

Draft Tamworth Energy Committee

October 16, 2023, 3:00 - 4:30

Cook Memorial Library

Call to Order: 3:00 pm

Present: Gabrielle Watson, John Kumm, Ellen Farnum, Ted Morgan, David Kunhardt (remote) **Guest:** Zack Remick, Tamworth Fire Department, Emergency Response Director

EV Fire Response Preparations:

Tamworth Energy Committee members met with guest speaker, Zack Remick, (Tamworth Fire Department Emergency Response Director), to discuss safety issues surrounding Electric Vehicles (EVs). Even though vehicle fires and problems with EV charging stations happen infrequently, they do pose unique risks and challenges, in large part due to the lithium-ion batteries.

Zack has been able to attend several local training opportunities on managing EV fires. However, he reported that the new technology associated with EVs has outpacing the local fire department's ability to train fire fighters and manage emergency situations.

- Lithium-ion batteries store a lot of energy and can create their own source of combustion in an accident, fueling a fire and creating a 'thermal runaway'. Battery fires can burn for days and in some scenarios, are capable of reigniting up to five days after the initial fire.
- If water is used to control an EV fire, runoff wastewater could contaminate groundwater sources.
- There is currently little guidance available to fire-fighters as to how to mitigate EV fires, and not many hands-on training opportunities.
- Many tow-yards will not accept EVs, due to the potential for a fire reigniting.
- EV chargers can pose unique fire risks and ideally, in Zack's view, should be located away from buildings and other vehicles.
- EV chargers should be installed with an available master shut-off switch.

TEC would like to support the Tamworth Fire Department as they seek possible solutions. TEC will continue conversations with Zack as needed.

Recommendations:

- **Training:**
 1. Gabrielle suggested the EV Rescue app that details how to disconnect batteries in different EVs,
 2. Consult National Standards and National Fire Protection Association to find future training opportunities,
 3. Request EV fire training from Ossipee Valley Mutual Aid Association,
 4. Ask our town administrator to consult with larger towns to see if they offer trainings or are open to sharing how they are handling challenges.
- **Equipment:**

1. Zack would like to see the town purchase 3 vehicle blankets (useful for suppressing fire,)
2. Zack believes it would be advantageous to equip a second fire truck with F500 unit to fight potential vehicle fires.

Approve Minutes from October 2, 2023

Motion to approve: Gabrielle W. Second: John K. **Vote:** Unanimous

Tamworth Community Power:

TEC members discussed plans for the Tamworth Community Power Hearing on Tuesday, October 17th. Gabrielle has reviewed and tailored the PowerPoint with Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH) staff member Andrew Hatch. Andrew will attend our meeting and help answer questions. Tamworth Community Power has a logo design but is still waiting for the Eversource data. TEC members reviewed the slide show and discussed the format for the meeting.

To Do:

All Members:

- *Arrive at 6:30 to set up chairs and technology.*

Gabrielle:

- *Lead the meeting and start the PowerPoint, reviewing the first 3 slides with the audience,*
- *Lead the audience in an interactive voting exercise to rank priorities,*
- *Lead Q and A,*
- *Post Hearing Notice to the Tamworth Exchange and put-up posters at local libraries,*
- *Help with Zoom presentation.*

Ellen:

- *Set up and monitor Zoom audience,*

Ted:

- *Take notes detailing the questions from the audience.*

Town Office Audit: Selectboard direction and next steps:

Gabrielle reported on the meeting with the Selectboard on October 12th. The Selectboard supported the TEC recommendations to air-seal and insulate the attic floor and add insulation to the ductwork. The Selectboard will also join Clean Energy NH.

To Do:

- *Obtain estimates from insulation companies for the work.*

- **David:** *contact Solar companies for pricing on both roof-mounted and ground-mounted solar arrays.*

Brett School Energy Audit – Update:

Ted and John will facilitate the Brett School energy audit. Contacts include school board member Dexter Harding, Principal Melanie McBride, Administrative Assistant Crystal Turner, School Business Administrator, Heather Sherwood, and Noah from Eversource.

Solar power purchase agreement - Update (David Kunhardt)

David has followed up with two companies offering power purchase agreements to municipalities.

The first, **ECA Solar**, was founded 10+ years ago and is based in Waltham, MA. They have been doing solar developments across several states locating customers and finding appropriate locations. To date, ECA has not completed any NH projects, but they are busy with the new law that makes 1-5 MW projects with Net Energy Billing possible.

David spoke with Stephanie Eggers, Development Manager. Stephanie is pursuing projects in Eversource territory, including in Conway. If Tamworth signed a letter of intent with this company, they could offer 15 % savings of the market cost for 20 years. ECA Solar would get competitive Interconnection Agreements with various utility companies and would arrange for all the civil, electrical engineering, and construction cost associated with building a 1- to -5 MW solar farm (5 to 25 acres). The company's strategy in NH would be to find appropriate sites near points of interconnection suitable for this array while at the same finding municipalities to sign Power Purchasing Agreements.

David also spoke with Michael Bartner at **ReVision Energy**. This company is employee owned and is very organized. They currently have 8 systems in development in NH that should be completed by early 20225. ReVision would ask the town of Tamworth for a 5-year agreement; this would enable Tamworth to have a small share of power produced by ReVision. Eversource will pay ½ cent per kWh; however, this could perhaps be negotiated to a higher amount per kWh.

TEC members agreed to meet with both companies separately to hear how they compare and to learn more.

To Do:

- **David** *will schedule meetings with both ReVision, ECA Solar, and possibly a third provider, given Tamworth procurement rules.*

Next Scheduled Meeting: November 6, 2023 Cook Memorial Library, 3:00 pm

Possible Agenda Items:

1. Interview one of the solar PPA providers
2. Review Tamworth Community Power Hearing,
3. Community Conversation Insights and Next Steps,

4. EV Expo - Initial planning & next steps (contact car dealerships, propose dates to CMI)
5. Energy Committee web page - Update ideas, key documents to have, revisiting Ted's earlier suggestion for content.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:45

Minutes E. Farnum