

**Town of La Pointe
Energy Committee
Monday November 6, 2023
9 am at Town Hall/Zoom
Minutes**

Members present: Lilah Guertin (Chair), Zach Montagne and Robin Trinko-Russell,
Members absent: Tom Kromroy and Scott Hayman
Staff present: Michael Kuchta, Town Administrator
Public present: Bill Bailey, Cheq Bay Renewables

1. Call to order/Roll Call

The Energy Committee meeting was called to order by Lilah.

2. Public Comment

3. Minutes of the following meetings to be considered for approval:

A. October 9, 2023

Motion by Zach to approve the above minutes as presented, seconded by Robin, all ayes. Motion Carried.

4. Updates from Public Service Commission

Bill reported that on 11/3/23, the Public Service Commission approved an EIGP (Energy Innovation Grant Program) with a similar structure as in prior years. This grant will be \$7.8M vs. \$10M from last year. We submitted a grant for a downtown microgrid last year that was not awarded. This grant will focus on disadvantaged communities and Madeline Island is in a disadvantaged census tract. The timeline has not yet been announced but Bill anticipates the application deadline could be as early as February and hopes the awards will be announced in the spring (late April or early May) but that is only a guess.

5. Energy Innovation Grant Program (EIGP) discussion

Bill gave a quick overview of the downtown microgrid history concluding this project is no longer economically feasible with consensus from the committee. Bill suggested applying for the EIGP for an Emergency Services Building (ESB) Solar & Storage Microgrid. He presented cost estimates (\$177,870), budget (funding from EIGP, Focus on Energy, Federal "Elective Pay" and La Pointe capital or fundraising) and financial metrics (6.3 year break-even pay back) supporting his proposal.

Bill explained the need to move from the Cg-7 to Cg-2 Xcel Tariffs in order to make this project financially feasible. This can be done by just asking for the change and keeping the monthly usage under 25kW which with this solar + storage will keep the demand under control.

Bill suggested the next steps be to send out Request for Proposal with the next month (he will help draft) and have a CPA review Federal Elective Pay (to make sure it applies to make the budget work).

Motion by Zach to recommend to the Town Board to reduce the 2024 budget request to \$50,000 and move forward with the above proposed RFP, seconded by Robin, all ayes. Motion carried.

Clerical note: Robin left at 9:27 - no quorum.

Bill asked Zach to verify if the ESB has 3 phase power which will change the inverter specs but should not change the cost much.

Bill will update his figures to a \$50,000 Town match (per motion above) and get a draft RFP to Michael this week so it can be put on next week's Town Board agenda.

Michael asked Bill about electrical vehicle (EV) charging station grants as the cost to install one in the Whitefish parking lot was originally in the downtown microgrid grant proposal but not in the current ESB solar + storage microgrid proposal. Bill thought a charging station at the ESB was not in a convenient downtown location. He spoke about a DOT CFI Grant that Ashland County will be applying for in the spring that the Town could possibly link up with. This grant (along with Xcel reimbursement) would cover the entire cost of installation leaving just the cost of energy which could be passed on to the customer. Michael will look into.

Many thanks to Bill for all his work and insight!!!

6. Set next meeting and agenda

Next meeting will be scheduled after receiving Town Board feedback.

7. Adjourn.

Minutes taken from recording and submitted by Dorgene Goetsch, Clerical Assistant.
Minutes approved as presented 2/16/24. D. Goetsch, Clerical Assistant