

**TOWN OF SOUTHWINGTON
ENERGY COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
February 18, 2009**

The regular meeting of the Energy Committee of the Town of Southington was held on February 18, 2009 in the Town Council Chambers at the Town Hall, 75 Main Street, Southington, CT. The meeting was called to order at 7:10PM by Councilman David Zoni, Chairperson.

I.) Roll Call

Sharon Vocke, Jerry Belanger, Anthony Tranquillo, Fred Cox and Councilman David Zoni, Chairperson.

A quorum is determined.

Councilman David Zoni, assuming the Chair:

II.) Approval of Minutes for January 21, 2009.

A motion was made by Mr. Belanger to table the approval of the January 18, 2009 minutes, seconded by Mr. Cox. The motion passed on a voice vote.

III.) Energy Committee Communications

Chairman Zoni spoke about the Governor's attempt to use clean water funding to balance the budget. Ms. Vocke explained that this money has been contributed from the ratepayers. Chairman Zoni encouraged committee members to contact their state representative to express opposition to raiding this fund. The Town has some school projects on the table that will be depending on this funding being available.

IV.) Issues for Discussion and Review

a.) Update on 20% by 2010 Campaign

Ms. Vocke reported that apparently there is some grant money available to promote this program to the public. There needs to be two participants to attend a training program in the use of this funding. Ms. Vocke explained in some detail what is entailed. Mr. Belanger accepted this responsibility, along with Ms. Vocke. It is necessary for the public to be aware of the program and Southington's commitment to it.

Ms. Vocke reported on her progress in seeking a collaboration with the Environmental Club at the high school. There was some discussion about placing some information on the town's channel 14. Ms. Vocke will speak with Leslie Cotton. Content of the message was discussed.

b.) Public Building and Facilities Energy Conservation Issues

1.) Luminosity Audit 08-10-08 (Feedback)

Chairman Zoni reported that Mr. Cox has made changes at the school facilities and most of those lighting issues have been resolved. He has made a few "midnight runs" to check. Some equipment changes have been made. In the high school the hallways are illuminated 24-7 because they were designed to the fire code at the time which required it. They are being gradually rewired to allow less night lighting while maintaining fire and police requirements. The municipal buildings need to be addressed and Chairman Zoni welcomed to the panel, Mr. Tranquillo, Town Engineer. There was a discussion about vandalism and safety issues requiring night lighting of public buildings. Mr. Cox suggested that this committee invite a representative from the fire and police departments to a meeting to discuss the safety issues.

2.) Facilities/Sie Energy Guidelines/Energy Savings

Mr. Cox reported on the Best Practices Guidelines set up in the fall at twelve of sixteen school facilities. He explained the process of implementation and shared the data resulting from the energy conservation program. Common sense and retraining in the use of electricity produced a savings of \$26,237 in two months on the electrical bill, as compared with the same time frame in 2007. Mr. Belanger asked about degree days this year as opposed to last year and was advised that this year was actually ten percent colder. The Southington High School was eliminated from this experiment because last year it was signed up with CL&P on a conservation program. Lighting had been upgraded with a substantial savings in place, making a cost comparison impossible. Vo-Ag was not included, it is a new building but there have been some energy changes on site. Plantsville Elementary was not included because it was closed. Pine Center is used now for programs only. The twelve buildings were chosen because they remained the same from 2007 to 2008 and therefore could be honestly compared. The staff has performed admirably and the savings was 14.08% in December. This project cost little and the savings is for the most part due to the cooperation of the school staff. The Middle Schools are presently being upgraded with more efficient lighting. Flanders has been done and work is in place at Kelly. He is planning to have all buildings done by July. With conservation efforts and new technology he anticipates a sizable savings in energy costs.

3.) Status of Energy Audits/Relamping Programs

The municipal buildings were discussed. Mr. Tranquillo explained how the town buildings operate differently. Chairman Zoni asked where the town is on its energy savings agenda. Mr. Tranquillo reports that the town is pursuing this, working with an energy audit firm, with lighting and windows a first concern. An initial report is due next month. Chairman Zoni discussed the Best Practices Guidelines and suggested their modification for each town

building. Mr. Tranquillo talked about heat/cooling zones and the heating imbalance problem at the Town Hall. Motion sensors were discussed. Mr. Cox suggested that energy guidelines need to be formulated by a group of people who are familiar with each building. He feels that the goals need to be reasonable or the program will be unsustainable. Mr. Tranquillo outlined some of his problems, one of them being that the town buildings do not have an actual custodian. Low cost and no cost savings will come first. Chairman Zoni summed up—there will be a guidelines plan for each town facility.

4.) **Facilities Oil vs Gas Status Review**

Mr. Tranquillo had submitted, at the request of this committee, a report on all town facilities to include what fuel is used and the availability and feasibility of converting to alternate fuel. He reported that the energy consultant was given this information, as well. Ms. Vocke asked about the use of geo-thermal. Some buildings could be converted to gas. Gary Lane, the energy consultant, will present his report and he is expected to have some grant information. When the report is complete, he will be invited to present it at a meeting of this committee.

5.) **30 Minute Response Program**

Mr. Cox explained that CL&P has a 30 minute response program which allows them to cut the demand infrequently at times when it is nearing a peak. This is in place at the high school and is instituted during the summer months when air conditioners bring a greater demand for energy. He reports substantial savings from this program. Mr. Tranquillo was familiar with this and reported that it is in place at the sewer department where back up generators are in place.

c.) **EPA Energy Challenge Program Update**

Ms. Vocke explained this program. She has been to a meeting on this recently. The town can choose any energy goal and when that is reached, there is a grant available. Ms. Vocke will continue to monitor this and report back to the committee.

d.) **KVARC/Capacitance Device Update**

It turns out that this KVARC device is, in fact, real and has value according to Gary Lane. Mr. Tranquillo explained to the committee and he will report back on this. Perhaps this could be used at the treatment plant to save some electricity. Mr. Tranquillo will speak with Mr. Triano at the Finance Board about this.

e. **Rescue-A-Buck Energy Suggestions**

There have been 14 suggestions, to date, about energy savings from the Rescue-A-Buck program.

- (1) LED lights on cruisers: The Police Chief reports that they are in the process of converting to LED lights, one vehicle at a time.

- (2) Installing energy efficient thermostats: This is being done in the school facilities procedurally according to the Guidelines. Saucier Mechanical has gone through the town buildings to assess which thermostats could be replaced by electronic programmable thermostats. Some are not practical to consider. Their quote is \$11,582.00. Gary Lane will take this under consideration.
- (3) Night lighting at the dog park: The Park Department has been notified about this.
- (4) Putting lights on timers: This was discussed. Mr. Tranquillo suggested that a policy needs to be in place for night lighting of parking lots and parks.
- (5) Contractual agreements on buying gas are too long: Mr. Tranquillo believes that they are bid once a year. He thinks that it is a consortium capital region bid. He will check with finance.
- (6) The purchase of SUV's for the town: Chairman Zoni and Councilman Riccio are in the process of exploring this.
- (7) The purchase of energy efficient police vehicles: Ibid.
- (8) Someone suggested the purchase of a solar enclosure for the police department: There was some discussion about this. Apparently there is a solar roof device under which the police cruisers can be parked and then the solar power generated by the roof could be used. This is a good idea but cost prohibitive at this time.
- (9) Street lighting issues: The street lights are on photo sensors and cannot easily be changed. The town owns the street lights and are charged per light for the year. Mr. Tranquillo explained that all of the lights are wired into the grid. The Town Manager had set a standard of 50% lighting years ago so in essence the town has been conserving electricity for years. The town pays the same amount, whether or not that light is on or off. To attempt to alter this system is not practical. Residents are encouraged to call in any street light that is off. The pole number and the location are very helpful—the taxpayers pay the same amount whether it is working or not. Lights are there for the safety of the public.
- (10) Reschedule football games to Saturday afternoon and not Friday night: This has been discussed with athletics. The gate fees support the evening game.
- (11) Install motion detectors: We are working on this.
- (12) There was a suggestion about converting lighting to LED: It is expensive to do this. The LED lights are coming down in price and experts have advised that within the next year or two they anticipate that the initial cost will drop to half.
- (13) Heating problem at DePaola School: Mr. Cox reported that maintenance is taking care of this. Some thermostats are being recalibrated. A bad thermostat has been replaced in one of the classrooms, where the teacher was opening the windows to balance the heat, rather than reporting the problem.

(14) Re-bulbing the public buildings: This is part of the energy conservation audit.

V.) Public Communications

Art Cyr, 103 Berlin Ave. spoke to the committee. He complimented Mr. Cox for his fine job on conserving energy and the town's money. He reported that he e-mails reports of street lights that are out when he sees them. He discussed his thoughts on the KVAR presentation with the committee.

He asked about shutting down the town hall on Fridays to save energy but there was a discussion about professionals who use the building on a daily basis and the service the staff provides to the public.

VI.) Miscellaneous Business

Ms. Vocke asked about the recycling programs. Someone approached her about the failure of some families to recycle. There was a discussion about this with Mr. Tranquillo. Haulers are not supposed to pick up trash that has not been sorted for recycling. Mr. Tranquillo suggested that the concerned person call him directly. Ms. Vocke will relay the message. There was some discussion about having one hauler for the whole town being more efficient from an energy standpoint.

VII.) Adjournment

Mr. Belanger made a motion to adjourn at 8:55PM, seconded by Mr. Tranquillo. All were in favor of adjournment.

Councilman David Zoni
Chairman
Energy Committee
Town of Southington