

Public Wood to Energy Projects (Maine Public Buildings)

- Third round of Federal Stimulus money awards (\$2.7 million) for Maine public buildings (\$500,000 max per grant award).
- Project supports conversion of oil to wood heating systems
- Application due March 24th (initial grant notification February 28th)
- Falmouth Schools currently heat the high school and new elementary school primarily with wood (100,000+ gallons of oil saved at a savings of approximately \$230,000 using wood). This application would seek to move the middle school from oil to wood, finishing the entire campus conversion to wood heat. We could also promote tying the town hall into the grid if desired.
- Projects must be “shovel ready” (spend funds with one year of grant award)
- Grant scoring improved if you can demonstrate:
 - Large displacement of oil usage in the conversion (middle school would score high with 55,000 gallons of oil displaced)
 - Cost effectiveness (higher cash matches will result in significantly higher scores)
 - Community support (includes school boards, town councils) for project
 - Feasibility and “readiness” for project (prior engineering studies, HVAC system conversion analysis (steam to hot water), etc.

Summary: A conversion of the middle school heating system from steam to hot water is a top priority of the District’s facility committee planning (current system is 1950’s vintage). This conversion would ultimately lead to a switch from oil to wood as the primary heating fuel. We would like to take advantage of this grant funding opportunity, if at all possible, to infuse up to \$500,000 into the solution. The town’s support (philosophically and financially) would be appreciated and enhance the potential success of the grant application. Total cost of the project is estimated to be \$1.5 million for a new wood-chip boiler building and boiler, requiring a local funding differential of approximately \$1 million. Assuming a 15-year lease purchase (allowed since energy efficiency upgrade), we would estimate a yearly payment of \$70,000. We calculate heating cost savings of approximately \$115,000 annually based on current consumption and prices (one ton of chips at \$60 = 70 gallons of oil at \$3.15/gal). Our request would be for town funding support of the local cost phase of the project and interest in future connection to the system.