

The January meeting of the Energy and Technology Committee was held at 4:30PM on January 14, 2020, at the Town Office. Attending were Jim Babarski, Matt Kennett, and Howard Marshall.

In his absence, Gary Vincent delegated the chair to Howard.

The minutes of the last meeting, 12/11/2019, were approved.

Gary had submitted a couple of updates, which were read to the group by Howard:

Communications Tower -- the staff RFP review committee has sent a letter requesting clarification on several items from the firms that submitted responses to the RFP. Responses are due Jan 15th and the review team will be meeting on Jan. 22nd with the intent to reduce the number of firms for further consideration. Hope is to be in a position for a recommendation to the BOS before Town Meeting.

Comcast Franchise Committee -- has contracted with Tony Vigue to provide consulting support. He has extensive experience and will significantly reduce the learning curve for the team. Focus right now is on defining the Town's equipment needs and the customer Survey development. The team will be meeting Jan 22nd to review drafts in both areas.

The agenda item for the HVAC SMRT update was skipped because John was not present.

Howard gave a status report on the solar plans:

Howard had a phone conversation with Vaughan Woodruff of Insource Renewables on January 10. Vaughan was not excited about Harpswell's solar plans. Essentially, he did not say not to do it, but he cautioned about expecting too much. A major issue, and Matt confirmed this from his own work experience, is that CMP lowered its Standard Offer for 2020 from \$0.09 to \$0.07 per KWH -- a 22% decrease which has caused quite a stir in Maine's electric supply industry. Howard reviewed the issues at the recycling center for Matt (roof rebuild, 1-phase to 3-phase conversion, extended CMP power outages, demand spikes and demand charges). We all agreed that we need more numbers about the town's power usage. Howard described his scheme for off-grid capability at the recycling center and the possibility for eliminating demand charges while providing power during utility outages. One complication is that for this to be feasible, solar panels would need to be local to the recycling center, so this impacts the Mitchell Field plan. Vaughan felt this was out of scope for a town project. Vaughan also suggested caution on committing land at Mitchell Field for the duration of a solar project because land in Harpswell is more valuable than land in other parts of the state. This may make it more attractive to install solar panels on the recycling center and/or the capped landfill so that it is co-located with the recycling center, town offices, and EMT station. This would also have the advantage that the town's energy consumption while the panels are producing would come out of the panel output directly, before any energy was pumped into CMP ("behind the meter").

Vaughan recommended asking Revision to update their 2016 proposal for 2020. He also prefers the idea of Harpswell going in on a larger project with other towns.

We still need to get more hard numbers, both the town's current energy costs, and the exact financial arrangements between the town and CMP if we build a solar array (maybe Revision can explain the financial arrangements, or maybe there is someone at CMP that can fill in the details). Maybe we can arrange for a meeting with Revision to clarify the financial structure.

Matt explained the table that he had emailed earlier with the cost for green energy. Summary: it's about \$0.015 extra per KWH for green energy.

The meeting adjourned at 5:40PM.