

**TOWN OF BEDFORD  
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES  
September 28, 2023**

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, September 28, 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, Chuck Nettleship, and Bill Foote (SB Liaison).

Absent: Carolyn Mahoney, James Dumont, Sue Thomas (TC Liaison), Lori Radke (TC Alternate), Mindy Bator (SB alternate)

**II. Approval of August 24, 2023 Minutes**

Mr. Bandazian had one edit to change who opened the meeting. It should be Chairman Russell, not Vice Chair Bandazian.

**MOTION by Mr. Bandazian to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2023 meeting.**

Chairman Russell wanted to know what the 15% haircut was that Mr. Bandazian discussed.

**Seconded by Mr. Foote.**

Mr. Bandazian stated that with the IRA credits, there was a 15% reduction if non-taxable financing was used like a municipal bond. The 15% was 15% of 30%, not 15%. Chairman Russell wanted to know where the ‘haircut’ came from. Mr. Bandazian thought the Treasury and the folks in Washington (DC) who said if you have non-taxable financing, you’re getting a tax benefit at the cost of the Federal Treasury. Chairman Russell responded hence the 15%. Mr. Bandazian stated that it was generous to them, because the taxable part of a bond was much less.

**Vote taken – Motion Passed – 5-0.**

**III. Reports of Members and Committees**

**a. School projects progress and planning**

**1. Progress with systems upgrades**

Mr. Foote stated that October was when the budget process started. All of the work that had been done had been completed and put away. Chairman Russell wanted to know if the sprinklers were done. Mr. Foote stated that the control panels weren’t, but the plumbing was done, which was the biggest part of the problem. The control panels would be a lot less disruptive than tearing the school apart trying to get the plumbing in.

**2. Portfolio Manager**

Mr. Foote stated that he hadn’t spoken to Todd (Zollman) since the discussion with Mr. Bandazian back in the spring. It was a really tight schedule for them to stay on top of stuff.

Chairman Russell wanted to know if there was a time table for the control panels. Mr. Foote stated that it was a supply chain problem holding it up. The design was done, but it may have to go out for a quote, because it was a different project than the hard plumbing for the sprinklers themselves. The sprinklers were sensed, so if there was a fire, they would function.

Mr. Foote stated that for HVAC, Peter Woodbury was a problem. They hadn't started at Riddlebrook; was a heart transplant; it was going to be a major disruption next summer. As far as the other schools, they were looking for HVAC upgrades and those were extensively complete.

Mr. Foote stated that the \$5M of bonding was a big bite for their maintenance people to digest and was going to drag into next summer. At this point it's more operational than aspirational. Chairman Russell mentioned the roofs and Mr. Foote stated that the roofs were a couple of years out, but it's on the radar. That would probably be a bond if and when they get around to it.

#### **b. Joint Meeting of Boards and Commission – Housing in Bedford**

Mr. McLaughlin stated that last week the Planning department got various boards together: Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Town Council, and Energy Commission. It was an open discussion about what type of policies the Town should put in place to increase housing in Bedford. It started because there was a Federal grant that Bedford applied for to study this issue. They were broken up to about 5-7 people at a table. They had a set of questions to go through and discuss. After 45 minutes they all got together, but he left. Mr. Bandazian stated that the organizers took notes and if there was a consensus about how to have more affordable housing, it would get done in the Performance Zone. There was a barrier to doing that. Mr. McLaughlin thought it was good that the Energy Commission showed up and were sitting in the room. Mr. Bandazian stated that James (Dumont) had some good comments at the end. Mr. Nettleship thought what was eye-opening to him was the amount of land that was already used up for housing. Mr. Bandazian stated 95%. Mr. Foote wanted to know if they hit build out yet. Mr. Bandazian stated that there were still some parcels that didn't have conservation easements that could be developed; that could be subdivided and developed. The Upton property was a large property; he didn't know what else there was. There some large landlocked properties. People could combine lots and carve things up in a different way.

Chairman Russell wanted to know if there was discussion about going higher, more vertical. Mr. McLaughlin stated that in his group they discussed in-law suites or a single family adding up to 1,000 sq. ft. detached or attached to the house; the Town already approved that. Mr. Bandazian mentioned repurposing existing retail space and office space had less demand. Chairman Russell thought that was the potential; to replace office space with housing. Mr. McLaughlin stated that on November 14<sup>th</sup> there was a follow on meeting open to the public at the high school; a consulting firm was hosting it. Chairman Russell was wondering if there were any creative Federal or State ideas for office space not being used to push guys to get rid of it, off load it, and convert it over to apartments; tear down, rebuild. He thought there had to be something out there to incentivize that.

Mr. Foote wanted to know the date of the meeting at the high school. Mr. McLaughlin thought it could be the 11<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> of November, but don't quote him. Mr. Foote thought as it got closer they would hear about it from Jeanne's office. Ms. Walker stated that it would come from the Planning Department, but it would be posted as a public meeting.

### **IV. Old Business**

#### **a. Solar Photovoltaic Facility at Transfer Station Update**

## **1. ReVision Energy awarded contract**

Mr. Bandazian stated that Jeff Foote sent a Letter of Intent, which was necessary, so he thought the ball was in ReVision's court to check with the utility and make sure that they could do a MW project, which he didn't see any barriers to, but they don't know until they know.

Chairman Russell thought the next major hurdle was Eversource had to okay 1MW and then they had to go after environmental approvals for their 10% use of the top of the landfill. Mr. Bandazian stated that ReVision was taking care of that; it's not a Town responsibility. Chairman Russell wanted to know at what point they bond or finance it. Mr. Bandazian stated that there was another step, which was a contract. They've sent the Letter of Intent and there's a contract that does everything that needed to get reviewed by the Town's legal counsel, which would include a schedule of payments. Ms. Walker thought that was predicated on what size facility, because the dollar value of the contract would depend on the size of the facility. It became a matter of timing, because you couldn't put one in front of the other; you had to have them all come together. Chairman Russell thought another factor was they wanted to get that IRS direct payment, so if they were to start in late 2024, they probably weren't going to get the direct IRS payment until 2025. Mr. Bandazian didn't think that anybody wanted to start in late 2024. Chairman Russell stated that they had to file a 1099-T; it's on the IRS site. That had to go in, in order to get that direct payment for 2025. That needed to be on the schedule as well. Mr. Bandazian stated that the next municipal bond bank option, if the Town goes that route, was in January. Mr. Foote wanted to know if there were two per year and Mr. Bandazian responded yes. Mr. Foote thought the School side picked it up in July. Ms. Walker believed the deadline for January was October 27<sup>th</sup>; she wasn't 100% sure.

Chairman Russell wanted to understand about the municipal bond bank. Mr. Bandazian stated that Bedford had an Aaa rating and they do fabulously well, but with any bond, to get the underwriters to do their thing and finance people do their thing adds \$25K - \$50K or more to the cost of a bond in terms of their due diligence on the municipal side. If you had a small bond like this one, it added up to a fairly large percent. The State had a bond bank through the Municipal Association that aggregates things and then auctions. The last time was not too aggregated. The School District was in its own category and there were two others. It wasn't like there were 100 municipalities looking to finance through the bond bank; it was a handful. The bond rating of that bond bank, he didn't know what it was, but it didn't seem to affect the interest rate, so they lose some overhead in the bond issue, and you don't add much to the cost of the bond if anything. That was an inexpensive way to do smaller bonds. If it was road bond size they would probably do it themselves. Mr. Foote stated that the School's \$5M was rolled into a \$3m deal, so it was them and 8 other towns. Mr. Bandazian stated that he hoped Jerome Powell (Federal Reserve) was kind to them and they get some more guidance on how the various incentives would need to be documented.

Mr. Bandazian wanted to know if the poles for the 3-phase power was separate and Ms. Walker responded no, they combined it. She didn't have an update. Mr. Bandazian thought it sounded like a real nuisance to keep reporting to fulfill those requirements to keep the grant and to not have it finished. It would be nice to find out if the poles and transformers were from the US, which would be great, because it would be worth about \$150K in another rebate. Or were they Canadian poles and Mexican transformers in which case they could easily dismiss that and move on.

Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if Eversource tried to limit them to 750 kW, if there was any advantage of building it out to 1MW and have the ability to add it in the future. Mr. Bandazian understood that the 3-phase would support almost 3MW, so it's not like the capacity in terms of the lines was there; it's what the utility could absorb and what ISO-NE would let them add. He didn't see it as a problem. Mr. Foote wanted to know why ISO-NE would be involved, because

the solar power would be consumed before it really hit the grid. Mr. Bandazian stated that it was only to squeeze entities for money, in his opinion. Mr. Foote stated that they had no idea how much solar was online, because it's consumed almost at the point of use. Mr. Bandazian stated that if you click on the ISO-NE thing you can see the instantaneous level of renewables according to them. He didn't know how they determined that instantaneously.

## **2. Financial Issues and Opportunities – DERA Grant submitted**

Ms. Walker stated that it had been submitted; it was due September 15<sup>th</sup>. They heard back from them; they had some questions on the application. Now they were going to talk to the EPA about it. There were certain requirements and the Town met them, but they would need a waiver for some of the things. It had something to do with the backhoe versus the replacement compactors. It wasn't exactly a 1-1 correlation; it's a different way of thinking about it. Mr. Bandazian stated that there were two compactors that they were using to replace one backhoe. Chairman Russell wanted to know if they were selling the backhoe or was it being repurposed. Ms. Walker stated that one of the requirements of the grant was that the backhoe be taken out of commission. They are looking at that because there were some things that weren't related to compacting trash; small things that that backhoe does. They have to take that into account. Chairman Russell stated that when they were pitching this thing, they were definitely selling the idea of getting rid of a backhoe. Mr. Foote stated that there was a capital backhoe coming up that they weren't going to buy; that was on the plan. He thought the backhoe was going to die soon. Mr. Bandazian thought it was 7 years into its life cycle. Mr. Foote thought that was a long time for what it was being used for. Mr. Bandazian stated that for a normally used backhoe it could be 15 years; to occasionally smash down glass or do some of the smaller snow clearing. Mr. McLaughlin added that they may do some of the work out back where they have dirt piles. Mr. Bandazian stated that there were things that it did infrequently. Ms. Walker stated that in terms of hours of usage, it would drop off dramatically, but there were still come things that still needed to be done with a backhoe. Mr. Bandazian stated that eventually Highway would have its backhoe age out how this one used to be done. The Transfer Station didn't used to have its own reserve for a new backhoe; it always got the hand-me-down. Mr. Nettleship stated that there could be an EV backhoe coming to the market soon as well. Mr. Bandazian stated that he would make his pitch for all of them to slowly look at that. Ms. Walker stated that they did some research and they weren't into production yet. It's not available right now, but it was something that they were working on. There were some other considerations such as cold weather, storage, etc. that they would have to take into account.

## **3. Construction Update**

Ms. Walker stated that the construction meant the ReVision contract, the poles, and that type of thing. ReVision was given the notice of award and was looking at how they were going to approach whether or not they go with a 1MW or 750 kW. They're evaluating that and getting the Town started in the right direction. Chairman Russell wanted to know if they could do things in parallel; have a discussion with NHDES and a discussion about 750 kW or 1MW. Ms. Walker didn't believe they could do that this time. The conversation with NHDES was specifically geared towards size and square footage. Chairman Russell stated that the size had to be set first.

### **c. Solsmart**

Mr. Bandazian stated that now that they had their Letter of Intent, he wanted to know if they get their silver designation. Ms. Walker stated that it wasn't related to solar. There had to be some

training and she needed to set those up; she was looking to do that in October. Her goal was to have it done and in place in order to achieve silver status by the end of the year.

**d. Messaging Signage at Transfer Station – No update**

**V. New Business:**

**a. CENH Updates**

Mr. Bandazian stated that he was looking at the new Eversource tariffs, because they lowered their supply cost by a lot, which made community power less attractive. He was sure it would get more attractive in another 6 months or more. It's a hard sell right now to get something ready for Town Meeting; there was a lot that had to be done to be convincing. If people see their bill going down, they would have a hard time convincing anyone. He looked at the time of day tariffs again. The big break you get off-peak was on the transmission charge; a little bit on the distribution charge. The cost of the supply was the same and there was a little standard charge that they pay to be an Eversource customer, which goes up a little bit if you do time of day. He thought they had chosen to do it in a way where most of the time was off-peak and to not have a big break in the rate. Peak was just limited to 1PM to 7PM on weekdays and not holidays. If somebody could avoid those times they might save \$10 or \$15 a month. If they air condition and heat their house and use major appliances a lot on weekdays 1PM to 7 PM, they may be paying more. He didn't know if they needed to be in that time of day option for any specific amount of time. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if they had to get a special meter and Mr. Bandazian responded didn't think so. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know that with Eversource you can sign up for time of day pricing and Mr. Bandazian responded yes. Mr. Foote wanted to know if you had to sign up or it was a specific tariff. Mr. Bandazian stated that he didn't know the mechanics of it. One of the impetuses was for EV charging. He looked at that with all things being equal; if you did your EV with the regular tariff it would cost \$77 a month for energizing your EV. If you use the time of day rate it would be \$72; not a huge savings. They would have to be disciplined about not using power, because they would pay a lot more for that peak time. He thought the order of magnitude was \$5 to \$20 a month, but that was also the kind of order of magnitude that people get with community power. He didn't know if community power did time of day, because it's the transmission and distribution where they get the break; it's not the supply. His guess would be no.

Mr. Bandazian stated that Chairman Russell had posed the question of revisiting it every month or just carry it over until next May when there's a new Energy Commission and they put together an agenda and had seen what Eversource had done. They could discuss it after the February rate came out. Chairman Russell thought the Eversource rate currently at \$.12582 per kW hour was low enough. He didn't think community power would buy you much at \$.12582.

**b. Housing – already covered**

**c. Other new business**

**VI. Reminders:**

**a. Next upcoming meeting – October 26, 2023**

**b. Deadline to Respond to NH Renewable Energy Fund – Request for Comments due September 29, 2023**

Mr. Bandazian stated that there was a survey from the Renewable Energy Fund; he sent it to the Commission. The deadline was Friday for comments. They provide rebates for solar panels. They didn't have enough money to do that. They do a lottery and about 45% of the people in the lottery get their rebate, and it's limited to \$1,000 or less. They were examining if it was really serving a purpose anymore as an incentive for people now that there are Federal credits that were more generous; should it be their priority. They're asking for input. His view was that those things should be innovative like the geothermal system, which that fund made possible and no longer funds. They're examining whether they should continue to use the same priorities that they had been.

Mr. McLaughlin didn't think he received it and wanted to know if he could find it online and do they fill it out online. Mr. Bandazian didn't know, because he made a hard copy a long time ago. Mr. Foote stated that Mr. Bandazian sent them a link when it first came out. Mr. Bandazian thought he did, but he would re-send it. Mr. McLaughlin stated that he could Google it tomorrow, because tomorrow was the deadline. Mr. Bandazian was glad they were doing it, but thought it was a piece of work to thoughtfully respond to them. Mr. Nettleship wanted to know if they had them in to speak and Mr. Bandazian responded no. It used to be administered by the PUC and then the State reorganized and its departments and made a Department of Energy; it's a State agency. They get their money from renewable energy credits. It's not well-funded anymore anyway, so they had limited funds and they wanted to look at their priorities, which was a good thing.

**c. 2023 Local Energy Solutions – Thursday November 2, 2023 (8:00 am to 4:30 pm)  
at the Doubletree in Manchester**

Mr. Bandazian encouraged people to go if they can. He's been and it's great. They get to meet vendors and there might be somebody there with electric heavy equipment. There are community agencies that help lower income residents with energy improvements. A bunch of different vendors and good presentations; local commission and committee focused, and get to hear what other energy commissions were doing. Chairman Russell wanted to know if they were coordinating as a group to go. Mr. Bandazian stated that as someone who had chaired groups for a long time he found it to be very painful. Their topics were community power, distributed energy resources, workforce, regional roundtable, economics, innovation & planning, local solutions, policy pitches, storage update, IRA: one year in.

**VII. Adjournment**

**MOTION by Mr. Bandazian to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Foote. Vote taken  
– Motion Passed -5-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Boufford