

Minutes for 2024-01-17 Energy Committee meeting

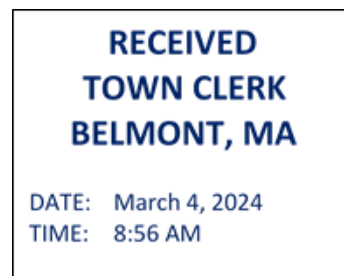
Attendance

Present

- Claus Becker (Scribe)
- Kevin Bleau
- James Booth
- Marty Bitner
- Brian Kopperl
- Ellie Lesser
- Greg Piotrowicz
- Roger Wrubel

Absent

- John Kolterman



Approval of minutes

Minutes from December 20 were approved with minor changes.

New member

Introductions to Mr Bleau (pronounced “blow”) a new member, representing Belmont Light, and who contributes experience from a career in energy solutions.

Financing to help families with oil-heating switch to heat pumps

The committee discussed a program in Ipswich, MA, which funds switch to heat pumps and recovers the money via the electricity bill in such a way that savings cover most or all of the payments.

www.bostonglobe.com/2023/11/19/business/ipswich-clean-energy-pilot/

Since electric accounts follow the house, transfer of the loan is simple. It was noted that Belmont Light might be concerned about individual customers having non-standard billing. Gas customers have access to zero interest rate loans, but oil customers do not, and the committee felt that BL could consider a pilot of such a program.

It was noted that removing the oil fossil fuel system gives an extra \$1000 rebate from Belmont Light, but that keeping an old system is an option.

Mr. Wrubel suggested that this committee put together a proposal and take it to Belmont Light. Greg pointed out that landlords are not so motivated to do energy improvements, since they transfer the cost of heating to their tenants. Under this program, owners who joined would be left with an asset. Around forty percent of Belmont is rental property, a committee member informed the team.

Town fleet electrification

On February fifth, Mr. Wrubel met with Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator, to discuss EV bus parking / charging at the incinerator site. An inspection of the area shows that there is room for not only Belmont's vehicles but potentially lessees at parts of the site that do not need to be capped. Kopperl discussed the option of renting parking to other commercial operators. In addition to the rental income, significant value could be gained if the large batteries of the buses could be used for energy arbitrage.

Green communities

Getting the benefits of being a designated Green Community requires submission of annual reports which have recently been done by Ms. Hewitt, Mr. Blazon, and the DPW.

Mr. Bleau told the committee that he will likely write the reports going forward. To derive the benefits (financial and other) the report writer will depend on timely collaboration from town departments which will need to find time to support this effort.

Gas vs heat pumps – Real-world cost comparison

Mr. Kopperl and Mr. Bittner discussed a comparison of the energy economics of their two homes. Both are approximately 2200 sqft. One home is gas-everything plus solar while the other is electric-everything, including being heated by heat pumps. The energy consumption of vehicles was ignored. One home had a total energy bill of \$3475 (electricity and gas) compared to \$1902 for the all-electric home, a tax-free difference of almost \$1600/year.

Updates

BMHS solar. Mr. Kopperl reported that all solar panels have been installed at the high school. Ms. Lesser reported that she was trying to find out from the school manager if they have been commissioned.

Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee: Town budgets are being reviewed. Several departments have requests for EV trucks.

Belmont Light: The committee is informed that the EPA makes available EV bus grants. Max grant would be \$250k. Belmont does not own their buses so the contractor would apply for grant.

Library committee: Library has sold/donated furniture. Demolition in Q1. Construction starts Q2 2024.

Ice Rink committee. Rink is being demolished this month.

High School Climate Action Club. Ms Lesser reported on a composting trial program with Black Earth. Only one bin now so volume is low. Also, outreach re native plants.

Other: Brookline has passed enhanced requirements at multifamily homes requiring new construction be 100% EV ready with at least 8A charging per site, which is slow charging.

Next meeting

Next meeting scheduled February 28th at 19:00 o'clock.