

Rye Energy Committee Meeting Draft Minutes

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

3:30 PM

Town Hall

1. Attendance - Howard Kalet, Carl Nicolino, Frank Melanson, Lisa Sweet
2. June meeting minutes - approved unanimously
3. Community Power update - New rates were approved at the end June for the August 1 - January 31 rate period. The new rates are appreciably lower than all utility default products (Unitil, Liberty, and Eversource) and very slightly lower than the NH Cooperative rate. Three of the 4 products available from Rye Community Power are less than the Eversource rate so people could opt-up to Granite Plus (33% renewable) or Clean 50 (50%) renewable and still pay less than they would without Rye Community Power. Over the past 12 months, Rye Community Power has saved its customers \$429,000 over Eversource default supply rates and has supplied Rye customers with 21,347 MWh of power.

A rate new option is now available for upcoming rate periods. Any CPCNH Member with an operating Community Power Aggregation (like Rye Community Power) can offer a “local” rate. This rate would have an adder of the member community’s choosing that would accrue for any energy related project or program a municipality might consider. Rye Community Power is NOT offering this option at this time. However, we discussed an example of a local rate that could be the second lowest rate (so less than the other 3 RCP products and less than Eversource) and would generate about \$50,000 in the next rate period. This could be a powerful tool for providing beneficial programs and projects for the Town of Rye. The energy committee discussed that it would be important, if the town were to implement such a rate, that the use of the funds raised would be specified and that the project or program would save the town money.

Also discussed that transmission/delivery costs for power are going up due to maintenance, reliability, and increased demand.

4. Solar Grant Applications for Recreation Garage and Public Safety Building - Applications for solar arrays on the Rec Garage and the PSB are progressing. Applications are due August 1 and grants will be awarded in October. The PSB roof needs to be replaced in 3 years. If the portion of the roof where the array would be installed were completed by early 2026, then the array could be installed within the requirements of the grant which is by October 2026. If the grants are awarded to Rye and the solar installations are installed, the town would immediately see the benefits of generating electricity “behind the meter” (generated and used in the same location) and would have to purchase less energy from the grid. This would lower energy costs significantly.
5. Library HVAC - Howard met with a small committee to discuss replacement of the HVAC system. The library currently has 6 oil-fired furnaces to heat the building. The committee will explore replacing the oil-fired furnaces with the same, replacing them with propane, and replacing them with air source heat pumps. Air source heat pumps also provide air conditioning.

6. New Business

The proposed solar ordinance was discussed further. Representatives from the Energy Committee will be meeting with the Planning Board to discuss the proposed ordinance.

The Rye Water District will be building a water treatment plant. The Energy Committee wants to make sure that energy efficiency and renewable options are considered at the beginning of the design process. There are currently rebates and incentives that could apply which would help Rye install more efficient options that will save money over time.

7. Adjourn - next meeting September 3