

**DRAFT Minutes  
Town of Henniker  
Energy Committee  
December 19, 2011  
The Grange**

**Present:** Mark Mitch, Barbara Bernstein, Nicole Gage, Tara Germond, Tom Watman

**Guests:** Chris

*Meeting called to order at 7:10 PM.*

**VICE CHAIR / SECRETARY:** Mark Mitch volunteered for Vice Chair and Nicole volunteered for Secretary. Unanimously agreed. Nicole mentioned that Town Hall is working on a packet of information for future & current chairs, to support and educate them in their duties and role.

**WARRANT ARTICLE PROPOSALS:** Barbara reviewed the three warrant article proposals with paybacks, costs and work to be done. Watman noted it is the committee's prerogative to make recommendations as best they see it; the committee is appointed by the Selectmen and unless the Board asks for specific recommendations, it is the choice of the committee to choose recommendations as they see fit.

Discussed financing options. OEP (NH Office of Energy & Planning) has nothing on the horizon. Revolving loan funds need to be replenished and are very competitive. Investing our (town) money now, as a follow-up to our energy audit, could make us more palatable to future funding programs and also open us up to start saving money right away.

Mark noted that pay-for-performance programs, run by "TRC", are only an option for large energy users. Henniker likely would not be considered a large energy user, but there is movement to help municipalities bundle together so they can participate as one larger unit. To do so, the town would have to make improvements for one year before participating in a "payback" program. Barbara noted that "performance contracting" is coming on the horizon for municipalities that bundle together.

Tara noted that, overall, all payback periods for Henniker (based on the recent audit) are very low. She asked if the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) is active in Henniker. Tom noted that the CIP is active and presented their recommendations already to the Selectmen for the current budget cycle. Tom recommended that we talk to the CIP Committee to see if they would back bonding for these projects as a way to meet their duty of preventing fluctuating tax rates based on long-range planning needs. However, it is unfortunate the audit was not ready to present to the CIP committee in a timely fashion this year.

Tom noted that Capital Reserves may already be set aside for the Fire/Rescue and Police station buildings, typically for emergency-type repairs; but the wording of these reserve funds could be looked at to see if energy improvements would fit as an allowed use of the monies.

Tom expressed disappointment that there were not more department heads at the recent meeting set aside for them.

We discussed presenting our objectives to the Selectmen at tomorrow night's meeting and reviewed a simple handout/fact sheet that Barbara will put together.

**NEW LGC/NHMA ENERGY GROUP:** Nicole promised to send Tara some information on the new energy initiative coming out of the NH Municipal Association / Local Government Center through Tim Fortier.

**NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE GRANT / HOME WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM:** Mark reported that he was approached by his supervisor at New England College to apply for a grant up to \$10,000 through PSNH (Public Service of New Hampshire). Mark agreed to pursue it and is proposing that the college acquire a blower and thermal energy camera. With the equipment, the town committee could collaborate with New England College and implement a home-weatherization program for Henniker citizens. Training students to use the equipment properly will be part of the grant request. Barbara MADE A MOTION that the Energy Committee supports the Grant Application. Tara SECONDED. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Nicole suggested that the lowest income levels currently have access to weatherization programs but there is gap with the working class where needs are not being met. She suggested that Henniker is a community of givers and there are handymen in town that might be willing to help homeowners on the weekend. Tom suggested that this is the type of project that the Chamber might be interested in. We discussed similar initiatives in other towns.

**FOR NEXT MEETING – HOMEOWNER OUTREACH:** Mark asked “Where do people go, where can people be pointed to, for energy improvements for their home?” Tara suggested the “Button Up NH” website. This will be a discussion item for the next meeting – how can we do educational outreach to homeowners. Mark asked if a website could be available to the Energy Committee and Nicole said that we could prominently display something on the town's homepage and dedicate a page to energy outreach, too.

**TRACKING ENERGY USAGE AT TOWN LEVEL:** Tara noted that she got the data from Russ, who is doing a great job tracking energy usage for the town. She suggested it might be redundant to re-enter the data into the Portfolio Manager program.

*Meeting adjourned 8:40 PM*