



**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

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*Minutes
Solar Committee
Thursday, November 12th 2020*

Committee members attending via Zoom video conference: Brendan Denehy, Dennis Comeau, Jacob Solon, Joel Shacklee, Kelly Seeley, Maria Bechis, Patty Smith.

Also present: N/A

(30:30) 7:17pm Brendan opened the meeting. **Brendan** said we are meeting electronically under Executive Order 2020-04 and Emergency Meeting Orders #12 and #23, which allow for remote meetings. All committee members stated they were social distancing, some with others present in their homes, but not in the room. Maria was in attendance with Dennis Bechis.

Approval of minutes, October 14 and 21, 2020

Maria asked to correct a note about wood pellet heating in the 10/14 meeting minutes, which was noted. **Kelly** moved to accept the minutes from 10/21. **Maria** seconds. **Dennis** abstains. All other members approve.

Agenda adjustments

None.

Discuss Energy Audit proposals

Brendan said there were presentations by Resilient Building Group (RBG) and Energy Services NH (ESNH) to the committee on October 21st and presentations by EEI and Dick Henry (DDH) to the Brookline school board at their meeting on October 28th. He asked if the members had watched the school board meeting. All members said yes.

Brendan said he had followed up with ESNH and RBG on Wednesday 11/11. Mike with ESNH responded the same day and Brendan forwarded his responses to the committee.

Discuss Recommended firm(s) to Selectboard

Brendan asked for the committee's thoughts on the presentations given to the school board. **Patty** said although they focused on the school buildings, there was lots of information about how they approach energy efficiency. She also said the information seemed repetitive of the other presentations the committee had seen so far. **Jacob** agreed.

Dennis said he was particularly impressed with Mike Davie from EEI and the number of local communities that are working with them. He mentioned that in making a recommendation to the selectboard, the committee is obligated to seek lower risk. **Maria** said she agreed and noted his work with Nashua High School North and other local schools. **Maria** said she was impressed with the amount of information he shared about RMMS and highlighted that EEI does the energy audit for free.

Dennis noted that he had stated earlier that he is cautious of free services, but he feels comfortable with EEI because they seem to have a large enough scope of business to offer audits for free as part of their process. **Joel** agreed and said it is low-risk because there is no commitment up front.

Maria asked Kelly if she has any perspective from her experience working with DDH in Hollis. **Kelly** said she would be comfortable working with DDH because their process is familiar, but she is also interested in working with EEI on the school buildings.

Jacob said he thinks it is a priority to pick a company that will cover a lot of the legwork for the project such as drafting RFPs, filing paperwork, and creating presentations and materials. He said the only one which specifically did not meet that requirement is ESNH, so he would vote not select them.

Patty said she is undecided between EEI and DDH. **Brendan** said he liked that EEI would take care of most of the project with little oversight needed. He said one thing he liked about DDH was the vision for solar energy down the road and possibilities for energy efficiency. **Brendan** noted that DDH had done the solar project with the Hollis primary schools which is very similar. He said DDH was also the highest price of the four proposals received.

Dennis said he was very comfortable with DDH and agreed that the local reference for him is a plus. He said he is leaning towards EEI because with their resources they will be able to do everything in-house. **Dennis** said a no-cost audit is a great offer, and more likely to be approved considering the selectboard's feedback to the committee. This would likely allow the committee to start moving forward more quickly.

Maria said she liked how well Mike from EEI articulated his proposed work, including increasing renewable options such as solar and biomass, and that energy savings will be guaranteed. She also liked how he presented a lot of numbers and stats which helped her feel

more comfortable about his projections. **Dennis** agreed and said the presentation seemed very well researched and prepared. **Kelly** said that EEI seems to have a standard presentation formula which works very well.

Jacob suggested the committee could pursue working with one of the smaller consultants in the future or on the transfer station project, which would not need the same kind of building upgrades.

Brendan asked if there is a consensus on choosing EEI to recommend to the selectboard. The committee responded affirmative. **Jacob** noted for the record that his top choice was RBG due to their mix of a vision for sustainability and their merits as contractors. **Kelly** noted that DDH proposed including Dana Nute from RBG in his presentation to the selectboard.

Brendan said he would tell the selectboard the committee recommends EEI because of the free audit up-front, their experience, and their detailed presentation style. **Dennis** noted in favor of EEI that he is impressed with their local client list. **Jacob** said it would also be convenient if EEI is already in Brookline working on the schools. **Kelly** noted that the school board is touring RMMS with both Mike Davie and Dick Henry, and she predicts they will want to choose EEI.

Brendan said he would take the committee's recommendation to the selectboard.

Other business

Brendan asked for feedback from the committee about their feelings about the work so far. They noted it had been more of a learning experience than expected. **Jacob** said he thinks this project is a great thing for the town in general, and the committee agreed. **Dennis** said he thinks it is almost impossible the town does not save money as a result. **Maria** said once the town sees the numbers from EEI they will likely be convinced as well.

Set next meeting date

Meeting date will be set next week pending a decision from the selectboard.

Meeting adjourned at **7:43pm**.

Minutes submitted by Jacob Solon.