

TOWN OF BECKET
ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING
September 19, 2023, 4 PM
Minutes

In attendance (In-person): Garth Klimchuk (Chairman), Cathy DeFoe (Vice-Chairman), Bob Gross, Al Blake, Susan Purser (Secretary), Julie Craumer (potential new member)

Absent: Katherine Warden (Town Administrator)

Guest (via Zoom): Sherdyl Fernandez-Aubert (Community First Partnership, BRPC) and Sean Howe, Sun Wealth Community Solar

1. Called meeting to order at 4:01pm
2. Approved minutes of July 11, 2023 meeting – Garth, Susan, Al, Cathy and Bob.
3. Committee Elections –
 - Garth Klimchuk was reelected as Committee Chairman
 - Cathy DeFoe was reelected as Vice Chairperson
 - Susan Purser was reelected as Secretary.
 - The Committee has one member position and one Alternate position open. Julie Craumer has submitted an application to the Select Board to become a member and it will be reviewed on 10/4/23.
 - Robert Gross announced he will resign at the end of the meeting. The Committee thanked him for all his work in the past.
4. Energy Information Session – Committee members evaluated the Session and had the following comments: a.) Perhaps we should have it every other year. We could alternate with the Town of Washington. b.) Susan suggested that the session be shorter, may be 1½ hrs with only direct providers presenting. She felt DOER's presentation was too long and addressed municipalities not the general public. c.) Another idea was to have local people talk about their experiences with home assessments and/or solar panels.
5. Wind Project Status – a.) Eversource has received the interconnection application and we are awaiting approval. b.) Megan Amsler, the site assessment consultant will be here on Thursday 9/21/23. Cathy and Susan

will meet with the consultant and discuss the project. All the project documents have been forwarded to Megan. Cathy showed the committee a map of the Town Hall property which also showed the location of the septic field there. Solar may not necessarily be assessed. Submission of the wind turbine application for a Green Communities grant will now be set for the April 2024 deadline.

Al mentioned that he had attended a U.Mass seminar where free solar assessments for towns were offered. He proposed we inquire to get one for a possible roof-mounted solar project at Town Hall. Bob stated that after the assessment we can then put out an RFP. Cathy will talk to Kathe Warden regarding the steps involved to create RFPs and RFSs.

Garth did not support working further with Phillip Geer of Pinnacle Solar Energy on a future solar project.

Garth discussed the new IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) Direct Pay program that pays municipalities immediately (30-50% of project cost) which makes it easier for towns to fund projects. Al reminded us that an RFP process might be required so we would need multiple responses from several solar contractors.

Julie suggested we get the name of the solar installer who worked with the Town of Windsor on their project. Susan will get the name from one of her contacts.

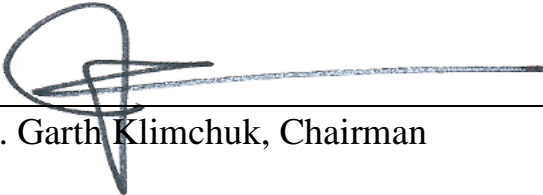
6. Joint Letter re MassSave - Julie followed up on the idea from last meeting of a joint letter from BCAC and the Town of Becket reminding local low income households of the MassSave program and its benefits. After the letter is sent, a BCAC staff member will call households to follow up. Julie circulated a sample letter that was sent to residents in the town of Adams. The group felt it was a good idea and so Julie will draft a similar letter for Becket that we can review at the next meeting. Sherdyl said his agency could fund the mailing after we give him an invoice. In addition, MassSave info could be left at the Farmers' Market and Food Pantry.
7. Sun Wealth Community Solar with Sean Howe (via Zoom) – Sherdyl brought Sean to the meeting to discuss his community solar proposal. Sun Wealth is offering a program in which residents can save up to 25% on their electricity bills by “buying into” a new solar installation. Sun Wealth is targeting EJ households for these significant savings. There is no credit check, no cancellation fee and can work with fuel assistance. The western

part of Becket may be eligible. Sherdyl said that Community Partnership wants to help publicize the program. It could also work well with BCAC outreach. Billing is done by autopay where one pays both the Eversource and the Sun Wealth bill and then receives a check from Sun Wealth with a refund.

What should be the next step? The committee needs to check with the Town to see if we are able to promote a program for a for-profit company.

Publicity could include flyers and marketing postcards. Julie suggested that Sean send us a sample copy of the two bills so we can get a better idea of the concept. Al mentioned that NexAmp's community solar project just sent a check without the billing paperwork. The Committee will wait until we get the literature from Sun Wealth before making any decision.

8. Other Topics – DOER may have new grants coming. Garth will talk to Chris Mason (DOER/Green Communities rep) re decarbonization credits.
9. Next meeting: Tuesday, October 24th, 2023, 4 PM, In person and via Zoom.
10. Adjourned at 5:40pm.



J. Garth Klimchuk, Chairman