

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
Meeting at the Williamsburg Town Office Planning Board Room
January 27, 2016

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in a joint meeting with the Energy Committee to review the proposal from Nexamp on a program for municipal building electricity. The proposal is for the Town to purchase net metering credits (about 7% of the entire project) from Nexamp's proposed solar project in Rutland Mass for municipal buildings electricity use. This project is on the National Grid waiting list as a public project but will not go forward without the legislature raising the cap. The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Board of Selectmen Members Present: David Mathers and Denise Banister

Absent: William Sayre

Energy Committee Members Present: Kim Boas, Rob Stinson, Mary Dudek, Gerry Mann, and Charles Dudek

Also Present: Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator)

The Energy Committee Chair, Kim Boas, gave an overview of the proposed project. It is a net metering credit agreement which is proposed to save the Town approximately \$510,000 in electricity costs over 20 years. The proposal is that Nexamp would sell the Town its net metering credits at a discount (proposed 20%) and assign them to the Town's existing National Grid Accounts. This would allocate about 433k or 7% of the Rutland project to the Town. The project is shovel ready and in the National Grid queue, but will not go forward unless the legislature lifts the cap.

Kim Boas defined net metering credit purchase agreements (NMA) as the selling of excess energy credits produced by a solar installation system at a reduced price to a municipality. Those credits at full value (100%) are then used to offset our energy bill with National Grid and we pay the solar company the purchased value. The Nexamp proposal is that we pay 80% of the value of the credits to Nexamp which results in a 20% savings or discount.

Members of the Energy Committee did some research about other options available to the town for municipal energy use. They expressed frustration with the lack of information, guidance, and clear distinctions of what the benefits or focus should be with each of the options. Options are:

1. To develop our own solar installation project – upfront costs are substantial, a solar farm for only our use would not provide as much financial savings, a larger producing farm would require the town to find buyers for the extra electricity. Funding and resources are the issue.
2. Have a developer install a public solar facility on the town land fill area so designated and enter into a Power Purchase Agreement. Problems/ concerns are that we haven't had any developer interested because our needs are small and therefore we aren't necessarily attractive to developers. They need to build a fairly sizable installation to be profitable. A member will reach out to the developer interested in the South Street water land area.

3. Enter into a net metering contract such as Nexamp proposes or some other company. Questions were: are there other companies that may offer a more attractive proposal? What about the project on the Lashway/ O'Brien property located on Goshen Road? It was noted that comparing other towns' proposals or decisions to the Nexamp proposal proved to be difficult because it wasn't an "apples to apples" comparison.

Energy Committee members expressed concerns about the length of the contract and the uncertainty of electricity in the future, and what the legislature may decide in the future about the rules and regulations and how that may affect this contract. It was noted that the town should do something to reduce our energy costs and this may be the most cost effective option. The Energy Committee voted to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to enter into negotiations with Nexamp with the condition that we go forward with a three year contract and years 4 – 20 are contingent on town meeting approving the contract in June 2016. The Town Meeting approval vote was recommended by town counsel. The Energy Committee decided to hold off on making the recommendation to the Board until they get more information about the solar installation on the Lashway property and clarification from Mr. Fiori at Nexamp on a couple of points. The Energy Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 2, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. to review any new information and then make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen at its regular meeting on February 4, 2016.

Kim Boas noted that he would be away on February 2, 2016, and would like to participate remotely at the Energy Committee meeting. On a motion by Denise Banister, seconded by Dave Mathers, the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to authorize the use of remote participation for Mr. Boas during the February 2, 2016 Energy Committee meeting.

Adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Approved:

Clerk