

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting - Draft
November 1, 2021**

Committee Members Present: Jim Emerson, Jack Schneider, Lowell Rasmussen

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:01PM by Jim Emerson - Chair.

. Inspirational Thoughts

Each Board member provided their comments on what motivates them to accomplish their goals.

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen and seconded by Jack Schneider to approve the minutes of the October 11, 2021, Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Brandon Energy Committee (BEC) Logo and Byline

Jim Emerson reported Robert Black suggested the Energy Committee develop a logo and byline. Mr. Emerson will request Mr. Black develop a logo and byline for the BEC.

4. Update on Final Wording for Goals and Review of Goal Planning

Jim Emerson would like the BEC to determine a deadline for the final wording for the Committee's goals that will use in drafting the Committee's report for the annual Town Report. Mr. Emerson requested more clarity for Lowell Rasmussen and Matt Orchard's goals. Jack Schneider reported Bill Moore and he will be meeting with Emily Eckert on the EV festival on Wednesday to work out specifics and will provide the Committee information from that meeting. Mr. Emerson suggested having it on parade day. Mr. Schneider noted any expenses would likely be covered by the Town with the BEC helping with the planning, with the event under the direction of Mr. Moore.

5. Best Practices Survey – Jim Morales

Jim Emerson advised that Jim Morales has agreed to call other committees to determine actions that have been effective in other towns and will follow-up with Mr. Morales on the status of the calls. Lowell Rasmussen would like suggestions on what other information the BEC would like to know to assure that the proposed survey will pose the right questions. Mr. Rasmussen would also like to obtain input from the Select Board, Town Manager and Bill Moore. Jack Schneider advised Bill Moore is the key player in SolarFest as it brings revenue and jobs into Town. Mr. Schneider suggested one question for the survey could be whether people think the Town is committed to energy and the State's goals. Mr. Rasmussen noted the survey needs to go hand in hand with articles that are being written. Jim Emerson suggested some questions could relate to considering community solar, knowledge about energy audits, familiarity with energy programs like Efficiency Vermont, and whether people know what the State's energy goals are. It was noted these are the goals the BEC is aspiring to meet. Mr. Lowell noted one major issue for the Town is transportation. The State plan calls for producing renewable energy and he is much less concerned about how to meet the energy production guidelines, as a few key developers who move in would help that effort, but the more difficult items are gas emission and fuel oil heating. Mr. Schneider suggested the most impact could be on the housing energy use. Mr. Rasmussen stated the conversion for transportation would be to electric vehicles, but that depends on the industry. Mr. Schneider reported the Town has a Green Fleet program for future replacements of town-owned vehicles. Mr. Emerson stated part of the equation is for the Town to reach the greenhouse emissions reductions in converting vehicles to EV and using heat pumps for homes. Davenport Solar will be a 15-megawatt project that will generate a lot, but it is not known who will be using the energy.

Mr. Rasmussen noted the State's goals require to plan towards 2030 and 2050, and not just the current systems. Mr. Rasmussen will send an email to all BEC members requesting the information he would like to receive from them.

6. 2% of ARPA Funds for Efficiency Vermont Matching Funds and Heat Squad Incentives

Jim Emerson provided a draft proposal to the Select Board of the BEC's ARPA fund request. The proposal will need some refinement for the Select Board to pass and implement at the Town level. The 2% proposal is to provide matching funds for Efficiency Vermont incentives and to reimburse \$100 of the \$150 cost for Heat Squad audits. This would be about \$25,000 of the ARPA funds. It was suggested an upper limit on the incentives could be included in the proposal and to match up to a certain amount with a maximum amount of possibly \$250 or \$500. If the average rebate is \$150 it would provide funding for around 160 residents. Part of the proposed survey could include interest in the proposed ARPA funds for Efficiency Vermont. It was proposed the process for obtaining a refund would be for one to submit a copy of the rebate received from Efficiency Vermont to the Town for payment.

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen and seconded by Jim Emerson to explore matching funds to fund Efficiency Vermont programs. **The motion passed unanimously.**

7. SolarFest Update and Community Solar Project Update

Jack Schneider reported the SolarFest group is going to try to have their entire Board of Trustees visit Brandon sometime around Thanksgiving. They are at a point of trying to make a deal on one of the three properties. It is not known the status of the State property but they are handling their own negotiations. Mr. Emerson suggested Mr. Schneider touch base with them again regarding their visit and advised he will talk to Mike Bailey about their timing on the visit.

8. Budget Requests for Town Budget Committee

Mr. Emerson reported the BEC is looking at developing a community solar project. The Town will be holding budget meetings in November and December and the Town Manager has indicated committees who have budget requests could be part of this process. Mr. Emerson questioned the cost associated with an Energy survey and Mr. Rasmussen advised he will contact Elaine Smith concerning the Town's postal rate for 1st Class mailings. The BEC would also need the Town's mailing list plus the cost for printing. Mr. Rasmussen will follow-up with the contacts Mr. Emerson provided regarding suggestions on how to do the survey. Mr. Emerson stated Castleton University may have a program that could help the Town with this effort. Mr. Schneider has had discussion with the Town Manager about the BEC having a presence on the Town's website, which would require funds for website development. Mr. Atherton will provide information on the website person to assist with this effort. Mr. Schneider will research this item for the budget request. Mr. Emerson noted if the ARPA funds request is approved, this information could be included on the survey and the Town's website.

9. Other Business

Lowell Rasmussen questioned the topic for the next BEC article for The Reporter. Jim Emerson plans to write about community solar in December. Mr. Rasmussen suggested with fuel oil prices going up, it might be a good time to talk about energy conservation and provide information on the Heat Squad.

Jack Schneider asked if there is anything in the BLUO that is being updated to include energy standards and suggested encouraging contractors to include certain energy efficient measures. Mr. Emerson stated there are energy efficient standards that are available. Mr. Rasmussen did not think there is an Energy section in the BLUO. Mr. Schneider suggested this item be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Mr. Rasmussen will start providing a BEC update at the Planning Commission meetings going forward.

Mr. Emerson noted Matthew Orchard provided information to the Committee on electric heavy equipment that is coming out. Mr. Schneider suggested adding an agenda item about the parade and if doing an EV festival, suggested having a vendor of electric tractors provide a demonstration.

10. Review of Committee Members Agreements for Follow-up Actions

Jack Schneider and Lowell Rasmussen to develop budget information.

Jim Emerson will call Mike Bailey and discuss logo and byline with Robert Black.

Jack Schneider to sketch some steps on his goals.

Jack Schneider to get information on the initial planning for an EV event.

Lowell Rasmussen to request Energy Committee members provide input on questions for survey.

Jim Emerson to work on The Reporter article regarding weatherization.

Jim Emerson will draft an Energy Committee report for the Town's Annual Report.

11. Next Meeting

December 6, 2021 @ 5:00PM

7. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned by consensus at 5:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary