

**Town of Middlebury**  
**Energy Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**\*DRAFT\***  
**Wednesday, April 19, 2017**

Present: Ross Conrad, Jason Kaye, Diane Munroe, Hannah Hurlburt, Heather Seeley, Howard Widelitz

Absent: R.J. Adler, Chris Robbins

Guest: Steve Maier

Review Agenda

No changes proposed for the agenda although it was recommended we ensure enough time is reserved for the "Committee Roles and Responsibilities" discussion so they are understood prior to the next committee meeting.

Review minutes of the March 17, 2017 regular meeting and the April 12, 2017 special meeting

*March 17, 2017 minutes:* Page 2, second paragraph: The word "if" contained a typo.

Heather made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, and Ross seconded. Approved with six in favor and two absent.

*April 12, 2017 minutes:* "Heather" appears in both Attendance and Absent. Remove "Heather" from attendance since she was absent from this meeting.

Diane made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, and Heather seconded. Approved with six in favor and two absent.

Climate Economy Model Communities program update

Steve summarized the latest information regarding the *Climate Economy Model Communities* program of the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD). Middlebury was selected as one of two towns to participate in the program. Pownal was selected to be the first town to participate, and the lessons learned from this effort will be used to help scale the program to a larger town such as Middlebury. As discussed in the March energy committee meeting, the Climate Economy Model Communities Program is sponsored by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) in partnership with Efficiency Vermont, Green Mountain Power, Vermont Electric Coop and Washington Electric Coop for the purpose of developing a model for economic sustainability and a climate smart community. It is also to promote Vermont as a model for clean energy.

A press release was published by VCRD for the Pownal selection with the press release for the Middlebury selection coming at a later date. The plan is to formally start up the program in Middlebury in September. Steve clarified that there is no money associated with this selection, however VCRD will provide resources to support the effort. He believes the steering committee will need to be expanded. In particular, there will be a need for greater participation from the business community. Steve also cited the Vital Communities program in the Upper Valley as a model for how the program could operate.

Diane suggested contacting Sarah Brock for information regarding the Vital Communities program. She is an energy coordinator/program manager for the program.

Jason asked what are the next steps with regard to Middlebury's participation in the program. Steve said we are just sitting tight until they are ready to begin with Middlebury. Steve provided a vision of how he sees the program working. First is the need to define the role of the steering committee. He believes having a greater number of entities involved with the steering committee is better than having too few. It also needs to be decided as to what kind of decisions the steering committee will need to make. The process will involve getting the word out to the community and businesses, soliciting their participation in the program. A brainstorming session would be conducted to identify themes from which a set of initiatives could be derived. These initiatives would be brought back to the community to see in which of these they would like to participate. There will be decision points in the process to see if certain task forces should continue to be pursued.

When asked if the Pownal initiative will overlap with the Middlebury initiative or will be conducted in sequence, Steve confirmed they will be conducted in sequence. Hannah asked if someone had access to the press release on Pownal's selection and if it could be made available. Diane took the action to send a copy of the press release to Energy Committee members.

Steve asked who on the Energy Committee would like to participate in this program. Based on an earlier conversation, Ross said he could participate but not until the fall. Hannah expressed an interest and might have some capacity to tie into the business community in support of the program. Howard and Jason offered as well depending on availability at the time this program begins.

Actions: Diane is going to provide a copy of the Pownal selection press release to Hannah.

#### Municipal Energy Efficiency Project update

The first part of this discussion focused on a draft of a Request for Proposals (RFP) letter. Chris has been working on the draft RFP but was not present to provide an update as to its status. Ross mentioned he was planning on reviewing the letter with Chris. Heather mentioned she is still planning to create a fill-in-the-blank template to add to the RFP to simplify the process for the Town department heads.

Heather provided information regarding her discussion with Director of Public Works Dan Werner about this initiative. Dan mentioned contacting Judy Harris for getting outside help to understand the needs and priorities. Since there is only \$10,000 to spend on this project, the committee didn't want to get ahead of ourselves by using outside expertise until we have a better understanding of where we are going with this. Dan agreed an energy audit would be a good place to start. He didn't believe his building has had an energy audit.

Jason thought Dan's idea of laying out the whole scope of the project was a good one to better understand what our approach will be. Diane asked if this can be an annual appropriation. Howard said a request to make this an annual appropriation was made to the Selectboard when presenting the initial request for funds. Heather said we will need to show progress from this project to help justify additional funds.

Hannah asked what next steps are needed to get this going. The next steps involve engaging the department heads and completing the RFP letter. Jason suggests laying out the goal of the committee

for this project to include our vision for establishing a self-sustaining fund through the savings from these projects.

Actions:

- Ross took the action to contact Chris and help put together the RFP along with a draft of the goals/plan for the budget. Heather will work with Ross and Chris to take the RFP letter to the department head meeting.
- Heather will work on the fill-in-the-blank response page.
- Ross will still put together a draft of the mission/plan, keeping short-term and long-term goals in mind.

### Committee Roles and Responsibilities for 2017

Jason emphasized there are certain roles he needs to turn over to others with him stepping down from the committee. Heather said the protocol is to set the next agenda with roles and responsibilities at which time we would officially assign roles and responsibilities. Therefore, the discussion of specific roles and responsibilities was deferred until the next committee meeting in May.

To get us to next month's meeting, we still need to post the minutes from this meeting and the agenda for the next meeting on the website. Jason took the action to show Howard the steps involved with this task. We will then need to determine how to proceed with the website going forward. Steve was interested in understanding the architecture behind it to see what could be used for the *Climate Economy Model Communities* program.

Diane and Steve suggested having the Energy Committee's website tie into the platform the Town uses for their website. This would reduce the maintenance needed to maintain the site. Jason said another option for posting the minutes and agenda is to just have it posted to the Town website. We can work with Chris English to post them if we decide to pursue that option. Jason also noted that the website was constructed in HTML so that any updates to the site would need to be done using HTML.

Jason discussed the email list which runs off the back end server requiring a process to update. Howard took the action to look into other options (e.g. web email). The discussion segwayed into email as it pertains to the Open Meeting law. If you click reply all, there is thought this is considered to be a meeting. Heather mentioned that revisions to the Open Meeting law might be coming out which might help clarify this. Jason said it is not very clear now.

Actions:

Howard to look into options for creating new email distribution

### Committee Term Lengths and Rotations

Ross proposed having longer terms that are staggered to reduce the possibility of having a number of members leave the committee at the same time. The current term lengths are one year having to be reapproved by the selectboard. Ross suggested we should consider changing our bylaws to extend the terms.

In a farewell to Jason, it was important to note the contribution he has made to the committee as a member and as the Chairperson. He added structure to the meetings providing an increased focus on

the objectives and actions to be taken from the meetings thereby increasing their effectiveness. When asked what he envisioned for the committee, Jason explained his passion for community organizing and engaging the community and knocking on doors as part of this engagement.

Howard motioned to adjourn the meeting. Heather second the motion. All approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45am.