

**\*FINAL\***

**Town of Middlebury  
Energy Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, April 17, 2019**

Present: Ross Conrad, Howard Widelitz, Chris Robbins, Lindsay Fuentes-George, John Snyder-White.  
Guests: Diane Munroe, Grace Widelitz. Absent: Steve Maier, Van Barth.

Ross convened the meeting at 8:47 am. (Note: all votes are unanimous unless otherwise indicated.)

Grace Widelitz, a Middlebury High School senior, was observing the meeting for a school project.

Minutes from March 20 were approved with a correction under Committee Concerns: "size" of the solar panel was changed to "output." Motion by Lindsay, seconded by Howard, John abstaining.

Purchasing policy/RFPs (Howard, Diane, Chris): Diane had checked with Jack Byrne at the college to see if they had a purchasing policy, but they do not. They tried an electric lawn mower, but it broke down. They do look for more efficient alternatives when possible.

Howard said that a company called XL can convert pickup trucks to hybrid or electric, but it costs over \$10,000. <https://www.xlfleet.com/>. We then discussed how to estimate the value of avoided CO2. Diane said she has read that the true social cost of CO2 should be \$40 - \$80 per ton, but it is trading now at about \$10. Lindsay said that the select board would probably ask, can the equipment do the job, and how much does it cost? Ross reminded us that Efficiency VT has some information about comparing vehicles.

Chris had developed some factors to consider when evaluating a heating system for the library. The committee will meet again to write up its suggestions.

Revolving loan fund. The subcommittee didn't have an opportunity to meet. Not much change from last month's minutes.

Enhanced energy plan (Chris, Ross): Richard was not at this meeting, but he had presented the committee's proposal for an enhanced energy plan to the planning commission on April 4. Chris is a member, and Ross attended as a guest. The PC will be busy for at least the next year with the downtown master plan and Exchange St. planning, but they were open to allowing the energy committee to develop data to be used in an enhanced energy plan later. Richard said he has found ways to gather better information about town energy use than what the state is providing.

Howard wondered if we will be able to provide pushback to the Public Service Board without such a plan in place. Ross said the demand for solar fields has slowed due to reduced incentives from the state, and most of the ones being built are on brownfields, etc. rather than green fields.

Town Meeting resolutions (Lindsay): Lindsay reported that the town policy committee looked into the plastic bag ban, but wanted to wait till the end of the legislative session to see if the state would pass a law on the same subject. Chris said that a local ordinance could contain language stating that it would be superseded by state law if that should happen. The select board has not taken action on the other, energy-related resolutions. Ross offered to go to a select board meeting and encourage them. Howard moved and Lindsay seconded a motion to propose to the select board that they move the resolutions forward, and to offer assistance from the energy committee.

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Committee concerns: Lindsay reported on a meeting between representatives of the college and the select board. The college is planning a 5 MW solar farm off S. St. Extension, and is continuing to pursue the biomethane project. They also expressed interest in developing hydro power at Middlebury Falls, perhaps on the east side. They are interested in partnering with the town. The college wants a reputation for sustainability, and the town can benefit from that.

John discussed the committee's facebook page, and how it can be used to inform about local and state actions and to mobilize the community. We now have 62 followers. A more active page could get more people engaged. We decided that although there are many articles that could be linked, we should limit it for now to upcoming events and happenings. Diane mentioned a weekly "Climate Dispatch" video by Vermont Conservation Voters that is produced during the legislative session. Moved by Chris and seconded by Lindsay to put a link to the Climate Dispatch on the facebook page.

Howard reported that the Climate Economy energy group had come up with two priorities: "Retrofit for Humanity" (helping low income families weatherize their homes); and supporting local energy efficiency innovations such as a solar furnace that attaches to a wall.

Howard brought brownies to thank Chris for her long service on the committee.

Ross said we had more applicants for the committee than spaces available. The select board will be appointing members next week.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 on a motion by Lindsay, seconded by Howard. Next meeting will be May 15 at 8:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Robbins