

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting - Draft
January 4, 2021**

Committee Members Present: Michael Shank, Lowell Rasmussen, Matt Orchard, Jack Schneider, Edna Sutton

Others Present: Tim Guiles

1. Call to order

Michael Shank, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00PM.

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Edna Sutton to approve the agenda. **The motion passed.**

3. Approval of Minutes

December 7, 2020 Meeting:

A motion was made by Jack Schneider to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2020 Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed.**

4. Energy Revolving Loan Fund Review and Discussion

Michael Shank noted Tim Guiles provided ideas on this subject to the Committee members. Mr. Shank also provided a one-page draft for a Brandon Energy Loan. Mr. Shank suggested a way to get the program started would be for Brandon to do the outreach and people apply through the one-page document to the Energy Committee. The Committee would get a sense of who wants assistance and determine if the applicants could benefit from the Efficiency Vermont program. Jack Schneider reviewed the Brandon Revolving Loan Fund and noted it is designed to assist low-income residents and businesses that want to make renovations and suggested this could perhaps be a source of funding. The Brandon Revolving Loan fund has a process that already exists and a Board that reviews and approves loans. Mr. Shank suggested on the lines of educational work that is needed, such as a mailer or virtual language, the Committee could come up with language and provide several resource options such as Efficiency Vermont and the existing Brandon Revolving Loan Fund. The long-term vision would be to obtain private capital for an energy-focused fund down the road. Mr. Shank noted stories are most effective and once the Committee has some case studies of people who would not be eligible for either of those options, it could further build out the services for an energy fund. With case studies, the Committee could reach out to philanthropists in Town to assist those who want to make energy changes. Matt Orchard stated when originally proposing the concept, the flow made sense in defining people who don't fall within the parameters of the current funding options and then use those stories to promote the concept of an energy fund. The original document seems good and asked if it should include commercial as well as residential projects. Tim Guiles liked a tiered set of responses beginning with Efficiency Vermont if that fits their needs and then the Brandon Revolving Loan fund that already exists and has a pool of money. The third level would be more far-reaching focused money to be raised specifically for energy projects and allow for flexibility. In the one-page sheet, Mr. Guiles thought it needs to capture the concise message that was originally discussed with a more complete set of options and suggested leaving out the table, as it seems to constrain the opportunities for people who may want to participate. Mr. Guiles suggested it should indicate there are multiple levels of support as the challenge is getting people to participate. Mr. Shank summarized the one-page document would describe the charge of the Energy Committee and do outreach for one of the following the options: 1) pursue Efficiency Vermont opportunities, 2) pursue Brandon Revolving Loan fund opportunities and if neither of these suit needs and/or capacity, 3) to identify needs that are not met. The document would encourage people to reach out to the Energy Committee. Mr. Guiles stated it should indicate the Energy Committee will help people figure out how to move forward. Edna Sutton stated there are

pathways to help people meet their needs and she will be interested to know if anyone has applied to the Brandon Revolving Loan Fund, as she thought it has been used by businesses only. Mr. Shank will also add the Neighborworks of Western Vermont to the document as they cover the Brandon area and offer audits and energy loans. Mr. Shank noted Efficiency Vermont and Neighborworks offer a number of options. Mr. Guiles noted the one-page document should be more of an encouragement for the people to contact the Energy Committee to discuss the various options. Mr. Shank agreed the document should be a narrative and summarize the resources with the Energy Committee as the first point of contact. Mr. Shank suggested the Town could potentially fund a mailing to all residents that could include information from the Energy Plan. Mr. Shank will draft the language for the Committee's approval for submission to the Select Board. Mr. Guiles suggested submitting to the Town in time for it to be placed in the town report as this year's report is being designed to be a reference book for people to use throughout the year and will be well indexed. It is hoped that more people will read it. The information could also be circulated on social media and it can then be determined if additional outreach is needed. Mr. Shank noted the Energy Committee is building a system that has long term value that will take effort to build in Town, but it is a clear agenda for 2021. Mr. Orchard suggested having a visual presence at the town office and also have detailed information for the town staff for people who express interest. Mr. Shank suggested making the offerings as simple as possible to understand and requested any recommendations for the draft be emailed to him. Jack Schneider stated it should be pointed out that they are zero percent loans, with asterisks.

5. Old/New Business

Michael Shank reported he has sent information to Bill Moore and the RRPC concerning the solar company that had decided not to build near the Thomas Dairy in an effort to facilitate solar company interest for Brandon. As solar companies that are interested in the area are known, information will be passed along to Mr. Moore as the Town's Economic Development person.

Mr. Shank requested a change in time for the upcoming Energy Committee meetings due to a conflict in his schedule. Mr. Shank asked if the Committee would be willing to meet at 4:30PM instead of 5:00PM on the first Monday of each month. The Committee agreed for the short-term to change the meeting time to 4:30PM. Mr. Shank noted there may not be a need for the Energy Committee to meeting every month.

6. Next Meeting

February 1, 2021 @ 4:30PM via Zoom

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Edna Sutton to adjourn the meeting at 5:36PM. **The motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary