

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
Council Chambers
Economic Development
February 16, 2023

Present: Gregory Shanahan, Chair
Lisa Belmarsh, Vice Chair
Gary MacDougall, Councilor

Absent: Christopher Heffernan, Councilor
Fred Happel, Councilor

Also Present: John MacLeod, Procurement Director

Recording Secretary: Diane Hachey

Chair Shanahan called the Economic Development Committee Meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

Mr. MacLeod explained that in 2019 the town was approached by Good Energy, who partners with MAPC regarding this program. The town would be the buying group which is managed by a consultant (John O'Rourke of Good Energy) and allows the town the buying power to work with utilities that distribute electricity. It was clarified that signing on would be transparent to the residents and the poles and lines continue to be maintained by National Grid. Community electricity aggregation is simply the supplier of electricity that is distributed by National Grid.

Mr. MacLeod noted that there is a green model whereby a percentage of saved energy would fund green initiatives. The town adopted energy programs for town street lights in an effort to conserve funds; our electric bills have decreased by 30%. We received a grant from MAPC to switch out street lights from incandescent to LED.

Fast forward to 2022-- the program resurfaced due to the recently increasing electricity bills and (numerous complaints from residents) and other municipalities joining and signing contracts. There are currently 40-50 communities onboard. The town revisited with Good Energy who is the main player and has the most knowledge. There is no cost to the town to implement the program. The cost of developing the aggregation plan and legal expenses involved, RFP's etc. are all borne by the consultant. The consultants are paid one tenth of one cent per kilowatt hour by the electric supplier.

The program works as an opt-out model which means that customers do not need to do anything, they would be enrolled in the program automatically unless they choose to opt out. There is a 30 day notification period which involves a mailing to all qualified residents-if someone has already chosen a third party supplier they are excluded. Once the notification period lapses, residents can opt out at any time without ramifications. The town prefers this and believe residents do as well. Good Energy will supply a self addressed stamped envelope to be included in the utility bill for residents to opt out at any time.

Mr. MacLeod noted that this opt out model is most feasible if 80% remain in the program. Many towns are signing contracts and negotiating rates are a moving target. He wants to enter into an agreement with Good Energy to be our consultant.

Councilor MacDougall noted that Cohasset, Marshfield and Scituate are entering contracts in March of this year and he asked Mr. MacLeod for a list of communities in the program-who agreed to supply a list. He also wanted to confirm that seniors receiving energy savings stay in tact and Mr. MacLeod confirmed.

Mr. MacLeod spoke of solar off-taking in the town. The town has negotiated with developers and are currently deriving 22% energy from these projects (Bob's in Stoughton and WB Mason to name a few).

Councilor Belmarsh asked if the town will realize savings or only residential? Mr. MacLeod stated that the town wouldn't be affected as our contract is negotiated separately as is the schools.

Councilor MacDougall asked about solar panels on town buildings. Mr. MacLeod confirmed that the library and Chapman have solar panels. He explained that the infrastructure needs to be ideal and living in the northeast isn't as appealing, it also takes a lot to manage solar; solar off-taking is more ideal,

Councilor MacDougall motioned for favorable action that the Council authorizes the appropriate departments to research, develop and participate in a contract to aggregate the electricity load of the residents and businesses in Weymouth and for other related services, independently or in joint action with other municipalities and authorizes the Mayor to execute all documents necessary to accomplish the same. Motion seconded by Councilor Belmarsh and voted unanimously.

Councilor Belmarsh noted that the last time the committee met (over 1 year ago) she had asked that the Council receive AARPA funding reports on a regular basis. To date, we have received one in January. Chair Shanahan stated that he will speak with President Mathews and send a letter from this committee to administration seeking this information.

At 7:39 PM with no further business to conduct, Councilor MacDougall motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Belmarsh and voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by Diane Hachey as Recording Secretary

Approved by Gregory Shanahan as Chair of the Economic Development Committee
Voted unanimously on 6 March 2023