

FRANCONIA ENERGY COMMISSION
MINUTES
December 20, 2022, 4:30 PM

In attendance: Fitz, Eric M, Chuck L, Dave S, Chris D, Melissa Elander

Minutes from November Energy Commission meeting were approved.

The meeting began with a proposal for rotating among the FEC attendees taking of minutes and creating the next meeting agenda. The proposal was accepted. Said individual will create a PDF of the minutes and send to Kim Cowles, Town Manager.

An update on the Franconia Municipal Solar Energy System behind the Town Hall was presented by Chris D. This update included the following:

1. Since the backside of the solar panels, which includes the panel electrical connections, is covered with a material to prevent accidental access the system fulfills the building code and a fence around the array is not required. There is no plan for a fence at this time.
2. The system will not be started until the new year begins in order to qualify for monies from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
3. In preparation for system startup Chris D will contact the system installer (New England Commercial Solar Services, POC Ted Vasant)

Melissa Elander of Clean Energy NH discussed some of the background of the IRA. The IRA enables a 30% credit, from the IRS, as a direct payment for renewable energy systems installed by tax-exempt entities, such as Franconia, after December 31, 2022. It was unclear if this amount increases after 2023. This program runs through 2033.

Also within this discussion was:

1. Bethlehem is also pursuing IRA monies for their 214 kW system.
2. Will EV charging stations may be eligible for IRA monies as part of the alternative-fuel - refueling property credit?
3. Should we pursue a solar energy system for Lafayette Regional School? Chris contacted LRS and one or more of us should attend the schoolboard meeting Jan 12 at 5:30 to start this discussion.
4. Renewed discussion of a solar tracking system for the Franconia Safety Building. This system has been the topic of many meetings. Melissa provided the name of Solarflect as a solar tracking system contractor. A good first step is for FEC to reach out to Police and Fire heads. Fitz said he'll connect with Rick Gaudette, Fire Chief.

Continued discussion of creating Regional/Franconia Community Power for Franconia and participating regional towns. The goal of community power is to create an alternative to sourcing energy from the incumbent utility servicing a region, with the intention of pooling a group's buying power for greater savings on renewables. Melissa suggested we look at the Harrisville Electric Power Aggregation Plan as a start. Here is the link:

<https://harrisvillenh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/HV-CPEAP-Warrant-Article-8-2021.pdf>

Also from Melissa: **Renew America's Schools**, highlighted in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law focusing on energy improvements at public K-12 schools. Though it seemed this may be a funding opportunity for a renewable energy system at Lafayette Regional School, this program is for large projects (\$500k or larger), and addresses high need schools, so not an ideal fit for a Lafayette system. For those interested in learning more, see <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/Default.aspx#FoaId06985843-f32c-494e-880a-cb5db6d787a4>

Deadlines for this program are Concept Paper 1/26/23 and Full Application 4/21/2023.

Chuck noted that the Town Report on Energy is due at the start of February. He will have as many numbers as possible by the January FEC meeting.

Next meeting: January 17, 2023

Meeting Adjourned 5:55 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Dubé