

Jim Nourse called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm. Committee and public access at UberConference [888-919-7047 or 603-506-6463].

1. Jim announced that this telephonic meeting complies with the Governor's Order #12.
2. Roll call of members present: Mark Bolinger, Jim Nourse, Mike Novello, Matt Brown, Dan O'Hara

Members of the public joining: Harry Higgs

3. Approved the minutes of our October 12, 2020 meeting. Dan moved, Matt seconded. Motion unanimously approved by roll call.
4. Nomination of Harry Higgs to join the Energy Committee: Jim moved, Matt seconded. Unanimous vote in favor—welcome Harry! Jim will run it by the Select Board for approval, and Harry will need to sign the pledge form.
5. Update on Home Energy Assessments for Pearl Dimick fund referrals: Seven fuel assistance recipients are interested in home energy assessments. Jim and a few other members have volunteered to help guide applicants for energy assessments through the application process. Jim talked with Jen Schiffman at the Lyme Foundation, who relayed that the Foundation is open to receiving requests for funding to help implement weatherization measures. In the meantime, we already have ~\$1500 left over from the Weatherize Upper Valley initiative a few years ago; that money (which is currently housed at Community Care of Lyme) will be used to offset the \$100 assessment fee (so we might use up \$700 of it that way, with the balance used to implement weatherization measures). COVER is running flat out, due to pent up demand, so we're unlikely to be able to tap into their help.
6. Update on Town Highway garage: At its November 5 meeting, the Select Board approved a propane heating bid over a pellet boiler bid—despite the Town's recent adoption of the 100% renewable energy goals. Matt had called into that Select Board meeting, and summarized the deliberation, which seemed to hinge in large part on the likely unavailability of the 40% NHPUC pellet boiler rebate, without which the pellet boiler bid becomes untenably expensive (at \$69,000) compared to the propane bid of ~\$26,000.

The possibility of installing a companion solar thermal system (evacuated tubes) on the south-facing wall of the building to pre-heat the hydronic fluid in the radiant floor was raised at the Select Board meeting, and discussed by our Committee. There is concern that the south-facing wall of the building may actually not be a great solar thermal site, due to grading issues (there is a north-sloping hill behind the building, and a portion of the south wall is below-grade) as well as shading (there is a row of trees screening the

building from the cemetery). Moreover, if we are going to install solar thermal, presumably that should be taken into account in the propane boiler system design (e.g., perhaps with solar thermal, a smaller propane boiler is warranted)—which raises the question of whether and when this propane replacement is likely to happen.

Action items (“to-do’s”): Jim will ask the Select Board whether they have leftover budget to implement the propane replacement this year, or instead will be waiting until a new budget is approved at the next Town Meeting in March 2021 (he will also ask whether the decision to go with propane over pellets will be made public). Depending on the answer to Jim’s question (i.e., whether or not we have time to investigate other options), Matt will ask Curtis Shepard whether a geothermal heat pump system would be a viable alternative to propane (since Curtis has installed such systems in the past). Mark will check out the south wall of the building with solar thermal in mind. All of us should think about ways to make energy considerations a concern earlier in the design/renovation process (the master plan is a good first step), and how to have our recommendations carry more weight with the Select Board.

7. Energy chapter of Town master plan: Harry and Mike have provided written comments on the draft outline; Dan and Matt gave verbal approval. Jim ran through the process for fleshing out the outline with text: Mark will draft the introduction and electricity sections, Harry will take transportation, Jim will ask Scott to take on heating, Jim will take the section on the 100% renewable goal, and we will all contribute to the “recommendations” section at the end. Full steam ahead.
8. Report out on Clean Energy NH’s Local Energy Solutions conference: Jim and Mike attended some of the virtual sessions. Jim found it useful for gaining new contacts, but thought that the presenters were talking mostly at the macro level (national or state level, rather than local), so the content wasn’t all that applicable to our local needs. Mike had the same impression—i.e., not a whole lot of new or actionable information (e.g., a focus on offshore wind, which isn’t particularly relevant to Lyme).

Jim was disappointed that there were no sessions on community solar—which sparked a discussion among Jim, Mike, and Matt on that topic. There could be opportunities for community solar here in Lyme (presuming we could make it work within Lyme’s stringent zoning regs—which is a big if), but there is a significant difference between a private venture (which might be easier) and a Town endeavor (which is presumably where we’d start, at least). We, as a committee, obviously have interest in this topic, and Matt recommended that we add a community solar discussion as an agenda item for a future meeting.

9. New Business: Jim asked whether we should try to meet via Zoom rather than via phone, given that Zoom has some advantages (e.g., chat, screen-sharing, video). There was general agreement that we should give it a try at our next meeting.

10. Adjournment: Mike moved; Dan seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:44 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 14 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Bolinger, Secretary