

ENERGY COMMITTEE
February 21, 2018
Mulvey Municipal Center
Regular Meeting Minutes

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Chris Ehlert at 5:01 pm.

Members Present:

Chairperson Chris Ehlert, Bill Fish (via phone), Bill Fredrickson, Lesley Wysocki, Darlene Briggs, Richard White, Gary Gavigan and Clark McCane.

Upon a motion by Gary Gavigan, seconded by Darlene Briggs, it was:

VOTED: Unanimously to add “Discussion of participating in EverSources Small Business Program to review Municipal Buildings” and “Board of Selectmen’s decision of remaining with fuel oil vs. natural gas for the Riggio Building as recommended by this Committee”.

LED Streetlight Project Update – Bill Fish:

Bill Fish stated that Siemen’s is currently installing LED lights in Old Saybrook. We have made the request to install the test lights, as discussed. We received a letter of intent from Eversource back in December. It was forwarded to Town Attorney Mike Wells for his review and he recommended some adjustments. The adjusted document was sent back to Eversource on 1/11/18 and there has been no response from them. When they received it, they stated that they had some questions regarding their business procedures, but they never responded. We are not allowed to install the test lighting until there is a contract in place. Therefore, the ball is in Eversource’s hands. The 6 month period ends on March 22nd. Clark McCane asked if the delay could affect the savings that we have been anticipating. Mr. Fish stated that it would. Gary Gavigan asked if there was anything the Board of Finance could do to facilitate this moving forward any faster. Mr. Fish stated that there is not much we can do with the exception of First Selectman Noel Bishop contacting Eversource to inquire what the status is. Richard White stated that he is concerned about the lapse of time and asked if the contract voidable if not completed within the 6 month period. Mr. Fish stated that the same thing has happened to other towns and they just extended the contract. Mr. White feels that we need to put the pressure on Eversource and should we request to extend the contract in writing. Mr. Fish stated that there is no formal document, only an email. We should ask Mr. Bishop to contact Attorney King as First Selectman to see if we can get this done within the 6 month period. Mr. White feels that the call should come from our Attorney to their Attorney with an adamant demand for an explanation of the reason for the delay because time is of the essence.

A motion was made by Richard White and seconded by Bill Frederickson to:

Recommend that the First Selectman through Town Attorney Mike Wells contact the Attorney for Eversource to request an explanation as to what is the cause of the delay in terms of a response from Eversource to Attorney Wells replied correspondence on January 11, 2018.

Discussion: Bill Fish stated that Attorney Wells has already gone to Attorney King, with no response. If we keep using the Town Attorney, there will be an additional cost to the Town for his services. He feels that First Selectman Noel Bishop should be the contact person, not Attorney Wells.

Vote: Ayes: Richard White, Darlene Briggs, Lesley Wysocki, Bill Fish, Bill Frederickson, Gary Gavigan and Clark McCane.; Abstentions: Chris Ehlert).

The motion carried.

Bill Fish will contact First Selectman Noel Bishop.

Richard White recommended other incentives like contacting our State and Town Representatives.

Chairman Ehlert thanked Bill Fish for all of his hard work on this project.

ZREC Update – Chris Ehlert:

Chairman Ehlert stated there really is nothing to report at this time. We will probably have to re-bid in the spring for the additional buildings.

Microgrid RFP Update – Chris Ehlert:

Informal information was sent to Noel Bishop from DEEP and 9 bids were submitted in round 4. DEEP is reviewing a plan to have an initial review of each applicant and plans to have finding letters out by the beginning of March summarizing the findings of DEEP’s Microgrid team.

Approval of Bills:

None.

Approval of Minutes:

December 18, 2017:

Upon a motion by Bill Fish, seconded by Richard White, it was:

VOTED: Unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 18, 2018, as amended.

January 17, 2018:

Upon a motion by Darlene Briggs, seconded by Richard White, it was:

VOTED: Unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 17, 2018, as amended.

Committee Member Updates:

- Richard White re-stated his feelings on the LED Project and stated he feels that Eversource is not acting in good faith. He feels we should contact our Town and State Representatives.
- Gary Gavigan stated that the Board of Finance is firmly behind moving forward with the project and they are committed to the funding of it.
- Darlene Briggs stated that the map of sample lights and the Q&A are ready to go on-line.
- Bill Frederickson feels that we should look at the possibility of not replacing street lights that aren’t necessary. It was stated that this could open a “can of worms”. Mr. Fish stated that there is an audit in progress. Mr. Fish further stated that this was discussed at one of the informational meetings held at the library and it was decided that if a light were to be removed, the entire road should be contacted to see if they agree and local police should have input as far as a safety matter. Someone suggested a community service project of asking volunteers to drive down streets to see if there are any lights that are currently not working. This would be something that the First Selectmen should initiate, not this committee. Chairman Ehlert will mention this idea at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting to be held tomorrow.

Discussion of participating in EverSources Small Business Program to review Municipal Buildings:

Chairman Ehlert asked if the committee would like to have an audit of all town buildings, not including the schools. All members agreed that it should be done. Chairman Ehlert stated that he will get this project moving.

Board of Selectmen’s decision of remaining with fuel oil vs. natural gas for the Riggio Building as recommended by this Committee:

Chairman Ehlert stated that a while back an audit was done at the Riggio Building. This Committee recommended to the Board of Selectmen that the building be converted to natural gas. This recommendation was not acted on. We now have an issue with DEEP that the remaining underground oil tanks need to be removed. DPW Foreman John Riggio also recommended that the Fire Department Building and the Riggio

Building be converted to natural gas because it would be cost effective. (a cost analysis was never done). After a plea from a local oil company, the Board of Selectmen decided not to move forward with natural gas. Mr. Ehlert asked the Committee if they want to stay with the original recommendation and go to the Board of Selectmen again with the recommendation to convert to natural gas. Richard White stated that he feels that one town vendor is getting special preference and they should re-evaluate their decision. He feels the only justification is if replacing the oil tanks above ground and staying with oil would be less costly. With the consensus of the entire Committee present, Chairman Ehlert will bring up this matter at the next Board of Selectmen meeting and state that the Committee would like them to reconsider their decision.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion by Darlene Briggs, seconded by Richard White, it was:

VOTED: Unanimously to adjourn at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kathleen H. Kelemen, as transcribed from a recording.