



**FINAL**

**Meeting Minutes  
Alternative Energy Committee**

**TIME:** Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 7:30 pm

**PLACE:** Town of Cohasset Zoom session

**ATTENDEES:**

**Committee Members**

Tanya Bodell (Chair)  
Deborah Cook  
Pat Gooding  
Michael Schmitt  
Josh Staunton  
Steve Wenner

**Town Staff**

Michelle Leary

**Excused Absences**

**Unexcused Absences**

**Guests**

Steve Girardi

**1) CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was officially called to order at 7:32 pm.

**2) MEETING MINUTES**

The committee members reviewed the meeting minutes

**MOTION:**

Josh Staunton moved to approve the June 16, 2022 minutes, seconded by Steve Wenner. The minutes were approved 5-0-1, with Pat Gooding abstaining.

**3) GUEST SPEAKER: Matthew Parent, Marshfield Energy Committee**

Matthew Parent had been asked to give an update on Marshfield's Alternative Energy Committee activities but was unable to attend given a last minute conflict. He will be invited to join the Committee at a future meeting.

**4) GRANTS**

**Electric School Bus Demonstration Project**

Tanya Bodell reported that a number of grants may be available to the Town or a vendor that could bring the cost of an electric school bus to a price close to the existing diesel school bus leases. Both the Cohasset School Committee and Select Board had given approval to proceed with engaging in a competitive procurement process and sending out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an Electric School Bus Demonstration Project.

Michelle Leary said that the RFP was issued on July 13, 2022 with a due date of August 1, 2022. The RFP will ask for proposals that include options for a five-year lease, seven-year lease, and options to own, plus charging facilities, maintenance, and electric charging costs. Any potential vendor may request the RFP via email to Michelle Leary at: [mleary@cohassetma.org](mailto:mleary@cohassetma.org)

The Committee asked Michelle if she had sent the RFP to vendors who had presented to the Committee in the past.

**ACTION ITEM:** Michelle confirmed that she would provide a courtesy copy to those potential vendors who had presented to the Committee regarding electric school buses.

**MassCEC: Batteries for Harborview**

Tanya said the CEC had funds remaining from the CLEAR study, which they would like to disburse to Cohasset. The Alternative Energy Committee submitted a proposal to purchase electric batteries to power the common areas of Harborview housing in the event of a power outage. Eight batteries will be purchased with \$20k from the CEC, \$20k from the Community Preservation Committee (which requires approval from Town Meeting) and \$10k from the Affordable Housing Trust.



**MassDEP: Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA)**

The MassDEP has \$1.8 M to replace diesel generators with generators powered by a cleaner source of energy. The grant application is due by August 24. Tanya said that Cohasset has three diesel generators, most of which are at the end of their life and could be eligible.

**ACTION ITEM:** Michelle Leary will draft an RFP seeking bids for cleaner-source generators to issue in advance of the DERA grant submission deadline in order to find out what options may be available. Michael Schmitt will help to review the proposals.

**FEMA BRIC Grant: Cohasset Microgrid Project**

The first round of BRIC grants have been awarded. This first round is designated for tribes and state/federal entities. The FEMA website indicates that the second round, in which the Cohasset Microgrid Project will be addressed, will be announced later this summer.

[Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities | FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities)  
<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities>

**5) UPDATE ON INITIATIVES**

**Energy Sage Research**

Debbie Cook contacted five towns that currently have or recently have had partnerships with Energy Sage to research the company's effectiveness. Two towns, Wayland and Framingham, were completely inactive and no information was available. Cambridge, Lexington and Newton have active relationships with Energy Sage.

Debbie spoke with Liora Silkes, Energy Coach from Newton. Ms. Silkes said that Energy Sage offered valuable resources for Newton residents, but Newton had not utilized the company's services anywhere near their potential.

Lexington provided a very favorable analysis of Energy Sage's capabilities on the website; however, the woman who initiated the relationship had resigned.

Debbie's research found no red flags, and the internet reviews yielded positive comments.

This research confirmed the prior vote by the Committee to proceed with recommending a collaboration with Energy Sage to provide unbiased education and access to potential vendors to residents and businesses within Cohasset.

**ACTION ITEM:** Michelle Leary will remind Town Counsel to review the MOU from Energy Sage.

**ACTION ITEM:** If the Select Board approves moving forward with Energy Sage, Debbie Cook will work with Energy Sage on the website design and marketing.

### **Solar Energy RFP/Community Solar**

Tanya reported that the AEC has received a proposal from Palmer Capital for rooftop solar at Stop and Shop Plaza. The proposals will be circulated to the AEC for discussion and review so that the Committee can make a recommendation to the Select Board.

Tanya said the town should get as much solar capacity as possible this year because the solar Investment Tax Credit is due to ratchet down at the end of 2022 and expire for residents at the end of 2023. She suggested that the status of the proposed solar canopy project at the MBTA be investigated.

**ACTION ITEM:** Steve Girardi will check into the status of the proposed solar canopy project at the MBTA station.

## **6) MARKETING**

### **Community Choice Aggregation Subcommittee**

Debbie Cook reported that representatives from the six towns that had bundled their CCA applications together were planning to have a follow-up meeting in early July to further discuss ways to pressure the DPU to act on our applications. However, the attorney for Good Energy advised the group to lay low, saying that he had filed a motion for reconsideration and thought that progress was being made. Debbie said the group will continue to monitor the situation.

**ACTION ITEM:** Community Choice Aggregation Subcommittee to continue to monitor the DPU delay and continue the six-town wide collaboration to identify ways to move the process forward.

### **Social Media and Marketing**

Tanya said the AEC should begin planning a general marketing and education campaign for AEC initiatives. Michelle Leary said that Cohasset recently hired a media specialist who can help.

**ACTION ITEM:** Debbie Cook, Steve Wenner and Josh Stanton will develop a list of proposed articles and messages to educate and promote the AEC's initiatives for approval by the AEC.

**ACTION ITEM:** Michelle Leary will facilitate an introduction of the new media specialist to the AEC.

## 7) DATA REPORT

Josh Staunton displayed the Chargepoint dashboard (see Attachment). Michelle said that Cohasset has fulfilled its year of free charging and could start charging for electricity. The AEC had voted at prior meetings and recommended to the Select Board at a quarterly meeting that it would be time to start charging for electricity at the EV charging stations. The Select Board agreed and the AEC is tasked with coming back with a set of recommended rates that would do two things:

- 1) Cover the costs of electricity; and
- 2) Create disincentives for sitting at the stations when fully charged.

Michelle said that she had some preliminary information. Tanya suggested that they calculate the historical cost of energy and examine National Grid's rates that are charged to the EV charging stations.

Michelle said she would get recommendations from Chargepoint about how other towns handle their charging station usage and billing so that the AEC can discuss recommendations to make.

In addition to the recommendations for charging, Tanya is researching potential town structures that could be used to collect the monies and pay for the costs, without going through the General Fund. This structure also could receive grants to make sure they are dedicated to the associated expenditures.

**ACTION ITEM:** Michelle Leary will research how other towns manage their EV charging stations' usage and billing.

**ACTION ITEM:** Josh Staunton and Michelle Leary will create a data report on the charging stations from their operational beginning. Josh will continue to update the data report at the beginning of each month.



**ACTION ITEM:** Tanya Bodell will discuss with members of the Select Board the idea of creating an account or fund to hold revenues generated by the charging stations and perhaps grants received for AEC projects.

## **8) SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

Michelle said that the GHG inventory is underway, analyzing only the Town of Cohasset's municipal emissions. The review is being very thorough and searching for past and missing data.

## **9) MATTERS NOT REASONABLY KNOWN IN ADVANCE**

Michelle said that the law allowing Zoom meetings was about to expire on July 15, 2022, however, there was some question about whether there might be an extension. AEC members noted that they preferred to meet on Zoom.

The committee also decided to have a short meeting in two weeks to review the Stop and Shop solar rooftop proposal from Palmer Capital and other time-sensitive matters.

**NOTE: On July 16, 2022, Governor Baker signed into law An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations, which, among other things, extends the expiration of the provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2023. Specifically, this extension allows public bodies to continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum of the public body physically present at a meeting location, and to provide "adequate, alternative" access to remote meetings. The Act does not make any new changes to the Open Meeting Law other than extending the expiration date of the temporary provisions regarding remote meetings from July 15, 2022, to March 31, 2023.**

## **10) NEXT MEETINGS**

Alternative Energy Committee meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of the month (unless adjusted for holidays) at 7:30 pm.

The Committee discussed taking the August meeting off and holding a special meeting instead.

The next meetings currently are planned for:

- July 28, 2022 (Special Meeting)
- September 8, 2022



## **11) ADJOURNMENT**

Pat Gooding made a motion to adjourn, and Josh Staunton seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 9:44pm.



## **SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

### **All Members**

- Research grant opportunities for funding alternative energy solutions for the Town.

### **Tanya Bodell**

- Tanya to continue with outreach to Town Committees to describe the Cohasset Microgrid Project and BRIC grant applications.
- Keep asking Select Board to appoint new member to the AEC.
- Arrange for presentation about hydrogen at an upcoming meeting and research the possibility of using hydrogen to power the proposed microgrid's rotating generator.
- Tanya and Michelle Leary to continue open communications with the Town Hall Renovation Committee regarding potential backup options and grant opportunities.
- Raise the potential need to start charging for electricity consumed at the electric charging stations.
- Research possibility of a financial structure, such as a special revenue fund, to hold funds generated by AEC projects to dedicate to funding clean energy projects.

### **Debbie Cook**

- Continue to pursue monitoring effort of the Go Electric Project.
- Work with Steve Wenner on marketing plan for electrical aggregation.
- Work with Energy Sage, once the partnership is approved, to educate and promote solar to capitalize on Energy Sage's resources.

### **Pat Gooding**

- Research Climate Action Plans in other communities to provide the basis for development of a Cohasset-specific Climate Action Plan.

### **Michelle Leary**

- Provide a courtesy copy of the RFP for an electric school bus demonstration project to those who had presented to the Committee regarding electric school buses.
- Draft an RFP seeking bids for cleaner-source generators for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grant application from MassDEP.



- Remind Town Counsel to review the Energy Sage MOU.
- Facilitate a meeting between Cohasset's new communications director and Debbie Cook, Steve Wenner and Josh Staunton to discuss AEC marketing initiatives.
- Research how other towns manage their EV charging stations' usage and billing.
- Put a link to Good Energy's website on AEC webpage and plan to put it on Cohasset's homepage in a prominent position as soon as the project is underway.
- Work with Tanya and Faisal to explore waste to heat systems to obtain sufficient background to decide whether the topic has potential opportunity in Cohasset.

### **Josh Staunton**

- Work with Steve Wenner and Debbie Cook on developing article ideas, messaging and marketing strategies to promote the AEC's initiatives.
- Work with Michelle Leary on creating a report of the EV charging stations usage and demand since their operational beginning.
  - Collect EV charging data to start and maintain ongoing data.
  - Screenshot monthly summary every 1<sup>st</sup> of month.
  - Present monthly screenshots to Alternative Energy Committee
- Serve as the AEC liaison for the Fleet Assessment being performed by National Grid.

### **Steve Wenner**

- Work with Good Energy and other towns to the extent any other assistance is needed to finalize the DPU approval process.
- Develop a marketing plan with Good Energy to ensure the details of the Community Choice Aggregation Plan and residential options are publicized.

### **Mike Schmitt**

- Be prepared to review responses to RFP for non-diesel fueled generation alternatives.
- Serve as the AEC liaison for the Fleet Assessment being performed by National Grid.

### **Steve Girardi**

- Find out the status of the proposed solar canopy project at the MBTA station.



**ATTACHMENT A  
ChargePoint Charging Station  
Summary Charts Through Mid-July 2022**





### ChargePoint Charging Station Summary Charts Through Mid-July 2022

