

Brandon Energy Committee Meeting - Draft
April 19, 2022

Committee Members Present: Jim Emerson, Jack Schneider, Robert Black, Jeff Cohen, Lowell Rasmussen

Others Present: Tim Guiles

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30PM by Jim Emerson – Chair.

2. Inspirational Thoughts

The Committee members provided their thoughts on ways to collaborate with SolarFest to achieve the Committee's goals. The SolarFest Event is planned for September 10th beginning at 9AM. Lowell Rasmussen suggested advertising the SolarFest event during the EV festival in July. Jim Emerson suggested the Energy Committee could be the point of contact for individuals attending the Festival. Robert Black suggested the Chamber, DBA and Town Management could work together to assist with the Festival. Mr. Black noted there could be a coalition built within the Town to cross-collaborate the activities and continue to build awareness of the Energy Committee. Mr. Emerson stated SolarFest will have an Open House on June 4th. They have entered into all contracts to purchase the property. More information on this subject will be available in May. Tim Guiles, Jack Schneider, and Jim Emerson will be present at the June 4th Open House.

3. Agenda Adoption

A motion was made by Robert Black and seconded by Lowell Rasmussen to approve the agenda as presented. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Robert Black and seconded by Lowell Rasmussen to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2022, Energy Committee meeting, as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Item 5 – A clarification that the letter of interest for people to participate on the Energy Committee should be sent to the Town Manager.

Item 11 – A clarification that the Energy Committee was looking for input only from the Greenways Committee.

5. Welcome Jeff Cohen

Jim Emerson welcomed Jeff Cohen as a new member of Energy Committee. Jeff Cohen noted he has been progressive with regard to energy matters. Mr. Cohen and his family moved to Brandon in 2018.

6. Proposal for Select Board for Use of ARPA Funds to Achieve Town's Energy Goals

Jim Emerson noted there are two items the Energy Committee will submit to the Select Board for potential use of the ARPA funding. One is a 150kW solar project at the former landfill that the Town could draw from. The Energy Committee sees this as a 150kW project due to the single- phase power by GMP and the limited size of land. The MHG Solar group provided estimated pricing of \$375,000 to \$525,000. The variability is due to the current unpredictable pricing. The Town currently has a project with Green Lantern and is using 320kWh. It is suggested there is a possible need on the part of the town for an additional 180kWh. With the goals for the State's renewable energy, this would assist with the Town's reaching that goal. In the Town moving to EVs in the police department it would save about \$20,000 in gasoline costs alone. Any excess generation of electricity could also be shared with the Fire

District and a community solar arrangement could also be set up. There is potential for the Town to save \$34,000 per year and another \$9,000 generated from the Fire District. The cost would be \$4,000 to \$5,000 per year. Mr. Emerson noted SolarFest is also planning a community solar project. Jack Schneider asked how much of the ARPA funds are being requested. Mr. Emerson noted the Energy Committee would be asking for the total cost of the project on the estimated high side. Mr. Emerson stated the cost savings could be used for other projects. Mr. Schneider stated this proposal would benefit all town residents. Tim Guiles advised that he looked up the limitations on power and noted that the production capacity is what is limited and not the volume that can be produced as Mr. Emerson's draft proposal represented. It would be important to know what the kilowatt hour from Green Lantern is devoted to Brandon. Jim Emerson advised if the town could go up to 500kW then such a cumulative capacity would produce roughly 700,000kWh. Mr. Guiles suggested confirming the figures and advised there are stepping scales based on the size of the project and it was decided that 500kw is the limit for net metering services. It was noted MHG Solar 2.2 megaWatt project is a utility that is selling to all the electric utilities in the State. Mr. Guiles stated the Select Board is interested in getting advise from the Energy Committee and will benefit from the proposal.

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen and seconded by Jack Schneider to support the Energy Committee's proposal to use ARPA funds for a Brandon Landfill Solar project. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Jim Emerson stated the other item to be brought forward to the Select Board is in support of an EV for the next police cruiser. Jack Schneider advised the Town's Green Fleet Policy developed by Mr. Guiles notes the Town needs to make an effort to research all fuel choices when purchasing new vehicles. The Police Chief is asking to replace a 2009 Dodge Charger and at the last Select Board meeting, the Energy Committee was tasked with determining whether the Town should move forward with a gas vehicle or another alternative. Mr. Schneider provided a draft analysis of an EV for the Energy Committee's review. He noted this analysis allows residents to know the Green Fleet Policy is being followed. The analysis provided some of the advantages of an EV and Mr. Schneider noted many police departments around the country are running Teslas. Both Teslas and Ford EVs can do 60 mph in 3.5 second. The EVs offer reduced gas and much lower maintenance than a gas-powered car. Based on some police departments, the premium cost can be recouped in 1.5 years. There are zero carbon dioxide emissions. Transportation is the biggest contributor to gas house emissions and the State is looking to reduce this. The range of an EV should be around 300 miles with performance in cold weather dropping by 20%. Jeff Cohen noted the police cars are taken home at night by the officers. Tim Guiles stated the charger for EVs is a plug and one only needs a 240-volt plug. Another issue of concern was the police equipment affecting the performance of the vehicle and Mr. Schneider noted in his research a police department had used the on-line equipment in the car to run the lights that eliminated the need for additional equipment. Mr. Schneider noted there was concern with the inability to add a cage in an EV but stated one of the other gas-powered vehicles in the department could be used when needed. Mr. Schneider advised Volkswagen make a police car in Europe. Honda, Toyota and Subaru do not have EVs at this time. Some police departments are using Toyota, but more for administrative use and the two major players are Ford and Tesla, with the Tesla being the biggest seller. It was noted the New York Police Department recently order 185 of the Ford vehicles. Tesla is the other major player and is doing a good job of proving the concept. Montpelier and Richmond are testing out Teslas and the Richmond police chief will be providing a demonstration next week that Mr. Schneider will attend. Jim Emerson suggested providing more of the cost-savings benefit numbers for the replacement cycles and maintenance. Robert Black suggested the idea of a hybrid since the other cities are trying larger quantities of the cars and the results for small towns are not known. Tim Guiles stated police departments are using Teslas as patrol cars and he believes the hybrid technology is an old approach that gives very little improvement in gas mileage. Jeff Cohen noted hybrids shine in local driving with the stop and go. Jack Schneider noted the Interceptor hybrid is the same cost as the E-version. Mr. Guiles advised the funding for the cruiser is from the Police Department's vehicle budget that has not been used in the last 3 years. Mr. Emerson stated the Energy Committee supports buying an EV for the Town's next vehicle and suggested delaying the purchase as long as possible as the prices will likely go down. Lowell Rasmussen noted there could be longer-term benefits a year or two in the future with more options available for EVs. Jack Schneider requested Committee members provide suggested edits to the proposal that he will submit to the Town for the next Select Board meeting.

7. Update on Survey

Robert Black and Jack Schneider talked and agreed it is appropriate to stay with Bill Moore regarding the Energy Committee's virtual survey. Lowell Rasmussen advised the RRPC had offered to make SurveyMonkey available for
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the survey, however, Barbara Noyes-Pulling advised that the detailed questionnaire would require an upgrade of their subscription to SurveyMonkey. Robert Black advised questions need to be multiple choice for use as a data point and he adjusted some of the questions. There is still an issue of whether an email address is to be used, as there was discussion of anonymity. Lowell Rasmussen noted that a mail-in survey would allow for anonymity. Jim Emerson suggested the email survey could first be done and once the data is received, it could be determined the method for a paper survey. Mr. Rasmussen noted the intent is to create a Brandon baseline, with a future survey done in five years to determine how realistic it will be for Brandon to meet the State's energy goals. Robert Black stated it needs to be determined where the survey will be placed. Jack Schneider noted SurveyMonkey will collect all of the data. Mr. Black and Mr. Schneider will determine the program to use and advertise the questionnaire. Mr. Emerson will talk to Emily Eckert of GMP to determine if the survey could be included in a billing. It was suggested there could be a folder in the Town's database for the data to be stored.

8. Electric Fest Update

Jack Schneider noted the Davenport Festival would be to showcase the latest EV offerings but none of the car dealers currently have models available. The Energy Committee will need to meet with Bill Moore to determine what to do about this festival.

9. Plans for July 4th Parade Float

Tim Guiles suggested the purchase of a permanent sign for the Energy Committee that would have a blank area to add vinyl letters to use for various events. Robert Black has talked to the DBA and Greenways group and there was a suggestion of having a coalition of people to create a presence that would include bicycles and a float. Jim Emerson noted an application needs to be submitted by the Energy Committee to participate in the parade. Robert Black will provide more detailed ideas on the float and suggested it would be good to have some Energy Committee volunteers who could potentially assist in making a float. Jack Schneider noted SolarFest will be entering in the parade with EVs and a children's marching band.

10. SolarFest Update

Mr. Emerson reported SolarFest is moving ahead. They have cleaned up the barns on the property and determined what they need to tear down or salvage. There is a large area of outdoor concrete that will be turned into a parking area. Jack Schneider noted it has been determined there is nothing of historical value with the barns.

11. Info Displays

Robert Black advised he will be speaking with Tim Guiles regarding this subject. He noted Jeff Haylon was going to work with his sister regarding the graphic for the mission statement. Mr. Black will propose something for the Town Office window. Jim Emerson suggested Committee members provide information or suggestions they have to Mr. Black regarding info displays. Mr. Black suggested enlisting help from local students in this effort.

12. Other Business

Jim Emerson will be advertising for letters of interest for another Energy Committee member. Mr. Emerson will also request volunteer participation with the Energy Committee.

Mr. Emerson advised the State issued a resolution commemorating Thomas Davenport. It was noted that Kevin Thornton had crafted the resolution and Representative Jerome submitted it for approval.

Mr. Emerson sited information from Pathways of Global Emissions.

The Energy Committee will visit the municipal entities to provide information about Efficiency Vermont energy audits. There has been discussion with the Town Manager and Police Department. Robert Black will continue providing this information.

The Green Energy Times is being circulated in Brandon and Mr. Emerson noted it has many great articles and good points.

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

Jim Emerson to follow-up with Emily Eckert of GMP regarding the survey being included with billings.

Jack Schneider and Robert Black to determine the details of an electronic survey.

Jack Schneider and Jim Emerson to meet with Bill Moore to determine the status of the EV Festival.

Jim Emerson will submit an application on behalf of the Energy Committee for the July 4th parade.

Robert Black to continue to work on info displays.

Committee to have a discussion about resetting goals at a subsequent meeting.

14. Next Meeting

May 2, 2022 @ 5:00PM at the Brandon Town Hall

15. Adjournment

A motion was made by Jeff Cohen and seconded by Jack Schneider to adjourn the meeting at 5:54PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary