

**February Minutes, Town of Randolph
Energy Advisory Committee
Feb. 3, 2022**

Gary called the meeting to order at 6:05. In attendance: Gary Dir, Susan Mills, Pat French, Jeff Grout, Maryann Zavez, Larry Satcowitz, Jerry Ward, and guest speaker Ben Walsh from VPIRG. The January minutes were approved, and the agenda posted. ****Action items.**

Discussion with Ben Walsh, Climate and Energy Program Director, VPIRG

Ben outlined the main features of 2 bills that he feels are most relevant to our committee:

1) H.518 Municipal Energy Resilience Initiatives Bill

- Will make available 45 million dollars over several years for energy audits and more efficient fuel sources for municipal buildings, among other things. Schools probably will not be included.
- Money will be dispersed through grants that towns will need to apply for (for both bills).
- If we spend money on this now, we probably cannot be reimbursed later.
- Probably no money for energy coordinators, but hopefully, money for RCPs instead.
- Probably no money for community solar. Ben suggested reaching out to local solar companies.
- Details still need to be worked out, but Ben suggested getting started now figuring out as many preliminaries as possible. For example, we should make a list of all the town buildings.

2) H.H552 Transportation Innovation Act

- Probably won't be a stand-alone bill, but will be combined with a larger bill.
- Grants available for charging stations, programs to encourage more biking and walking, school buses, mass transit vehicles, and programs like MileageSmart for lower income people.
- Governor Scott has made similar proposals to these 2 bills, with similar amounts of money, so Ben feels there is a good chance these bills will be passed and supported. But money will probably not be available until the fall because of how the whole process works (slowly).

Open Meeting Law

We discussed some of the problems this law poses for town committees, and the lack of clarity about what we can and cannot do. ****Maryann** will talk to Trevor about setting up a meeting with members of the energy committee for clarification. Pat suggested that this meeting should be open to members of any town committee.

Weatherization for Low-Income People

Maryann has reached out to Capstone to see how we can work with them to promote weatherization for low-income folks. She will have a meeting after next week with Linda Anderson from Capstone in Randolph to discuss our role and see if we can collaborate on an outreach event.

LED Lighting

Larry proposed that the energy committee sponsor a project to switch all the municipal and school lighting to LEDs. Gary suggested that we use the drop-in type that work with existing ballasts, which are made by LED Dynamics. Everyone agreed that this would save money (payback period of less than 2 years) and was basically a no-brainer.

Other Business

--Jeff reported on an excellent VECAN workshop that provided good tools to document resources available to energy committees. He thinks these tools would be a good way for us to organize what we are doing, including how to prioritize projects. ****Jeff** will email us the relevant information. These VECAN workshops are always recorded, and several members said they plan to watch this recording.

--Jeff reported that Trevor has been in touch with Efficiency Vermont about an energy audit for town buildings. No further update at this time.

--Gary reported that the Bethel Selectboard has referred a town meeting proposal to Nicole Cyr, chair of the Bethel town energy committee for action. This proposal would give permission to their energy committee to work with nearby towns to save money by increasing energy efficiency.

--****Maryann** will check with John and Jerry to see if they have done any number crunching in relation to hiring an energy coordinator.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Mills