

# **MIDDLETOWN WIND TURBINE FEASIBILITY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 1, 2009**

**6:00 pm**

**MIDDLETOWN POLICE STATION COMMUNITY ROOM**

**Present: Christine Weglowski Forster, Ray Mosher, Don Mallinson, Peter Tarpgaard, Shawn Brown, Barbara VonVillas ,, Richard Talipsky, Gary Gump**

**The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.**

**In response to a question at the August meeting from Councillors VonVillas and Bozyan about the financial aspects of a turbine, the Committee invited Gary Gump and Richard Talipsky of the Portsmouth Economic Development Committee and the Renewable Energy Subcommittee to give a presentation on their experience building Portsmouth's turbine. Messrs Gump and Talipsky gave a fabulous talk with a Power Point presentation about the new turbine at Portsmouth High School (PHS). The presentation covered the process of putting the turbine online, from idea to dedication. More information is available on Portsmouth's website, the link is <http://portsmouthrienergy.com/> .**

**Issues covered in the talk were as follows:**

**When Portsmouth had decided on a site, the town applied to the**

**Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) for a decision on the height. The higher the turbine, the greater is the wind speed. In fact, the wind speed is cubed as the turbine gets taller. The location was restricted with the first application because it was in the flight path of TF Green Airport, and the second application was restricted to 65 meters. Gump and Talipsky noted that the application may be done online and is harm free, so one may apply numerous times without penalty. Normally the turnaround time is 60 days, but Portsmouth said they heard back from FAA in 2-3 weeks.**

**The turbine has its own meter from National Grid (NG), and the electricity produced in excess of the electricity used can be credited to 10 municipal accounts. The original legislation allowing credit for only 5 accounts has now been changed to 10 accounts.**

**Portsmouth has an enterprise fund for the value of the credited electricity. They receive a check rather than credit to town accounts. They receive a check once per month, but do not receive the check immediately at the end of the month, but several months later. The rate is location dependent, so if electricity costs more one location--distance from the grid, fewer users at that portion of the grid--the owner of the turbine receives more credit. They receive the displaced value of electricity, which is the rate minus NG's costs.**

**Costs to run the turbine include debt service, operations and maintenance; reserve repair replacement; and renewable energy**

**projects.**

**Financing came from Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBS), Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) and the state. CREBS are interest free loans from the federal government. RECs, actually a commodity, are funded when entities and/or individuals select on their electricity bill to purchase electricity from renewable sources. The RI Renewable Energy Fund provided \$450,000.**

**The PHS turbine is town controlled. Early in the process, four years before the turbine was dedicated, the committee had town council and public support. Over the course of the process the committee built a website, held three public workshops, and had ten meetings with the town council. The committee's core group was 4-5 persons, who in Gump and Talipsky's words, learned what they had to learn to get the turbine built.**

**During the construction an archaeological study was required when what was thought to be artifacts were discovered. The cost of this was foreseen and was in the budget.**

**Entities they had to interact with were Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC,) Federal and State legislators, Public Utilities Commission (PUC).They liaised often with the state offices of legislators and Renewable Energy. Gump and Talipsky stated that the aid and support of state offices was invaluable.**

**Portsmouth negotiated for a firm fixed fee contract. The turbine tower cost was \$2.1 million, and \$900,000 for the foundation. The contract allocated \$10,000 for geological borings, with a provision that had the borings indicated that the turbine could not be built at the location, the contract was void. Negotiated cost for the interconnection with NG was \$50,000. Five percent of gross revenue is allocated for eventual decommissioning.**

**The turbine is 336 feet high. Generation figures for March 28 to August 20, 2009 are 1147 mwh and that cash value is \$178,000.**

**The committee thanked Messrs Gump and Talipsky for the wonderful presentation and for their generosity with their time and information.**

**Forster reported that at the last EBEC meeting a budget subcommittee was proposed to track expenses and for general accountability for expenditures. Attorney Teitz will reserve the name at the Secretary of State's office until the issue of what sort of entity will be formed. A group of Roger Williams School of Law fellows will research this issue and report to the EBEC in early fall.**

**Tarpgaard reported that he had attended the Planning Board meeting on the Wind Energy Ordinance, and that it was ready to go to the council.**

**Brown reported that he was continuing to talk to owners of land that could possibly be available to the town as locations for utility scale turbines. Forster reported that the committee was waiting to receive photographic simulations of turbines on some of these sites from the graphic person.**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm. Next scheduled meeting for October 6, 2009**