

# Stratham Energy Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Date: November 14, 2012

Commission members present:

James Schlough

Matthew O'Keefe

Michael Gorman

Michael Welty

John C. Dold

Also Present: Paul Deschaine, Stratham Town Administrator

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

Review and Approve Minutes: Minutes of the October 17th meeting were approved.

Matt O'Keefe reported on his efforts to obtain an intern to assist the commission in gathering data and entering it into the Portfolio Manager software. Matt has been in contact with a UNH Manchester engineering professor who is looking for intern opportunities for his students to fulfill course requirements. The position would be unpaid and likely one day a week for a semester. Matt has produced a project summary explaining the purpose and scope. There has been no response as yet. Matt said he would be in contact with the professor tomorrow. Paul Deschaine commented that the student need not be an engineering candidate. Someone like a business major could do the work as well.

John Dold, commenting on the presentation by Tim Noonis of Unitil at our last meeting, said he would like to see Unitil more responsive to the town's needs for natural gas service. Since acquiring the gas utility from Northern Utilities two years ago, Unitil seems only interested in expanding to large users. It was noted that the gas line is currently extended on Portsmouth Avenue to the new Nissan dealership. This is less than a mile from the municipal building. Matt O'Gorman questioned the cost of extending the line for that distance, noting that at \$100 per foot (a cost he had been told), this would be more like \$500,000 instead of the \$2 million that had been suggested at last month's meeting. Paul mentioned that the state utility commission is against any financing method that would cause existing users to be charged for expansion to new customers. John questioned if it was reasonable to have the town fund the expansion.

Mike Gorman said he was interested in making progress on the short term energy saving items that would be based on outcomes from the Portfolio Manager effort and then have a longer term plan for doing the gas expansion as part of the water and sewer expansions.

John proposed that we drop the pursuit of gas service for now and ask Unitil to provide us with a long term vision for gas service expansion that could be folded into the town's long term plans. He will send Tim Noonis a "thank you" for the presentation and ask for a 5-10 year look ahead. John proposed that the commission ask for a budget at the next town meeting to be used for

expenses such as seminar attendance, organizational memberships and mailings to town residents.

In preparation for the town meeting in March, Mike Welty said he would like to see a visual presentation on where energy is being used in the town and start to get the hard data on usage. He asked when the Portfolio Manager process would be completed. Matt suggested 60 to 90 days. Mike W. thought we could get some obvious savings from a free electrical audit through Unitil and propose an implementation project at the annual meeting. Paul noted that a \$5k-\$10k project could probably fit in a maintenance budget but that something larger would need budgeting approval. He felt that most of the obvious savings opportunities have already been addressed. He said one project in the pipeline is spray foaming at the highway garage. Mike W. suggested we could do an status update at the annual meeting and note that the police station and fire station are already above code for energy use. Paul noted that usually only the warrant items get on the agenda at the town meeting.

Matt made the motion that we ask for \$1500 for a budget next year. Mike W. seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

John showed a YouTube video produced by an elementary school that is adopting an educational program engaging all the pupils in energy usage awareness. He noted the elementary school in Boxford MA, where he is town engineer, is initiating this program.

It was decided there will be no December meeting for the commission.

Mike W. proposed that we not have printouts prepared for items previously distributed by email. The second Wednesday of the month was adopted as the official meeting date for the commission.

Matt volunteered to oversee the Portfolio Manager data gathering and entry if an intern is not found.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20.

The next meeting of the commission will be Wednesday, January 9th.