

**Joint Meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission  
And the Electric Utility Commission  
Meeting Minutes, October 10, 2022**

**Roll Call:** Steve Fitzhugh, Dennis Donahue, John Stevens, Charlie Morse. Others present: Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Shawn Enterline, VPPSA

The meeting started at 7:00 PM.

**Minutes from Previous Meeting**

Motion by Charlie Morse, seconded by Dennis Donahue, to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2022 meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

**Meeting of the Electric Commission**

**Howard Wind Power Potential Power Purchase Opportunity**

Shawn Enterline with Vermont Public Power Supply (VPPSA) stated that there is the potential for the Northeast to experience a dramatic increase in natural gas price in the near future with the possibility of prices increasing from \$5 to \$15. As a result of that volatility, VPPSA is looking to diversify power sources without entering into a longer-term contract. The Howard Wind power purchase agreement affords its members a low cost diversified energy source.

The Howard Wind facility was constructed in 2011 and has a ten-year history of generating wind energy that is comparable to other wind farms in the region. Its generation profile is seasonal, and peaks during the winter months. This is an attractive feature of the PPA because it would deliver the most energy in the winter months when New England's electricity prices are highest.

The PPA would supply Northfield with two products; energy and Massachusetts Class I Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). The energy would be used to hedge against the market cost of energy in New England. The RECs would be sold to MA-based utilities, and the revenues would be used for two purposes. First, they would be used to purchase Vermont Tier I RECs, which are required to meet Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard. The remaining revenues would be used to lower the realized cost of the PPA itself. Net of REC revenues, the energy portion of the PPA is expected to cost about \$60/MWH in 2023.

The contract would supply approximately 19% of Northfield's electricity through 2027 and is forecast to reduce Northfield's costs by about \$800,000 (or \$28/MWH) as compared to market prices.

Charlie Morse asked if the Utility Commission can approve the power purchase or whether the Select Board needs to sign it. Steve Fitzhugh stated that the Utility

Commission has the authority to sign it. Dennis Donahue added that the merger document and structure gives the Commission the authority.

Next, Charlie Morse asked if the project is seasonal. Shawn noted that the project and agreement is designed with known limits and factored into the agreement. John Steven asked about long term maintenance of the facility and if that is taken in account in the purchase agreement. Shawn noted that there is a much more detailed agreement between VPPSA and Howard Wind which has been vetted by experienced attorneys that address those issues.

John Steven asked why other power companies are not signing on to buy this power. Shawn noted that VPPSA is buying 35% of the power and there are options for others to purchase the power.

Motion by Charlie Morse, seconded by Dennis Donahue to authorize the Manager to sign the Howard Wind agreement. Motion passed 4-0.

### **Electric Vehicle charging Stations**

Sarah Wolfe, Northfield Energy Committee (NEC) noted that she wanted update the Utility Commission on NEC's efforts to get an EV charger installed in the Downtown. The NEC has been working on this effort for the past two years and have identified two funding opportunities that may help fund the upfront cost of a charging station: the VCRD Climate Catalysts Innovation Grant and the town ARPA funds.

The NEC is willing to take the lead on applying for the VCRD grant. They are getting an estimate for the cost of installing a station and need to decide on a preferred location for the station. NEC's preference (which was reflected from the public in a survey we issued last year) is to locate it at one or two of the parking spaces in Depot Square. NEC met with the Select Board to discuss and get approval to use a space in the Downtown. The Board suggested a possible space near the PD station and authorized the use of one parking space on the Common on Wall Street along the wall.

Dennis Donahue asked about the estimated cost of a charger. Sarah responded that it depends on usage and the type of charger. Dennis stated that he supports EV, however, he also questioned why Northfield Electric should subsidize the chargers for a project that benefits the entire Town. Sarah noted that it benefits by buying power which benefits the rate payers. Steve Fitzhugh noted that there is no excess power and it would require buying additional power so there is no benefit to the rate payers. Steve added that he also supports EV but is not in favor of NED subsidizing EV.

## **Update of Northfield Electric Project**

Steve Fitzhugh noted that the Bone Hill Solar project went on-line on August 19. This project will add 2 MW of renewable energy to NED system.

NED is replacing 15 new poles on Water Street. Several of these poles are significantly deteriorated and other older poles should be replaced due to alignment issues.

NED continues to work on line projects which include Dogwood Glenn upgrades, and Turkey Hill, Terry Hill and Dole line realignment projects.

## **Water Sewer Commission**

### **Main Street Stormwater Abatement and CSO Elimination Project**

Jeff noted that the Main Street Stormwater Abatement and CSO Elimination project was delayed for some time due to the contractor having labor and material shortage issues. The contractor has been working the project consistently for the last two weeks. I had a monthly construction meeting last week with the contractor, the engineer and State officials to discuss the project schedule and other items. The contractor's goal at this time is to complete the Main Street portion of the work before winter. If the Main Street section can't be fully completed this year, the road will be paved and the lanes shifted back to two full lanes.

### **Main Street Water Line and Tank Replacement Project**

Jeff Schulz noted that the final engineering for the Main Street Water line and tank replacement is getting under way and should be completed this winter. In addition, we have been working with the State to move the project on to and up the State priority list and lobbying to get funding for the project. Based upon recent press releases and the priority lists, the State will fund a significant portion of the project cost.

Motion by Charlie Morse, second by Steve Fitzhugh to adjourn the Joint Meeting of the Electric and the Water/Sewer Commission. **Motion passed 4-0.**

Jeff Schulz, Town Manager