

Williamsburg Energy Committee

Minutes for February 13, 2023

Members Present: Jim Piermarini (Chair), Neal Anderson, Dick Guzowski, Mimi Kaplan

Others Present: Walter Grey and Zachary Holt (Power Options), Nick Caccamo (Town Administrator), Bill Sayre (Selectman, Acting Chair PSCBC), Mary Dudek (PSCBC), Charles Dudek

Called to Order: 6:30 PM

Minutes: Minutes from January 16, 2023 meeting approved unanimously by vote with roll call.

Power Options (guests Zach Holt and Walter Gray): Zach Holt and Walter Gray of Power Options, a nonprofit organization that offers energy services for nonprofits and municipalities, joined the meeting to give an overview of the services they offer. Piermarini introduced the purpose of their visit, and mentioned the WPB's current focus on our aggregation contract and solarization of the PSCB.

Holt gave a brief history of Power Options and an overview of their services and pricing, and explained how members (30% of which are municipalities) benefit. For municipalities like ours that have an Energy Committee, Power Options serves as a partner that can, among other things, help to negotiate contracts. Grey elaborated on how Power Options assists members with solarization, including creation of RFPs for solar projects, contract templates, and development of pricing methodologies. He explained how working through Power Options obviates the need for public entities to go out for bid, and talked about how Power Options would work with Williamsburg on the PSCB including pre-commitment groundwork. Discussion followed on several topics, including interconnection of the PSCB with the grid, on membership fee for Williamsburg (\$250-\$550), and timelines for the PSCB construction and decisions on the solarization.

Discussion then moved to how a decision to work with Power Options would proceed. Piermarini asked Sayre and Caccamo what the decision process would be going forward in deciding to engage with Power Options, and Caccamo explained that it would require a vote at an upcoming Select Board meeting. Gray explained that Power Options would take a look at the site and site and roof plan, and would come up with an indicative design before asking the Town to sign a non-binding letter of intent. The Town could then use this in its decision of whether or not to move forward. Sayre asked how the Town knows it is getting a good deal if there is no competitive bid process, and Gray explained how Power Options ensures this and pointed to their 11 years of experience with solar. They offered to provide references. Kaplan asked about PPAs (power purchase agreements), and Gray responded that Power Options does work with PPAs but that that Town ownership of a project like this would be favorable for Williamsburg given that funding has been secured through the MVP and that municipalities can currently receive direct federal support through the Inflation Reduction Act. (Gray mentioned as an aside that if the Town owned the project then it would be advisable to pay a few thousand per year for operation and maintenance.) There was discussion about how to proceed

in the short term, given that the deadline to get the next RFQ out is the coming Wednesday, and about the Town engaging simultaneously Power Options (who have a designated solar partner) and respondents to the RFQ. Finally, Piermarini noted that the design process is necessarily iterative, given uncertainty about what will be acceptable to the various stakeholders, and Gray responded that that working in an iterative mode is standard for Power Options.

Battery storage was discussed along the way, including tradeoffs between the market participation and resiliency modalities of battery storage use.

Public Safety Complex: General discussion on this topic was tabled until next meeting, although there was brief discussion of the revised RFQ for the PV system.

Other Business and Updates: Piermarini will prepare a draft of the WEC's contribution to the Town report and circulate to the Committee.

Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 7:59PM by unanimous vote with roll call.

Next Regular Meeting: Monday, March 13, 2023 at 6:30 PM