

APPROVED
Hartford Climate Advisory Committee
June 10, 2020

Erik Krauss called the meeting to order at approximately 5:05 pm.

Present: Erik Krauss; Courtney Williamson; Jack Spicer; Geoff Martin, Energy Coordinator; Ana Meija, Community Member, Alan Johnson, Selectboard Liaison

Act 92 Compliance: Erik read the Act 92 compliance agreement.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Erik suggested adding “Update to RFP” to Agenda. All agreed.

Approve draft minutes from the May 13, May 29, and June 3 meetings: Courtney Williamson moved to approve the minutes. Jack seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Erik noted that in his experience with Lynn Bohi he has learned some best practices that he recommends CAC adopts, including a note when a meeting is called to order and adjourned and signing the minutes.

Update on RFP: Geoff stated that he heard back from Lori Hirshfield and Brannon Godfrey this afternoon. There have been reductions in revenue from taxes in communities across the state. We will need the plan to be deemed essential to be funded from July 1 through August. Should the plan not be deemed an essential expenditure by the Selectboard, they recommend pushing this back into August as far as possible.

Alan stated that the Selectboard discussed timelines at last night’s meeting and there was agreement that at least a draft should be submitted for review during this year’s budget cycle. Alan also discussed that the first year of implementing the plan’s recommendations will likely not be as costly as the succeeding years.

Erik said that the group should determine whether the plan is essential. Alan says it will be better to determine this when we have a sense of budget reductions and what staff will be deeming essential. Alan said the CAC should focus on educating the Selectboard to ensure they do not continue kicking the can down the road.

Jack said that the budget wasn’t a major consideration when the Ad Hoc Committee came up with the resolution and warrant article, so it should not be an overriding principal now. Jack said the group made it a point that the costs of inaction were greater than the costs of acting. Courtney and Erik said to take a measured approach, especially considering the weight staff opinion will be given by the Selectboard. Erik asked if Geoff can make adjustments to dates on the timeline as there are developments.

Geoff also said that hiring a consultant will be contingent on the funding coming in and that that will be included in the final RFP, which could deter some vendors. All agreed that this is probably the case for all RFPs out there right now.

Discuss performance contracting for town buildings and infrastructure: Geoff proposed that the town select a contractor to put together a work scope for the town on one or more buildings, perform energy audits, and put together recommendations for prioritizing projects. Doing this with a performance contractor comes with a guarantee that the Town will have real savings and if there are no savings then the contractor will pay the difference or make changes to ensure the savings are realized. This is different from hiring an energy auditor, which is paid up front and expensive, and recommendations are not always timely implemented. The contractors also work with the town on financing. Some companies doing this are Johnson Controls, Siemens, Honeywell, and EEI out of New Hampshire.

Alan said this can be a tricky model for property owners because of the long term commitment. These contractors pick the lowest hanging fruit first to get savings, and then don't have to focus on the bigger issues whereas the town should be focused on longer term benefits and not so much on dollar savings. He also said the businesses have probably adapted to the current situation and acknowledged those shortcomings since he last looked into this model. He said the town likely won't get deep analysis from these companies though. Erik agreed that some projects that don't have a good payback won't be prioritized. Geoff said keep in mind that the Norwich Tracy Hall project is one that doesn't have good payback but is being implemented by one of these contractors, EEI.

Erik said we should talk about the timing of pursuing this in tandem with the Climate Action Plan. Geoff said that he thinks it is the right thing to do but doesn't want it to overshadow the Action Plan, and said that CAC could be involved in the hiring process to ensure the Town chooses a vendor that would have a broader view of climate costs. Erik asked how locked in the town is once it chooses a vendor and Geoff said the town doesn't have to select any vendor but once it does it is fairly locked in, depending on the terms of the contract. Erik said that the town should have its interests included and a way out of the contract should those interests not be honored. Members agreed and Geoff said he would want CAC involved throughout the process. Jack said that members have aired their concerns and that they weren't roadblocks, so the town should proceed accordingly. All agreed. The next step in the performance contracting is getting Brannon to sign off on the RFQ. Geoff said the RFQ has been presented to Lori but not Brannon.

Identify and distribute CAP development preparatory tasks including:

- **Compile data and other resources including contact information that CAC anticipates the consultant will need.** Erik said that CAC might compile a list of people to talk to as well as a list of current emissions in town. The list of people to talk to would be important for community engagement. Courtney suggested that each CAC member contribute names to one list and then discuss it later. Geoff said he will be the aggregator of the list so send names to him. Erik said he will clean it up and present it to the group at a later meeting. Send thoughts for who consultant should be talking to and Geoff will send to Erik. In terms of data, Geoff thinks the more

emissions data that CAC can collect the more the town will be saving money because it is time consuming and costly for the contractor to do this task. Geoff said the starting point is to review report on emissions that lays out accounting that he will send to the group. Part of the process is defining the boundaries which Jack said CAC should do on its own because this could be time consuming/costly and ultimately not in the town's best interest. Erik said he will start the process once the report is circulated but will likely need help. All agreed to review the energy chapter of the town plan and the reports cited therein. Alan said Two Rivers has much of this data as well.

- **Create a template for interviews including basic questions.** Courtney will work on this by going through RFP and using it as a guide to the questions asked of consultants. Ana mentioned that Mark Goodwin in Lebanon might have already developed these materials. Erik said he will contact Mark.
- **Create a rubric for evaluating consultants.** This would be a task that is finite. Jack said resilient Hartford likely has one for when the hazard mitigation plan was revised that he can dig up. Geoff has one for solar vendors. Alan said there was one for town hall renovations. Erik asked if anyone wants to take a first attempt and Geoff volunteered.
- **Lay groundwork for the community engagement process.** Erik said this could be ongoing and what he envisioned here was engaging community as much as possible to encourage robust debate and buy-in. Erik mentioned well-attended forums on the town plan that took place at multiple forums, but that he still thought CAC should do more. Courtney said CAC members should do a tour of group meetings and present the plan and get buy-in. Jack said this is a tried and true approach to collaboration and Ana said this approach has been discussed at Vital Communities. Erik agreed and said CAC should do the following: create list of groups, define timeline, develop talking points, gather concerns and come up with ways CAC can offer help on other groups' initiatives. Geoff will list groups and members will send him groups over next week. Courtney and Ana decided to be the point people on community engagement and will develop talking points. They will reach out and get on next month's meeting agendas. Alan said Hartford Community Coalition is one that should be involved and their meeting is in July. Erik said that CAC members do not have to hold back, especially if an opportunity presents itself.

Discuss recruiting for open committee position: Ana has not yet been confirmed but is on the Selectboard meeting for Tuesday. Erik will reach out to Tad and Sarah Wood. Geoff has started a conversation with Chuck Wooster and he will follow up. All encouraged this.

Closing comments and meeting adjournment: There will be a special meeting on June 24 at 5 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Jack Spicer, Clerk