

# WINDHAM ENERGY COMMISSION

MINUTES Monday April 13, 2015

**Call to Order:** the meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm. Commission members in attendance were: Jean de Smet- Chair, Alex Girshick, Liz Ostwald, Corey Krohn, Grace Adams, and Tom Markland. Also present: James Finger –staff

## **TOPICS**

- *Titan Energy, the town's energy supplier - ideas to share*
- *Proposal re: improved mileage for town vehicles from Tom Markland*
- *Micro-grid report*
- *Update on street light purchase: Progress report. To purchase or to change the lamps and stay with Eversource?*
- *Update on FY 15-16 budget, benchmarking*
- *Other Business: Virtual Net Metering opportunities*

**Citizens and Delegations:** - no one was present to speak

**Minutes** - The Commission discussed the details of the March 9, 2014 and the Chair directed James to make changes. Liz Ostwald made a motion to approve the March 9th minutes as corrected, and Tom Markland seconded the motion; all voted in favor except Tom Markland who abstained. The Commission took no action on the January 12, 2015 as they were preliminary.

**Web Design with Pat Bresnahan** - postponed as Pat was not present.

**Titan Energy** - representatives Chris Rahm and Elaine Lind met with the Commission to inform them of Titan's work with the Town as an energy supplier for electricity, and now natural gas. Mr. Rahm left early, and left Ms. Lind to speak for the company.

Ms. Lind explained Titan's work with the Town over the past seven years as an Energy Broker and aggregator, and her interaction with Tom Pesce, the Town Controller. She explained that she and Tom Pesce had discussed the Town's electric supply and Natural Gas. Then they discussed Solar for the Magnet School as it's all electric, and also the possibility of the Town taking over Street lights.

She explained that they brought in Earth Light - a partner who does energy auditing. She added that they'll be setting up a meeting with the School Facilities Manager to discuss the Co-generation at the schools. She also mentioned that Tom had asked her to look at a 36 acre Town owned property in Windham Center for a possible Solar Farm.

The Chair said the property was purchased for Recreation, but she hadn't heard of it being developed any time soon. Elaine said that she asked Earth Light to look at the site, and they are evaluating whether it could be used for a Solar site. Some discussion ensued.

# WINDHAM ENERGY COMMISSION

MINUTES Monday April 13, 2015

Ms. Lind then mentioned that she was looking at the Barrows Magnet School as its all electric, and would be a good candidate for solar and applying for a z-rec to fix the cost of electricity. Much discussion ensued, and that the incentives are dwindling as the z-rec program is being phased out.

*(James said that the School Facilities manager reported that the Magnet school already had solar)*

Ms. Lind explained that she recently had a tabling event about a month ago at the Eastbrook Mall for residential solar, and a few people from the Natchaug School were interested. She said she plans to go there and speak with the parents about their fixed rate electricity of 9.1 cents /kwh - which is a lot better than the utility at this time. She closed by saying that she is available if anyone wants to talk with her about energy.

**Miscellaneous correspondence** - The Chair mentioned the letter from Solomon Energy and that a number of communities are trying to figure it out - but there hasn't been any report yet. She mentioned that Alex Fox of C-TECH contacted her by letter saying that they are working on a virtual net metering project, and are looking for a community to work with to buy the electricity. The site doesn't have to be in Town, it could be anywhere. James mentioned that the Windham Solar project in Lebanon near the Town line and down by Franklin just got approved through the Siting Council - and it covers a large area -approximately 34 acres. - In any case, the Chair said that Alex Fox would like to speak with the Commission - possibly at the next meeting (James said that Soloman also wanted to speak with the Commission)

The Chair explained that there isn't any legislation in place yet to allow community 'Net Metering', but the Town could do this for its own buildings. She explained that - virtual net metering allows the Town to get credit for energy generation at a remote site - even though there may not be any buildings at the site. This could be used to off-set the Town's electric bills - where ever the Town was using electricity. Virtual Net Metering could be for up to ten separate meters; but there would still be a distribution charge. Discussion then turned to possible financing options that could involve a public-private partnership with and energy supplier. Ms. Lind explained that Titan could take ownership and take the energy credits which could reduce the cost to the Town; and they would finance it through a power purchase agreement.

**Proposal re: improved mileage for town vehicles from Tom Markland** - *Mr. Markland said he's worked on cars for awhile, and can improve efficiency by 20%. He made a presentation with power point slides to demonstrate his point. The Chair agreed, that the Town's vehicles use a lot of fuel, especially the police cars - as they get very poor mileage. Mention was made of employing hydropower, and electric vehicle charging stations that will soon appear at retail outlets - such as Wal-Mart and BJ's. Also - using programmable thermostats at Public Housing Facilities like Ashton Towers.*

*The Chair explained that Mr. Markland has suggested that the Commission send a letter to the Police Chief, and the Public Works Department - to have their fleet evaluated using this, and to make the modifications recommended - as they will be very easy to do. She added that she thought that the Public Works Department was keeping track of mileage. James agreed that everyone has to key in their mileage prior to fueling up. Mr. Markland said that vehicles typically use more fuel when cold,*

# WINDHAM ENERGY COMMISSION

MINUTES Monday April 13, 2015

*and also if the thermostat or O2 sensor is failing, the vehicle's computer will default to a richer fuel mixture.*

*Mr. Markland said he will be conducting the evaluations on the Windham Region Transit District busses during the next month. The Chair said that maybe the Commission should be sending the letter to the Town Manager urging him to consider having Public Works and Police try the evaluation tool, and copying the Public Works Director, Police Chief - and - maybe the Mayor.*

**Benchmarking update** - *The Commission discussed the Municipal Action Plan, and how it's important to qualify for the Bright Ideas Grant through CL&P (now Eversource). Commission members expressed interest in getting professional help in completing the benchmarking, which could provide useful information in planning for future projects. The Commission then discussed the use of the Bright Idea Grants, and their desire to help residents pay for Home Energy Assessments - as the Commission felt that residents are likely to object to the \$100 cost of these energy audits. However, home owners could benefit from the information, and may qualify for incentives or rebates on the energy conservation measures.*

**Status report on expenditures for Community Innovations Grant Program** - James updated the Commission on the expenditures to date, and that he's still working on distributing the Kill-A-Watt meters to the Libraries, as the Commission wants them to be loaned out to residents.

The product can be found at <http://www.p3international.com/products/p4400.html>

The Energy Meters will be distributed to the three Libraries in Town: the Willimantic Public Library, the Windham Center Library, and the Guilford Smith Library in South Windham.

As a reminder, The Chair said we need to put this information up on our web site.

**Update on street light purchase or to stay with Eversource** - awaiting report from Eversource.

**Micro-grid report** - none

Meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM -

Respectfully submitted, James Finger