

St. Johnsbury Town Energy Committee

August 3, 2020

Members Present: John Ajamie, Scott Campbell, Elmore Dickstein, Steve Isham, Pam Parker (Chair), Keith Whitmore, Lynn Wurzburg, David Zajko

1. Minutes

Steve corrected the minutes of the July 6 meeting.

2. Composting

John A has obtained a copy of the Casella contract from Chad Whitehead. It is not straightforward what it costs the town since there are various fees. How Casella obtained the contract is not clear. The contract, though, has expired.

Action Item: John A. and Lynn will set up a meeting with Paul Tomasi and Chad Whitehead to discuss the future of composting in St. Johnsbury.

3. Enhanced Town Energy Plan

The first draft of the Enhanced Town Energy Plan was reviewed by the committee. The focus was on the goal and action summary, which took up most of the meeting. The committee will continue to review the plan at the September meeting.

The committee expressed its sincere appreciation to Nicole Gratton, a NVDA intern, for all the work she put into developing the plan.

Action Items: All member will continue to review the enhanced town energy plan. And e-mail any suggestion to committee members.

4. Meeting with New Academy Headmaster

Dr. Sharon Howell has come out quarantine. As an aside, Scott will be meeting with Dr. Howell in his capacity as one of St. Johnsbury representative to the Vermont House.

Action Item: Lynn will contact the Academy to arrange for a meeting.

5. NVRH

Pam shared the information that NVRH supplied about their energy efficiency efforts. It is appended to the minutes.

6. 2020 Button Up Campaign

Steve has registered St. Johnsbury as a Button Up Committee. The registration period end on August 15.

7. Social Media

Steve has been posting on Facebook, Lynn on Front Porch Forum, and Elmore needs material to post on Instagram

Next meeting: Monday September 14 at 5:45

Appendix: NVRH Energy Efficiency Actions

Healthy People, Healthy Planet, Healthy Bottom Line

Improving energy efficiency has been a triple win for hospitals around Vermont and the US, including NVRH. Better energy efficiency saves money, is good for planet, and provides a more comfortable working environment for staff and a healthier space for patients to recover and heal.

Hospitals are open all day every day. Routine daily operations use a lot of energy to heat and cool spaces, and power lights and equipment. For over a decade, NVRH and other Vermont hospitals have worked with Efficiency Vermont to better control and reduce energy use. Just last year, Plant Operations Director Richard Degreenia, Mechanical Chief Doug Pastula, and Electrician and Systems Specialist Greg Lepine attended a series of Continuous Energy Improvement workshops sponsored by Efficiency Vermont. They shared and learned energy saving tips and techniques from experts and staff from other hospitals. The goal of the workshops was to help hospitals create and implement energy plans that align well with their patient-centered missions.

“Right now we are going through the process of retro commissioning all our water pumps, boilers, and air handlers to make them more efficient,” said Richard. “We have the technology to make all these systems react faster and more efficiently to changes in temperature and humidity. This saves energy and money and makes people working in these spaces happier.” Richard goes on to describe how making small changes to how the “chillers” – the systems that cool the hospital – run makes a big difference in energy use. “Running both at “half” capacity rather than one at a time at full capacity saves energy,” said Richard.

Another big energy saving initiative was to replace the 1970’s era hospital windows. The old style single pane windows were replaced with double glass with a “thermal break” – a layer creating a barrier between the outside and inside. “These windows were like going from a Pinto to a Mercedes,” said Richard. “Not that there is anything wrong with Pintos, I do like them”, added Richard.

For about four years now, NVRH has been part of net metering project using a solar array located in Randolph Vermont. “That project sells energy back to Green Mountain Power and saves NVRH \$35,000 to \$40,000 per year on our electricity bill,” said CFO Bob Hersey.

Future plans to improve energy efficiency is a thermal energy audit of the hospital building, an inventory of all the LED lights to make sure none have been missed, and upgrades to high energy use equipment in various hospital departments.

Submitted by: Laural Ruggles

Sidebars:

Things NVRH has done to improve energy efficiency:

- Lighting upgrades. Old style florescent lights replace with LED. Lights on a 7 minute timing sensor.
- Energy efficient windows in the main hospital building.
- Switched to Compressed Natural Gas (with oil backup).

- Upgraded to more energy efficient dishwasher in the kitchen and ironing system in laundry.
- Replace old style valves on toilets to conserve water.
- Installed electric vehicle charging stations (in partnership with Green Mountain Power)

Things you can do to improve energy efficiency at work:

- Shut off computer monitors whenever possible
- Eliminate or limit the use of space heaters
- Shut off printers and copiers whenever possible
- Shut off desk lamps whenever possible