

Sunderland Energy Committee Meeting Dec. 18, 2024 - By Zoom
Attending: Jeff Dexter, Richard Zens, Andrew McKeever, Liz Miller, Scott York, Colleen York (energy committee members); guest Callie Fishburn of the BCRC (Bennington County Regional Commission).

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Jeff Dexter at 7:05 pm.

Andrew McKeever was designated to take the meeting minutes.

The minutes of the previous meeting, Nov. 13, 2024 were approved. Motion to approve made by Jeff Dexter, seconded by Richard Zens.

The three new members of the committee, Liz Miller, Colleen and Scott York, were introduced and welcomed to the committee, and each gave some background about themselves.

The recent MERP grant award of \$206,000 for upgrades to the town garage and town hall were described by Jeff Dexter and discussed. About \$50K of the grant will go to energy efficiency upgrades at town hall and the remainder to work on the town garage, less the project management fee. Callie Fishburn of the BCRC reviewed the next steps to be taken regarding the implementation of the grant. A first step (through the grant) will be obtaining a project manager or consultant to guide the workflow. Eight towns within Bennington County received MERP grants throughout the state. Since contractors to perform the work of tightening up the buildings and installing the solar panels and heat pumps may be hard to find, it's important we start the process ASAP. It's possible two or three towns might be able to share the services of a project manager. This will be tackled early in January and the BCRC will start preparing Requests for Proposals (RFP's). The deadline for that will be Jan. 17, 2025. A historic review of the town garage will also be needed since it may be over 50 years old. One of the members will check with Town Clerk Susan Whitney and Road Foreman Marc Johnson on when the garage was built.

Discussion followed on what to use the remaining \$3000 of the previous year's MERP mini grant, part of which paid for the forum the committee organized and hosted in October, 2023. Building an energy committee website with important energy-saving info for town residents was one idea discussed. The next step is to find the right person or party to help achieve that effort. A list of VT towns with very good websites will be emailed to all members by Jeff. Liz Miller volunteered to check with Manchester, Bennington and Arlington about their website designers. Jeff will check with Starksboro and Hartford VT about theirs.

Holding another energy-forum in 2025 was another idea discussed.

Discussion of town membership in the Fuel Club was held, since membership might help save the town money on propane gas costs. More info is needed.

The next meeting will be held January 22, 2025 at 7 pm via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Minutes submitted by Andrew McKeever.