Town of Swanzey, NH
Swanzey Energy Commission
Meeting Minutes for February 10, 2025

Note: Draft minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by the Committee. Review and approval of minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled committee meeting.

Call to Order—The meeting of the Swanzey Energy Commission was called to order at 1:03 pm by Chair Audette. Present: Bob Audette, Barbara Skuly, Cheri Domina, Steve Russell. Also present: Emily Manns, Standard Power; Patrick Roche, Standard Power (Zoom); Town Admin. Michael Branley; Asst. Planner Stephon Mehu.

Absent: Denis Swain

Minutes

Audette made a motion to approve the January 13 minutes. Russell seconded. All in favor. Approved.

Business

Solar Garden—Audette reported that Andrew said they've pulled the plug on that project on Rte. 10.

Skuly also noted that Tire Warehouse has sold their property to a company that caters to bitcoin producers—they can be big energy users.

Community Power Contract—Roche noted that the town is using 18-19 mil. Kwh per year. Our next contract will take effect on the December meter read. Participation in the program remains stable.

In the northeast, Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) demand has been a key driver of non-hydro RE growth. Our RECs are coming from NH Class One sources, said Roche. This is accelerating growth in renewable energy—mostly wind and large solar projects. NH growth is set to plateau this year, but other states don't have that plateau built in; market forces continue to push growth in the region. This makes our 50% or 100% RE power categories even more important.

Roche reported that 91% of our accounts are on the community default, 7% at basic and 1% each at 50 and 100% renewables. We have about 2,600 accounts.

Community Power gave customers a better price than Eversource at first, but their last couple contracts were lower than our 11.4 cents: 8.28, then 10.4, then 8.9. However, our customers are still averaging better, and have 10% more renewables in the default mix. We offer a stable price for 30 months, while Eversource changes every 6 months. Cheshire Co. customers have many choices for electricity, and individual customers can now enroll in the CP Coalition too (they are county-wide).

Roche suggested we prepare to go to bid by the end of March. They will set a bid day soon. Prices should be lower in spring. Keene is staying with Standard Power, he said.

Questions:

1. How much renewable energy to keep in the default program?

2. Do we keep all 4 options? Keene is removing the 50% option (they were 2-1 for 100%).
3. Do we want to charge a fee to create a discretionary reserve fund? We can charge 1/10 cent per kwh to generate revenue to be held by a separate town account. We could provide rebates to residents or support a town solar project. Keene is considering this, Roche said. We would need to amend the CP plan and have it locally approved, but the PUC wouldn't have to rule on it (though we would want to file an amendment). Nashua raised $38,000 in their fund, Roche said. Audette said Keene CP committee recommended charging .07-.125 cents monthly to create a community assistance fund and help with RE projects. We would want to take care of this before we sign the next contract.
4. ESA review – need to review the contract w/o the rate. Roche said they check with all involved towns about a week before bidding.
5. Do we want to continue with Standard Power or move to the Coalition? Branley said that should be our first decision.

Russell asked if there are any new power suppliers. Roche said they are mostly the same, but SP is looking at a couple new ones to see if they qualify.

Municipal Energy Audits—Skuly reported that Stratton Library has requested an audit. The auditors are doing the Carpenter Home Saturday, and Whitcomb Hall on Monday. The Library will be done in March.

Goals/Work Plan

- Audits for Whitcomb Hall & Carpenter Home
- Solar Ordinance—pick up where Julius Peel left off.
- Municipal solar array at Mt. Caesar school
- Energy web page on town website
- Prep for new Community Power energy contract

Next meeting: Feb. 21, 10 am.

Adjournment: Voted to adjourn at 2:07 pm

Minutes submitted by Cheri Domina

DRAFT