

Haverhill Mayor's Energy Task Force

19 March 2007 Meeting Minutes

Room 301 Haverhill City Hall

Monday 19 March 2007 7:00 pm

Task force members in attendance:

- Mike LaBonte, Chairman

Others in attendance:

- Jeff Dill, Haverhill Facilities Director
- Jared Fortna, Haverhill
- Cathy Catanzaro, Johnson Controls, Lynnfield
- Kathy LaRoque, Haverhill
- Kevin McCarthy, Haverhill
- Mary Hess, Merrimack

Mike LaBonte conducted the meeting

Mike LaBonte showed page 4 of the March 15, 2007 Eagle Tribune newspaper, on which the article “Haverhill eyes energy consumption” describes a tour through several Haverhill buildings by the Mayor and Jeff Dill, seeking ways to reduce energy consumption.

Jeff Dill described his role as a city employee and briefed us on several energy-related topics. Historically, a maintenance department for the entire school system was created under Mayor Guerin. Other city departments handled their own maintenance. The school maintenance department employed EnergyCap computer software to monitor and manage energy use. Energy reduction has been aided by the typically part time use of school buildings, which can be shut when unoccupied. Jeff employs an energy auditor who checks on the buildings, prepares energy use reports, and keeps system components running as well as possible. Jeff estimates that \$1.6 million has been saved cumulatively on energy expenses in 4 years.

Jeff believes that retrofits might be needed for other city buildings. City Hall has undergone a lighting retrofit. The savings from this has been \$3300 per months, yielding a 2 year payback time. Jeff described the 5 pipe hot water heating system used in City Hall. The former high school building became City Hall in 1973, but heating records are scarce.

Mike gave a brief overview of the areas being pursued by the task force. Kevin McCarthy expressed interest in the idea of bringing bio-diesel fuel to Haverhill. Mike said that there is currently no progress in that area, and also described the fuel cost structure. Since B20 fuel contains 80% “regular” petro-diesel fuel, and since the 20% that is vegetable oil costs around \$4.00 per gallon, currently B20 fuel will tend to cost a little more than straight petro-diesel. Kevin said that bio-diesel also gives the community the benefit of lower pollution. Kathy LaRoque said there are citizens who have an interest in bio fuels, but the city

government is in the best position to bring them here. Jeff said that many city diesel vehicles are fairly old, and all city departments operate on a tight budget. Any changes resulting in higher costs are difficult to make.

Turning to the subject of building energy performance, Jeff described the concept of performance contracting, in which the costs of building enhancements is repaid from the savings in energy costs. Cathy Catanzaro said that in addition to energy, carbon dioxide emissions reduction, for example, could be a goal of a performance contract.. At this point Mike reminded attendees that the task force exists to make recommendations in general form to the Mayor, and the discussion would avoid the products and services of specific companies.

Cathy said that municipal leases are popular methods of financing these contracts. The amount paid yearly by the city is fixed. In any year where actual energy savings are less than the payment, the contractor issues a check for the shortfall. In some cases the contractor may also want to install additional measures to improve savings. Cathy said that the payback time for photovoltaic systems (PV) would be shorter than for wind power systems, and wind systems are dependent of subsidies. She also said that although the practice of performance contracting has existed for a good number of years, there are not yet very many performance contracting projects in Massachusetts. Newer legislation providing for the RFQ process, payback periods up to 20 years, and a shortened appeals process took effect one year ago. Quincy has undertaken a performance contracting project. The contact there is Laurie Allen.

We discussed the differences between RFPs and RFQs, here defined as Request for Proposal and Request for Qualifications. An RFP calls for a specific proposal, whereas in an RFQ a qualified company is chosen to decide what work should be done. A problem with RFPs is that the multiple proposals can be very different, and difficult to make an apples-to-apples comparison with. Companies might tour facilities for just a few days to gain the knowledge needed to respond to an RFQ. Somerville was cited as an example of a city that had had work done under an RFP, but has issued an RFQ for more work. Jeff Dill recommended studying the relevant legislation before proceeding. He also said that incentives from utilities might play a part. Cathy Catanzaro said that those are considered and sometimes made use of by contractors.

Kathy LaRoque suggested that energy education for the public might be a good initiative. Mike believed that MTC might provide a speaker for such an event. Kevin McCarthy asked if energy education is part of any school curriculum. Jeff described outreach programs such as the compact fluorescent change-over program conducted by Massachusetts Electric in 1984, which was not very successful. The Mayor recently has been exploring whether the city should undertake a new initiative to replace more incandescent lights with fluorescent ones. In terms of getting utilities to subsidize costs, Jeff felt that a larger organization such as the Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative might have more negotiating power.

Jeff suggested that the city might hire an employee specifically to manage energy. This city-side job might be similar to that of the energy auditor on the school side. We revisited the subject of the EnergyCap software used by the auditor. This software makes use of weather data to calculate the energy costs that might have been incurred, and how much has been avoided. Cathy said that Eileen McHugh has been working to have similar software developed. The U.S. Department of Energy Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) has protocols and calculators for measurement and verification. Jeff agreed to send a sample energy report to Mike.

The meeting ended at 9:20 pm

Minutes by Mike LaBonte