

NRPC Energy and Climate Committee

March 15th, 2023

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendants: Peter Zamore, Kirk Waite, Dan Seeley, Matthew LeFluer, Al Voegele, Bob Buermann, Barclay Morris, Bill Irwin

Staff: Emily Klofft, Marlena Valenta, Brian Caffrey

Meeting begins at 6:30

**Motion 1:** Adjustments to the agenda

No adjustments to the agenda.

**Motion 2:** Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) & Community Capacity Grant review

M. Valenta goes through the function and protocol of grant application. Every town has eligibility to have one building energy assessment (non-competitive).

B. Buermann asks how many communities will be awarded this grant. M. Valenta says there is no direct number, they have been vague about this. Every town will get at least one free energy assessment.

Kirk Waite does not understand how the energy burden is calculated, M. Valenta says that the information comes straight from the efficiency Vermont review. K. Waite thinks the towns would like to understand how the “energy burden” is calculated. (% of income that the community spends on energy)

Voegele wonders if municipal owned buildings rented out will be eligible. M. Valenta confirms that it would be available.

M. LeFluer emphasizes the importance of reaching out to selectboards to make sure towns have accessibility to these programs.

M. Valenta clarifies that the April 18th MERP webinar will have all necessary information, and is sending the information out to the committee as well as to towns.

**Motion 3:** M. Valenta starts explaining Community Capacity Grant

B. Irwin wants to encourage the high school trade program, he thinks it develops jobs and helps young people find their careers.

A. Voegele wonders who controls these funds, and wonders if there could be a partnership made between schools and homeowners. M. Valenta will check in on how the fund will be ran.

K. Waite believes the funds should be used towards more feasible projects that already have foundation in the community (i.e methane digester project).

The committee wonders what is the \$16 billions dollars number is, and what is the regional share for us in Vermont. M. Valenta explains that the numbers are coming soon, and that 60% of what the state receives will be distributed to the regions.

K. Waite wonders if we could use these funds for our own buildings, and has there been an audit done. The committee confirms that the funds can be used, and there is a fairly recent audit done on the municipal building.

M. Valenta also explains that this grant can be used for incentives to make programs like these more accessible, as well as be used for “walkability” projects. Also encourages programs like CIDER in Grand Isle County as place to distribute the funds.

P. Zamore thinks that the lack of charging in the region is scaring people away from ownership, and thinks that investment will help change the narrative. M. Valenta offers some locations around for EV chargers like schools and parking garage. Also offer the State Parks as a location for chargers, committee would agree this would be great.

The benefit of applying early is getting the money earlier. There will be enough money to go around to municipalities, so it is not first come first serve.

Meeting ended discussing WindowDressers locations.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:05 PM