

# Stratham Energy Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Date: January 8, 2014

Commission members present:

John Dold

Michael Gorman

Matthew O'Keefe

James Schlough

Michael Welty

also present: Paul Deschaine, Stratham Town Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 7:07.

The minutes of the December 11th meeting, previously distributed, were approved as written.

Matt O'Keefe reported on the blower door test performed at the Historical Society building on December 31st. Commission members present were Matt, Mike Welty and Jim Schlough. This test and the measures to correct some of the air leakages were performed by Newell and Crathern Builders of Loudon NH. The amount of work was set by the commission's 2013 budget balance of \$600. This contractor was selected because he had done similar work for Matt O'Keefe as part of the Unifit Residential Energy Saving Rebate program.

Matt explained the testing process. A sealing frame is put around an open exterior door. A fan in this frame exhausts air from the building interior to the outdoors. The air flow is measured by the pressure difference from the interior to the exterior. The initial reading for the air leakage peaked at 12,000 cfm. The contractors then felt for air leakages around any potential openings and either sealed or weather stripped to limit the air flow. The air leakage was reduced to 10,000 cfm.

It was explained that then normal air leakage would be significantly less than this as the fan produces an abnormal draw on the air in the building. It was also noted that the minimum air changes recommended for buildings is .35/hour. It was not determined what that number is for the building under normal conditions.

The contractors thought that some uncorrected leakage might still be coming through the basement from behind the studded walls built over the masonry foundation. Paul pointed out that the walls are continuous masonry with no discontinuities at the sill and that much of the basement wall had been insulated with spray on foam a few years ago.

Paul reported that when the building was entered on Tuesday, January 7th, the first time since the work was done on December 31st, it was discovered that the inside temperature was 26 degrees and the furnace was still switched off. Apparently the contractors, having turned the furnace off

for the blower door test, did not turn the furnace back on. Complicating this situation is that there are three individual switches to shut off the furnace. Two of these had been left off. Paul said town workers had been at the building that day to deal with some leaks caused by the freezing. The extent of the damage had not been fully determined. It was commented that the contractor might be liable for the damage. Matt was to notify the contractor of the incident the next day.

Mike Welty surmised that the result of the improvements might amount to about a 10-15% savings for heating energy. It was noted that running the ceiling fans at low speed could help reduce air stratification in the first floor area where there are high ceilings. However, even low air velocities could add to the discomfort of inhabitants.

Mike Gorman reported on the additional energy data for the Stratham Memorial School that he received. The corrected square footage of the building is 80,000, not the 82,000 originally considered. Also, annual propane usage was \$9000 and is used only for the kitchen. John estimated that the energy use for the school is about \$2 a square foot and that that seems very high. The municipal building is about \$1.14. It was noted that the electricity use through the summer remains almost unchanged even though the school is used much less. The use of dehumidifiers may be cause for this. John thought that he noticed many computers that had been left on when we were doing our audit and questioned if that could be a big factor. Mike Welty said that the interior lighting seemed to be well controlled.

Mike suggested that exterior lighting could be upgraded to LED. He noted that the Unitil rebate for such upgrades will be reduced from 50% to \$75 per fixture for 2014.

Matt will update the Portfolio Manager with the new data for SMS and we will analyze the results at our next meeting.

John asked about the status of the budget request for the commission. Paul reported that the budgeting deliberations had not started yet.

John reported that he had another email from Stratham resident Kevin Madley about his pellet stove installation. John proposed that the commission might want to meet at Kevin's house as part of our meeting next month. John will inquire further with Kevin.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30. The next meeting of the commission will be Wednesday, February 12th, at the Municipal Center.