

Energy and Climate Action Committee

Minutes – 06/04/24

[*approved 03/11/2025*]

Virtual Meeting

Joined Select Board meeting in progress

Chair called meeting to order at 6:11 pm

Committee Members Present: Michael DeChiara, Gail Fleischaker, Isaac Goldstein, Nate Heard

Committee Members Absent: None

Approval of Community Choice Aggregation broker

Michael reviewed the process that ECAC took to survey three possible vendors to serve as Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) brokers for Shutesbury.

- Nate forwarded ECAC vetted questions and received two responses.
- One of the two respondents recommended that the town use Colonial Power.
- Colonial Power also replied with comprehensive responses.
- ECAC submitted a letter recommending Colonial Power Group to the Select Board in March 2023 and again in advance of this meeting.
- The letter was accompanied by Colonial's responses. Nate added additional information based on his leadership of this process.

Michael asked the Select Board to approve the no-cost contract with Colonial Power Group to serve as the broker for Shutesbury's CCA process. Rita Farrell moved, Eric Stocker seconded. Unanimously approved by the Select Board.

Michael suggested that the next steps would be for Becky, as Town Administrator, to work with Nate, as designated lead for CCA to get a contract signed. Afterward Nate would work with Colonial on operational issues to advance the process, as previously decided by ECAC and Select Board.

Rita asked if the issue of having an Municipal Light Plan (MLP) was still a barrier to Shutesbury's CCA advancing. Nate pointed out that Colonial, in its responses, clarified it was only an issue with municipalities that have an electrical MLP not an internet MLP. This was consistent with town counsel's original understanding. ECAC and Becky both agreed it seemed that the town could proceed.

Role of ECAC in relation to Select Board

Michael began by referencing the recent situation where ECAC realized it needed to pull back a warrant article for Town Meeting because a public hearing was not conducted. This occurrence highlighted for him that the relationship with ECAC and the Select Board was not clear. Michael shared that two years prior when ECAC was created, ECAC was intended to make recommendations to the Select Board but not act independently. At this point in the evolution of the committee, ECAC is asking the Select Board to be able to act autonomously as a committee, similar to other appointed bodies.

Rita stated that in reviewing the language of the initial charge, she agreed that the design of ECAC was to recommend to the Select Board. She said that some changes would be required to adjust the stated relationship, which she supported as the person who drafted the original charge. She will take the lead on making these changes and would look to ECAC for comment. She also invited ECAC to offer ideas beforehand. The Select Board agreed to change the language in the coming weeks.

Michael assured the Select Board that for certain issues ECAC would certainly update the Select Board, and when required or prudent, ask for Select Board approval.

Michael thanked the Select Board on behalf of ECAC.

Motion to adjourn moved by Gail, seconded by Nate

Motion approved unanimously: Michael, Aye; Gail, Aye; Isaac, Aye; Nate, Aye.

Meeting adjourned at 6:28pm.

Respectfully submitted Michael DeChiara