

## MEC meeting 2/1/21

Present at Meeting by roll call: Jen Tinning (invited guest), Michele Siegmann, Mike McGuire, Dick Stockdale, Kathy Chapman, Curt Spacht, Darrell Scott, Michelle Scott, (Dave Morrison and Steve Wells are plowing during our present Nor'easter), Liz Fletcher, Garth Fletcher. and Guest from Shelburne, Michael Prange.

Kathy read "Right to Know" information, and all approved and are acquainted with the information.

Minutes by Michele Siegmann, were sent out for approval. Liz motioned for approval, and seconded by Garth.

### **Topic: Review a first look at possible solar for Mason Highway Barn**

Michael's proposal: for the Hwy Solar Showed 13 slides. Financial information is based on a bank loan at present rates. Slide 2 shows how we would still make out ok if interest rates rose. The insurance is low, the maintenance is really just money set aside so that if there are costs for electrician, or other incidentals. So that slide shows how there are still benefits even with a loan

Next slide 3, shows his estimates using various historical data from M. McGuire, and C. Spacht. It looks like about \$2.10/watt, and assuming a 13 kw array, cost about \$2700. The inverters last about 25 years.

Right now the return on solar REC are held down at \$20-50 by NH State Legislature,(in MA they are worth over \$200). Behind the meter you will get 10-20%. On slide 4 there is estimated load at 2.2% for 10 year. Cost per year \$700, would be going down until 10 years, at which point you would be making ~ \$200 and it continues to go up. On these graphs there is wiggle room allowing for a cloudy year, or more electricity use by highway barn.

So the solar installation will make very little money, that is to say, save us a lot, but not costing! Due to not using fossil fuel which has the potential to have rising costs, as there is less investment in the industry, and already there is a decline in subsidies.

Slide 5 figures are with the PUC grant. And it says if you go with the 15 yr loan you will make money, even with the loan. If you use the payments to pay off the 15 yr loan, you will pay it off in 12 years!

What happens if we change the array to 20 array, and then it would be in the positive from the start. So if we used a 20 watt, it would make money from the beginning. And Michael recommends a 15 yr loan. The price of solar panels had been stable for the past few years. Interest rates, may not stay as low!

You can only consider the one building that the solar panels are on, even if there is more energy than that building can use.

Michael says he can refigure this for each bid that comes. So their bid had to be solar money benefit. It only works if the solar can make even a few dollars right away.

Michael advises to get your \$2.20 /watt asap. PUC delivers grants by lottery? Or some other way. It is best if you can, to make extra payments using the positive cash flow to pay off the loan sooner than 15 years.

Since it is too late this year for a warrant article, we have to shoot for next year. Town would vote to authorize borrowing the money, so they need to view the project beforehand. Meanwhile education needs to take place so that the public needs to be convinced that it will make money or at least break even.

Michael suggests we might look at other buildings with high demand, and if another building might qualify, we could apply for more than one building. The excess from the highway barn would not be used for other building. Only the building that is under the array counts!

Batteries can be added to an in-phase system which is what Shelburne used. Add the batteries later. The warrant can be large enough to not only cover the solar panels but also batteries, even though we don't plan to do it right away. Look at Clean Energy NH for places to ask for bids. Shelburne had 4 bids on the same day, and they all came back with the proposals. The bank would then need to be approached. And the wording for the bank needs to be very precise from the bidders.

Michael has the wording for the warrant and the bidders. Clean Energy NH was VERY helpful. They are changing leaders, but he feels a new leader will appear soon. We need to plan for the strategy for working with BOS, and the educating the townspeople.

Plan: We will present info on this project in March 23 a week after Town Meeting to begin info for BOS. Present them info beforehand. Use other Towns info

**Conclusion of Solar discussion:** We volunteered Joe Harney, and Michelle Scott will assist Joe in getting together a copy of the slides and some explanatory info to go with them. We will keep it simple with the message, it can save the Town money, and be one of the outstanding towns in NH who are future oriented.

**Guests: Jen and Bob Tinning** who are building a house in Mason in the spring, are guests to find out more info for solar. They were welcomed. We directed them to [www.masonnhenergy.org](http://www.masonnhenergy.org) for more info.

**Electricity provider for Town of Mason.** The present contract runs out soon. Darrell feels we might look at this too. The contracts vary considerably in how they delineate the funds, but the actual charges are not too different. The MEC feels Pete will do the research well. It does not affect this committee.

**Lighting** the Town complaint about higher costs, was actually the correct figure, but they had gotten behind in their billing, so really it turns out there is not an issue. We have clarified this with the Brenda Wiley the accountant for Mason.

**Website** Curt has had an energy company contact him and that company is linking our website onto his! You can send info to Curt if you have something to share in the way of energy news and information. Darrell's latest addition to our Alternative Energy "Tour" is on Geothermal Energy right here in Mason.

**Education Funds** With our education money, we voted for Liz and Kathy to research a solar education kit for the Mason Elementary like the NEEP for about \$400 and make this purchase. Roll call vote is unanimous.

Liz moved to adjourn, Kathy seconded it, and roll call was unanimous in favor of adjournment at 9:07 pm