in our charter then recycling and saving energy would fall under sustainability.

Mr. Lu asked if there is an Environmental Commission. Mr. Foote said no, we are it. Mr. Schneller pointed out that there is a Conservation Commission, but Mr. Gillis thought they only dealt with land. Mr. Foote doesn't think what the Conservation Commission does applies to the Energy Commission. He wonders if the Town Council should have given the Energy Commission simple direction at the start of this meeting, because now we have elected officers but can't be turned loose to work on anything until we have Town Council agreement.

Ms. Ricciardi suggested working on something that they definitely know is part of the commission until they have further discussion with Mr. Gilbert. She suggested concentrating efforts on energy conservation building by building, but particularly at the schools which have large consumption of energy. She asked why the electronic monitor was installed at the school buildings as opposed to the library. Both Mr. Schneller and Mr. Foote said they were not aware of any electronic monitor being installed at the schools. Mr. Foote noted that the electronic monitor was installed at the library only temporarily. Mr. Sawyer confirmed that the electronic monitor was installed at the library, but not at the schools; so, he was unclear what Ms. Ricciardi was referring to. He was under the impression that Mr. Lu may have knowledge about the electronic monitor that Peter Barbuto (Public Works Facility Manager) was using.

Mr. Sawyer reiterated that he believes the intent was for Mr. Gilbert to meet with the newly elected Chair and Vice-Chair of the Energy Commission along with Ms. Ricciardi once the election of officers had been held. He knows Mr. Gilbert's focus is on the energy aspects of what the commission does. He has appreciated all the work the Energy Commission has done from getting geothermal at the library which has been incredible and couldn't have been done without the commission's support; the commission's promotion of solar at the transfer station over a number of years (noting that the RFP's probably wouldn't have gotten out without the help of the Energy Commission – unfortunately net-metering has not allowed us to move forward without 3-Phase power. If we had 3-Phase power at the transfer station he thinks we would probably be moving forward with getting power on our own system rather than trying to get somebody else to bring it in.) Given the town's staffing levels and not having anyone to focus on energy, what Mr. Sawyer thinks is needed from the Energy Commission is their expertise and interest in energy and bringing recommendations on true energy items.

Mr. Lu commented on the electronic monitor. In the system he can only see one monitor. He does not think that we have more than one electronic monitor, and that is why it has to be moved around. Based on electric bill analysis the goal for the electronic monitor is to be placed in those areas/buildings that have a high demand charge (about 70-80% of the electric bill) and monitor them to see if there is a way we can lower the demand charge and steady the cost. The electronic monitor does not need to permanently stay in one place, it can be used at locations that have high electric bills. He thinks we want to use the electronic monitor at building and sports fields to gather information on their usage so we can use judgement about whether we can do something in that particular building/area to improve the cost.

Ms. Radke thought this is a great conversation and that it will lay a good foundation on which to move forward. She is in an interesting position as an alternate member of the Energy Committee and also sitting on the energy committee of the Town of Hollis where she works as the staff representative. They spent a lot of time putting energy meters in the schools to make measurements over the years so they can give recommendations to the School Board and Select Board about ways they could reduce energy. Over the years they have put several warrant articles out which were voted in the affirmative which allowed them to install solar on top of the schools and put in energy-related things. She thinks we may also want to look at our zoning and seeing how restrictive our zoning laws are and if it will allow people to do solar. Somewhere down the road when larger groups of people are allowed to congregate she would love to facilitate bringing in the Hollis Energy Committee to talk and share ideas with the Bedford Energy Committee. Mr. Russell thought it is a fantastic idea. Chairman Paradis agreed and said it has been very helpful to see what other towns and municipalities have done.

Chairman Paradis thinks the Energy Commission should get clear on what role they should be playing in municipal aggregation and liaising with the Town Council (obviously the commission would have no voting power). As we've talked about before the Town could vote, we could get cheaper energy, and everyone could save money going forward, and the Town could take the money they save to use on other projects that would be useful to implement in the town. Although Mr. Fromuth's company had been in to talk with the Bedford Energy Commission before, Chairman Paradis asked for his thoughts on the municipal aggregation opportunity in Bedford.

Mr. Fromuth said he would abstain from any votes or recommendations to the Town Council and realizes that the Energy Commission has no power to implement policy or programs, but at the same time if the Energy Commission is going to make recommendations to the Town Council

regarding municipal aggregation he would abstain from a vote on that. Mr. Fromuth explained that the Governor signed SB286 and it certainly is an attractive model to take a look at. Seven or eight States have already implemented it in some fashion. There are 2 competing models: 1) The Massachusetts Model which is very similar to how Bedford runs its energy contracts by going out and getting a rate and work with a third-party supplier that handles all the billing and administration and there is really no added cost to the community; and 2) The California Model which gets into the details, for example, the Town can join with other town groups that come together and procure their power through buying conglomerates. There are attractive advantages to that, and disadvantages in that there are costs that the Town/community has to put forth in terms of staffing and collateralizing loan obligations and billing is a major concern through that type of venture. He said the New Hampshire law is interesting because when they wrote it they were the first State to allow both avenues to be pursued. Mr. Fromuth works with the towns of Lebanon and Hanover, and they are very much in the forefront of this stuff. He works closely with Henry Herndon at Clean Energy. Mr. Fromuth thinks the biggest obstacle for municipal aggregation right now is the push back we are getting from Eversource. Mr. Fromuth said they had written in some verbiage about what kind of access to data they could have on behalf of the residents/aggregations and Eversource is making the claim that they want municipal aggregation but at the same time they are unwilling to give out any account level data that suppliers and Towns need to implement a successful Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). We can't go out and get pricing unless the third party supplier knows not only what makes up the aggregated load, but what individualized capacity obligations are for each homeowner and business in the community; as well as who is on standard offer service, who is on competitive supply. Utilities are unwilling to give this information out at this point in time; so, he and Henry Herndon have a working group going with the major utilities, the Public Utilities Commission, and some third party suppliers to hash through this and see if there is a compromise we can come to in order to make this work. Otherwise, unfortunately, what is going to end up happening is that we'll have to go through Public Utilities Commission (PUC) rules for guidance and that is about a 1 – 1 ½ -year process to get them to give some kind of recommendation that can be acted on. Secondarily he said they are also trying to work through the legislature, but unfortunately, anything that did not make the crossover from House-to-Senate or Senate-to-House isn't going to be taken up for the rest of the term, so that's kind of dead in the water and pushes off any timeline that we have to influence this process well into 2021. It is a good time to talk about it. What is material to Bedford is that if we approve municipal aggregation (which is a step that we can take but we have to have our municipal aggregation plan put together) it can only be done on Town Meeting day. A different governing structure like Lebanon or Londonderry can simply vote to authorize it at any point in time, but in Bedford you only get one chance per year to push it through. If the Energy Commission makes a recommendation it should keep its eye on the calendar and keep in mind the time deadlines we are running up against. It will be interesting to see how the next couple of months unfold. He does not see the PUC running to our rescue. He thinks the only way we are going to get positive movement on this is legislatively, unless Eversource compromises and backs down from their incorrect (as he sees it) reading of the statutes.

Chairman Paradis asked if there is anything we should be thinking about as an Energy Commission when going in to talk with Ms. Ricciardi and Mr. Gilbert of the Bedford Town Council, and is there anything we should focus on to provide guidance to the Town Council.

Mr. Fromuth said the Town Council appoints the municipal aggregation committee and it is important that the municipal aggregation committee work in tandem and in-sync with the Town Council because the Town Council can only vote on the work product of the municipal aggregation committee and give it a thumbs up or a thumbs down vote. They can't edit it, or put line item vetoes on it, so it is important to have discussions with them to see where they are at and what their visions are for municipal aggregation, getting their input, and constantly pushing them towards appointing that committee and making sure they are putting people on the committee that are going to lead to an outcome that the Town Council can give a positive vote for. It would cause major delays if you had a municipal aggregation committee that pushed in one direction, and a Town Council that votes against that and wants to go in another direction. You would lose a lot of valuable time that way. The Energy Commission should get a checklist from the Town Council of some of the options they have looked at and some of the people they have talked to that they recommend we talk to as well. They should come back to the Energy Commission with what the goals for Town Council are and where they would like more input and where the Energy Commission can be of service, by getting more materials, or more presentations, almost to help them with the vetting process. The Town Council should utilize the Energy Commission (because members are passionate about energy) to make it a successful process within the time deadlines that we have.

Mr. Elwood said as a new member of the Energy Commission in order to make any intelligent decisions about what path to recommend he needs to understand what is being talked about through a syllabus, some data or previous presentations; otherwise, he'd just be sitting here nodding his head and listening but not understanding what the real issues are. He asked if we could get some source data to look at in order to not be flying blind.

Mr. Fromuth said there is a really good white paper he could provide from about 4-5 years ago on the different forms of municipal aggregation that provides a rundown of how it is operated in different States and what the advantages and disadvantages are.

Mr. Gillis said that there was also a great presentation made to the Energy Commission about this that may perhaps be around for viewing, or else they may have given us a PDF about it.

Chairman Paradis said that on October 24, 2019 Mr. Fromuth's company, Freedom Energy came, and at another meeting Henry Herndon came in either November or December 2019. He asked Mr. Fromuth to send the white paper to the Energy Commission's Google Group and he will look in the Google Groups to see if he can find any of the PowerPoint presentations that they previously sent to us. He will post what he can find to the Google Groups, including our discussions around SB286 and the third parties that have come in to talk to us so everyone can be as up-to-speed as possible. He feels that municipal aggregation is one of the biggest opportunities that we need to tackle as an Energy Commission and it would make a lot of sense for us to discuss it.

Mr. Gillis stated that we have a lot of new members and this is a complex topic if you've never heard of it before; but, it is actually very simple. Basically, the town buys power in bulk for the whole town, so they get this crazy-low rate because they've got these big contracts where they buy megawatts of power for the town offices, schools, and things like that. This program would allow the town as a whole to buy power for its residents. The residents would pay their energy bills as they do now; the town doesn't get involved with the money; but the town signs the contract. The residents just get cheaper power is what it boils down to. It's a neat program that allows town residents to work together to buy in bulk the way a big energy user like the town offices does. Mr.

Paradis asked Mr. Fromuth if what Mr. Gillis just described was the Massachusetts Model. Mr. Fromuth said it was. He explained that the reason it is the “Fisher Price” model (as he likes to call it) is because there is no need to vote on any budgetary items so all the cost is embedded in the power rate that the residents pay and there is no need for the Town to spend on HR concerns, billing department, customer service and everything that goes into running a power supplier. He said businesses can get involved too, but typically you don’t see much business interaction in these CCA groups because 92% of New Hampshire businesses buy through a third party already so they would be in our opt-out network and we would be targeting those on default service. In his opinion, the biggest advantage to the CCA groupings is that when consumers get mailers from companies offering them good rates for 3 months, they are hoping you are going to “fall asleep at the wheel” and then in month 4 you are going to give back that savings and then some! The real power of the CCA going through the town vetting process and having them negotiate the contracts is that they make sure when they negotiate on behalf of all the residents they take out all of the pitfalls that are commonly embedded in those residential contracts that make it so supplier friendly. This changes the dynamic so that becomes very consumer friendly. The price may not always be lower than the utility; however, there is going to be times when a CCA could find itself above a utility rate by virtue of when our utilities set our pricing. He said Eversource does 6-month intervals, so you might find that Eversource went out and bought in the middle of March when energy prices were being crushed and the demand evaporated because of COVID-19 – that might show up in the next Eversource rate of \$0.07 in August. Had we entered into a CCA we would have been very happy a month ago with a 7.3-cent rate vs. an 8-cent rate, but then you look forward to August and we could have found ourselves underwater for a few months, but in the end the advantage is always going to be on our side because Eversource and utilities are essentially price-takers and they just go out every 6-months and whatever the market is doing at that point in time, they lock it in. We have the advantage of waiting for market opportunities and going in and locking in what the market presents and we don’t have to sit around waiting or have some arbitrary date on the calendar with which to act, so that is another inherent benefit to the strategy.

Mr. Schneller said as a very liberty-minded person, the thing that makes him nervous is opt-in/opt-out and how binding those clauses are. Mr. Fromuth explained that the law was written almost as an alternative default service rate; in other words, Eversource Rate 1 and Eversource Rate 2 (municipal aggregation is trying to be Eversource Rate 2). By trying to be that alternative utility rate customers would retain all the benefits of the utility and they could come and go as they please. Not only would someone have the opportunity to opt-out within 30-days of getting the notice, but they could go back to the Eversource Rate 1 in the next month without any penalty. It is a universal access model that allows anyone who wants to depart to depart at any time. If someone was to find a third-party supply rate that was better than the Bedford buying consortium’s rate, they could leave at any time for that, which is better than most third party models out there (even in the commercial sector) where if they sell you a rate for 1 or 2 years you must adhere to that contract for that period of time and not have the same freedom you would in a CCA model. Mr. Schneller thinks the communication of that to residents is very important. He said there are potential support costs that might be born by the Town and if they have to create a new “department” it will embed a permanent cost to the Town’s cost structure. He feels this is something we would have to watch, and something that Town Council might ask about too. He doesn’t think it’s as simple a “Fisher Price” model as people may think – it *could* be if everything is done right, but there are definitely some issues that need to be vetted before we push anything forward. He feels that is why we are starting here and now at the Energy Commission-level before it has to go to any type of ballot.

Chairman Paradis thinks everyone is still educating themselves around SB286. He asked their group if there should be discussion with Ms. Ricciardi and Mr. Gilbert around their thoughts about the municipal aggregation committee and whether they would like the Energy Commission serve as the municipal aggregation committee, or if Town Council planning on appointing their own municipal aggregation committee aside from the Energy Commission. This may be one of the first things that needs to be determined.

Ms. Ricciardi knows it is a Town Council decision and they would discuss it later. She said when and if the municipal aggregation committee is formed the Town Council will decide. She thinks it would make sense for the municipal aggregation committee to request information from the Energy Commission. Everything has to be addressed point by point with Mr. Gilbert.

Ms. Radke suggested if the Energy Commission was thinking about becoming the municipal aggregation committee the best course of action may be to come up with a presentation and get on the Town Council's agenda and give that presentation to the council, so they could discuss it.

Chairman Paradis explained that was the direction the Energy Commission had been going under the previous Chair, Jeff Kerr. Former Chairman Kerr worked on a presentation along with Chairman Paradis. He thinks the Energy Commission should form working group to discuss the presentation and get on the Town Council agenda to request being appointed as the municipal aggregation committee, if there is going to be one.

Mr. Sawyer said the Energy Commission should put together presentation materials with specific detailed information for the Town Council (or at least the Town Council leadership) to digest. He feels that part of the disconnect that has been happening has to do with turnover on the Town Council. He explained that there was a changeover of two Town Council members, specifically former Councilmember Bandazian who had been the guiding light for the Town Council on all matters pertaining to energy. Also, former Council member Rombeau stepped away from the Energy Commission and did not seek re-election to Town Council. A lot of work must now be done to educate the Town Council about the things the Energy Commission can do for the town and the school district. Energy aggregation is a foreign term to Town Council so they need to be educated up on it. Without former Council members Bandazian and Rombeau being on Town Council to educate the council on all the work the Energy Commission has already done, unfortunately, the Town Council is now starting from scratch knowledge-wise. Even though there have been presentations to the Town Council in the past, it is still brand new to them and they are trying to grasp it. He said to pretend the Town Council and Town Council leadership is in kindergarten on the subject, and the Energy Commission are college graduates on the matter.

Chairman Paradis noted that the Energy Commission also has new members trying to get up to speed on this, and former Chairman Kerr had really been spearheading the municipal aggregation initiative; so it seems both the Energy Commission and the Town Council are at the same pace right now. He was a little fearful that Town Council was ahead of where the Energy Commission is, but it seems both groups are on the same page.

Mr. Gillis asked Ms. Ricciardi about something she said earlier about measuring energy usage at the schools. He indicated last year \$80,000 was voted in order to do an extensive energy audit of all the school buildings and there is a 120-page report floating around that has all the data from that study. He said the information in the report is really neat and while many things in the report have been acted on, there are still many other things in the report that still could be done. They

should be looked at because some things may now be even cheaper to implement. He just wanted to make Ms. Ricciardi aware that anyone on the Town Council who has not yet seen the report should review it because the town paid a lot of money for the report. Mr. Schneller said he would make sure that everyone has a copy of that report well in advance of the next meeting.

Lastly, Mr. Fromuth shared that one of the things he was hoping to focus on as part of the Energy Committee was to look at how we can impact costs perhaps through things like load shedding and demand response programs. He said there is a lot of money out there and no equipment to install for a lot of those programs.

He explained that there is one hour during the year in New England called the “capacity obligation” during which almost half of our energy costs are set during that hour - and if you are able to shed load during that hour you can impact the town’s energy rate. He said the SAU has an interval meter and when we get to peak usage in summertime we might be able to impact the energy rate during that hour (for example 3-cents per kilowatt hour at the high school) by curtailing energy usage during that time. He could also look into proper permitting if we need to have any emergency generation on any of the school campuses. He explained that you could then shift your load during that hour and use it for non-emergency situations . He is seeing a lot of his clients at colleges and school districts doing this. That is something Bedford is not doing that would be very easy to do, at no cost to us; and which would have a tremendous impact.

Mr. Fromuth is also a big fan of virtual net metering group opportunities that are available right now at the 1-megawatt threshold (there has been some difficulty getting to the 5-megawatt threshold) – and we could look at hydro dams that meet that criteria. Typically what they will do if they have an off-taker (ex-the Town offices or the school district) is set a benchmark and since Eversource is giving them a default rate for partnering with off takers, they will give off takers 1/2 -cent per kilowatt hour just for being in their pool and partnering with them. There is no cost to the town and nothing to install, but they need off takers in order to get their rebate or subsidy from Eversource. It is essentially free money for the town to take advantage of.

Mr. Gillis said the Energy Commission had discussed this, and it seems that everyone wants to get involved, so it is very difficult to find hydro that is still looking for off takers. Mr. Fromuth says you will probably see more coming into the marketplace because Eversource has gone from and 11-cent standard offer rate all the way down to 7-cents and they’re not getting the default service money that they used to get, so they are looking to renegotiate terms when a contract comes up. If Bedford is not out there saying to the hydro community that Bedford and the SAU are interested, we will never know what kind of terms we might have gotten. You could structure some pretty interesting deals. For example, offer to do the first couple years for free with a backend payment in years 3-5. We are already using the power; why not go and get some rebate money?

Mr. Gillis has been on the Energy Commission for a number of years and noted we have discussed the peak rates and how they set the power for the whole year, and we’ve never discussed using a generator during that peak period or shutting something off for a short amount of time and he thinks that is a really cool idea. He said we would love to hear more about that, and perhaps put that on the agenda for future meetings.

Ms. Radke was excited about the information that Mr. Fromuth shared and suggested that one of our goals on the commission might be educating the community and disseminating information

once every 3 months or so, and to also give us something fresh to think about as a group. Mr. Russell thought this was a good idea.

VII. Reports of Members and Committees

a. Legislative update

Ms. Ricciardi reported that SB122 which repeals the rebate that electricity customers receive from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is still on the table. It's a long, complicated funding of how this carbon trading in the Northeast raises dollars from customers for "so called" energy efficiency projects. We've previously protected customers by rebating most of the funds raised from RGGI back to the customers. The SB122 bill is up in Concord but some of the party has repealed the rebate, but this would mean higher electric rates. She discussed SB124 which increases fairly significantly the subsidies for renewable electric energy. While renewable is worthwhile with our prices, she said this increase would be significant and is very difficult to swallow. What Ms. Ricciardi has heard in Concord is that SB122 and SB124 are likely "no votes" by all sides and are likely to be vetoed again by the Governor. Lastly, she discussed HB1410 which is a compromise on net metering that the Governor supports, but which has been rejected by some. Net metering means an owner installs a renewable source of energy (like solar) and when they produce more power than they consume the electricity goes back to the grid and the owner gets a credit. This bill would have expanded opportunities for towns to increase the amount of power they can produce which lowers their power costs and helps the taxpayers.

Mr. Gillis stated that they have been going around net-metering for a long time. He explained it is the thing that basically allows you to have a big solar array and move the power from one place to the other. For example, we could put a huge solar array on our transfer station land and use the power at a school across town. Currently we could do that, but there is a limit of 1-megawatt. They were trying to get it to 5-megawatts.

b. School projects – Mr. Schneller indicated there was nothing to report.

c. Town Council response to Municipal Aggregation presentation

This was covered already in previous discussion this evening. Ms. Ricciardi had nothing further to report. One thing Chairman Paradis noted was that Town Council had some frustration that the Energy Commission was not following protocol, so as the new Chairman he wants to make sure that we follow protocol and that we are on the list. He does not want to miss out on an opportunity because we did not say it in the right verbiage or lingo through the proper channels; so, we will make sure to do that going forward.

VIII. Old Business

There was some input about tabling all of the Old Business until we have our meeting with the Town Council and coming back with fresh, new items at the next meeting and further meetings after that. In the essence of time and energy, Chairman Paradis asked if we should continue the conversation about items under "Old Business". Mr. Russell and Mr. Gillis agreed it should be tabled.

IX. New Business

a. Protocol for (new) commission members with business interests in Municipal Aggregation

Mr. Russell noted that Mr. Fromuth has a keen interest in municipal aggregation and it seemed prudent to have a discussion on what the protocol would be and how it would work.

Mr. Fromuth said he would abstain from any vote on municipal aggregation, but he would like to be a part of the discussion and feels he has a lot to bring to the table. He said it is an attractive opportunity for Bedford and he feels it's important to be sharing as much information as possible with the Town Council to help inform their decisions. Mr. Fromuth said everything he is working on, for example the rule-making process with the PUC; legislation with Senator Felts and Senator French – would be beneficial and fruitful to the group and a value-add to the conversation, and the reason he knows about all of this is because his business is energy.

Mr. Russell asked how the Energy Commission would handle Mr. Fromuth's business interests vs. other competitor's business interests when he sits on the commission. He asked if members of Freedom Energy sit on other town's energy commissions, and how it is handled in other towns. Mr. Fromuth indicated that there are competitors who serve on energy commissions in other towns; for example, Matt Rounds from Standard Power used to be on Hollis's energy commission and Bob Hayden serves on the energy commission in Nashua. He said there are about 4-5 competitors in the State and they all know one another pretty well and they are all active in their communities adding value to discussions and informing the decision-making of their towns and City Councils. He thinks it would be a mistake to say he cannot participate because of where he earns his living.

Mr. Russell asked how we get Mr. Fromuth's input and keep it absolutely clear and transparent. Mr. Fromuth pointed out that the Bedford Energy Commission doesn't have to the power to enact town policy and they are not voting on programs so he feels as long as he does not vote on any recommendations we make (even though they are not binding recommendations) it should be in the interest of everyone's comfort. As Mr. Fromuth sees it, if he served on the Town Council that would be a totally different conversation because they vote in policy, but the Energy Commission just provides guidance and advice to Town Council. He is hoping to help them make better/more informed decisions. He is simply a passionate volunteer that wants to see the town go in the right path with their energy concerns and informing them about programs that they may not have the time or ability to find out about themselves. The town may not choose his company to work with, but the town would be benefitting by having the information, and he is benefitting as a town resident with some of those programs and policies.

Ms. Braese suggested whenever something comes up on the agenda, the easiest thing might be to just disclose the conflict of interest and reiterate that Mr. Fromuth would abstain from any vote or recommendation with a standard statement, because then it is recorded and reflected in the minutes. Mr. Fromuth said that is totally appropriate, and mentioned when he was up at the State House for 4-years serving with Keith Murphy he voted on a lot of legislation that affected liquor licenses in the State, and Mr. Murphy holds liquor licenses because of his restaurants, so every time a vote was taken it was noted for the record that he had a vested interest one way, and the State law allowed for that. Sometimes while Mr. Fromuth was up at the State House they took votes on energy issues and if it impacted his business directly he would abstain from the vote. The law is structured to be all for transparency and alerting people to the possible conflict, but not thwarting anybody from their duties as a result of that. Chairman Paradis thanked Mr. Fromuth and said he felt it was good to have this discussion and have it recorded for the town. He also said that Mr.

Fromuth's expertise and depth of knowledge in this area would be welcomed and Chairman Paradis wouldn't want him to not participate in the conversations because of his business; but he also feels it is good to have the discussion so nothing is misconstrued and so we are all on the same page. Chairman Paradis also liked Ms. Braese's suggestion about using a standard statement to put on record to disclose the conflict of interest and reiterate Mr. Fromuth's abstention from voting or making recommendations.

X. Reminders: Next upcoming meeting is Thursday, July 23, 2020.

Chairman Paradis asked if the Energy Commission could continue to meet on the Zoom meeting platform. Mr. Sawyer indicated that as long as the Governor continues to extend the emergency order, the Energy Commission meeting would be able to continue to be held via the Zoom meeting platform. The group could also make the decision to meet in person; however, the horseshoe seating arrangement at BCTV only allows for 5-members with 6-foot social distancing between one another, and this evening there were 11 members plus Mr. Sawyer on this Zoom meeting tonight; so, the rest of the members would have to sit in the audience, or they would have to find a different space for the commission to meet in person (probably somewhere within the SAU). The meeting could even take place outside; however, televising the meeting, recording it, and having a good transcript from the recording is much more challenged if we leave BCTV. It is definitely a problem the town is facing with all of their boards and committees right now. Mr. Sawyer indicated that in 2 weeks we could take and see where the state of things are, or if there are any new potential solutions to meet in person.

XI. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Mr. Schneller at 8:28 P.M. Seconded by Mr. Gillis.

Roll call vote: Denise Ricciardi-aye, John Schneller-aye, Andrew Gillis-aye, Bart Fromuth-aye, Bing Lu-aye, Tim Paradis-aye, Sarah Braese-aye, Tom Elwood-aye. Motion Passed 8-0.

Respectfully submitted by,
Tiffany Lewis