



**FINAL**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Alternative Energy Committee**

**TIME:** Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 7:30 pm

**PLACE:** Town of Cohasset Zoom session

**ATTENDEES:**

**Committee Members**

Tanya Bodell (chair)  
Deborah Cook  
Pat Gooding  
Michael Schmitt  
Steve Wenner

**Excused Absences**

Tyler Thibault  
Adam Amann

**Unexcused Absences**

**Town Staff**

Brianna Bennett

**Guests**

Sam Wakeman, Capital Budget Committee  
Corey Evans, Select Board  
Laura Burns, Hingham Water Commission  
Brian Foulds, Distributed Resource Catalyst,  
Town of Concord  
Steve Girardi, Coh. Water Commission

#### **1) CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm.

#### **2) MEETING MINUTES**

Steve Wenner made a motion to approve the June 10, 2021 minutes, which was seconded by Tanya Bodell. The minutes were approved unanimously with one correction. Michael Schmitt was not present.

#### **3) PRESENTATION ON ELECTRIC BUSES BY BRIAN FOULDS, TOWN OF CONCORD**

Brian Foulds presented on the electric bus pilot project implemented at the Town of Concord.

Concord was first in the US to obtain an electric bus, via a warrant article that requested \$200k for the project. Buses are 3.5 times more costly to purchase than gas-powered buses but have many



advantages, including far lower maintenance and operation costs. Buses can 'shave the peak' during periods of high energy use and can even serve as mini shelters during emergencies. He said a good source of potential funding was the VW Settlement funding.

He showed a presentation he had prepared asking for town funding, which can be found on the Town of Concord website <https://concordma.gov/2662/Article-30-Healthy-School-Buses> and a follow-up report given at a public hearing in 2020. <https://concordma.gov/2663/Article-31-Municipal-Fleet-Electrification>

#### **4) WEBSITE REDESIGN AND CONTENT**

Brianna reported that the Town of Cohasset's website is in the process of being completely redesigned. She will keep us informed of the status and how we can contribute.

#### **5) ELECTRIC VEHICLES & CHARGING STATION UPDATE:**

Brianna reported that there were 156 charging sessions in June, with 39 new users. To date 1.86 MW have been used, costing \$223 at \$.012 per kWh. The atmospheric carbon saved is equivalent to carbon sequestered by 238 trees for ten years.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

Committee – Determine when to set a price at the charging stations

Brianna also said that she was successful in acquiring data about the number of EVs in Cohasset. Currently there are 23 fully electric EVs and 85 hybrids. She expects updates will finally take place soon on the MA EV Hub.

#### **6) UPDATES ON 2021 INITIATIVES**

- **Grants:** Brianna said FEMA will award grants through the fall. There were 991 requests with 42% being invited to proceed to the second phase. Brianna did not know if there would be continued funding going forward.
- **Community Solar:** No update available
- **Electric buses:** One available funding source is for buses that are used in a vehicle-to-grid application.



- **Electric Municipalization:** Tanya said she hoped the first meeting of the subcommittee would take place in September. A key responsibility of the subcommittee would be to determine how to draft the RFP for the consultant. Mike Schmitt expressed interest in being on the subcommittee and Tyler announced he has to resign. Tanya said two more members are needed and they could come from the general public.

**ACTION ITEM:** Find two people to join the Electric Municipalization subcommittee

- **Town Hall renovation:** Sam Wakeman, representing the Capital Budget Committee, expressed concern about the cost of the town hall renovation, including the proposed alternative energy HVAC systems, and particularly the geothermal option. He asked if the AEC could help finding grants. He also wants more exact estimates. Tanya said that the AEC could potentially add the geothermal system in the microgrid component of the FEMA resiliency grant application.

**ACTION ITEM:** The AEC will look into grants for the Town Hall renovation's energy systems and potentially include funding requests for geothermal in the FEMA grant application

- **Go Electric** – Debbie Cook said the website is at a point it can be shared with vendors. Currently the committee is developing a strategy and materials to approach vendors, which explain the program. The current website, which is not yet live, can be viewed here. <https://debbiecook281.wixsite.com/my-site-2>

## 7) UPDATES ON 2020 INITIATIVES

- **Solar**
  - School Rooftop Solar:** Tanya reported that Cohasset could be eligible for 22% cost of school roof replacements from the federal government, but the state won't cover nearly enough because of the roofs' remaining expected life. She suggested that roof replacements be included in the FEMA grant application.
  - National Grid Interconnection costs:** No new information was available about why National Grid was charging so much for new solar generation to connect to the grid. Tanya said this cost would kill further solar expansion if it stands.

- **Community Aggregation:** Brianna sent John O'Rourke from Good Energy a record of the vote at Cohasset TM when the Select Board voted unanimously to support community aggregation. Steve noted that applications from towns all over MA have been stalled.

**ACTION ITEM:** Steve will contact John O'Rourke and find out if there is any change in the status of Cohasset's application.

- **Microgrid** – Tanya said she approached National Grid to discuss a microgrid concept for Cohasset. She cautioned that if National Grid is not on board, the town won't be able to move forward.
- **Data Initiative- Backup Generators:** No information about the number of backup generators in Cohasset has been obtained.

**ACTION ITEM:** Corey Evans will ask the Building Inspector how to get access to permits for generators in Cohasset

- **Sustainability Initiative:** Brianna said Brian Foulds, a resident of Concord, MA, will be a guest speaker at an upcoming AEC meeting to talk about Concord's sustainability program.

## 8) MATTERS NOT REASONABLY KNOWN IN ADVANCE

None.

## 9) NEXT MEETINGS

Second Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm:

- August 12, 2021
- September 9, 2021

## 10) ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 9:52pm.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

### **All Members**

- Choose two members to serve on Electric Municipalization Committee and a chair.
- Monitor charging stations data.
- Research grant opportunities for funding alternative energy solutions for the town hall renovation, including geothermal.

### **Tanya Bodell**

- Arrange for presentation about hydrogen at an upcoming meeting.
- Develop a grant proposal for FEMA.
- Continue discussions with National Grid about the connectivity charges for solar.

### **Debbie Cook**

- Provide July meeting minutes for next meeting.
- Continue to pursue monitoring effort of the tri-town committee for the Go Electric Project.

### **Corey Evans**

- Ask Building Inspector if it is possible to obtain permits for backup generators in Cohasset.

### **Pat Gooding**

- Research sustainability programs in Concord, MA, Sharon and other towns.

### **Michelle Leary / Brianna Bennett**

- Write an article for Mariner and Cohasset 143 updating the usage and success of the charging stations
- Ask the Town Collector how the information for the car excise taxes is stored, which includes make and model information.
- Ask Cohasset cable to air Brianna's charging station video.
- Determine whether to add school roof replacements and a geothermal energy system to the FEMA application.

### **Steve Wenner**

- Supply official vote count for electrical aggregation to John O'Rourke at Good Energy.