

The January 13, 2020 Town of Bethel special Town Board Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Daniel Sturm at 7:30p.m. at the Dr. Dugan Community Center meeting room.

Council members present: Vicky Simpson
Hendrickson
Bernie Cohen

Council member absent: Dawn Ryder

Attorney for the Town: Karen Mannino

Sustainable Bethel members present: Karen London – Co-chair
Jeffrey Allison – Co-chair
Wendy Robinson
Jennifer Young
Michael Chojnicki

Climate Smart liaison : Chris Cunningham

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dan Sturm said this is a big step in being a climate smart community.

Karen London gave an overview of the LED Streetlight Conversion Options. Ms. Mannino explained the pro’s and con’s of both NYSEG and NYPA. The town wants to transition away from high-pressure sodium bulbs to a more “green” LED lighting array.

NYPA Pro and Cons

Cost to convert \$184,564 (after rebates); Years 1-10 cost \$33,680; Year 11 cost \$14,747.

Under NYPA the town will buy all the street lamps from NYSEG at approximately \$78,000. The town will benefit from having more customized lighting design. The town can determine the best fixture, wattage, etc. for each pole and choose to install node on each housing unit that can produce WIFI and the lamp can be managed by wireless. If the town chooses NYPA the town needs to find a vendor that will maintain and repair the lamps when required.

The town can enter into a maintenance contract with other townships; Tusten, Fallsburg and Thompson which have gone with NYPA. Contracting with NYPA for 3 years of maintenance.

Time to implement with NYPA is 105 days from purchase signature letter for design then 4-6 weeks to install.

Time to implement with NYSEG is no guarantee of timeframe. NYSEG states can accomplish in 12 to 18 months (without guarantee of delivery).

NYPA is tax exempt municipal lease (they finance at a low rate of 2.3%). Ten years to realize savings after debt service paid.

NYSEG Pros and Cons

Cost to convert \$12,277; Years 1-10 cost \$24,849; Year 11 cost \$12,572.

NYSEG will retain responsibility for all street lights including routine maintenance and repair damage caused by storms. The town will be locked into paying NYSEG a facility charge of \$9,200 annually in perpetuity. According to the Town of Bethel NYSEG is not willing to commit to a date for the LED conversion. NYSEG will only convert 25% of the street lights per year. The town cannot choose design options.

NYSEG will only do bulb to bulb conversion. Also, the town doesn't have the option to upgrade the lamp housing such as adding a smart node which could host other tech options for the town.

Who are the players

Over the past two years, the Sustainable Bethel Committee has engaged in numerous conversations with representatives of NYSEG, the Town's current energy provider, New York Power Authority (NYPA), and the Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC), with respect to proposals from each of NYSEG and NYPA to convert the Town's street lighting to LEDs either through the utility (The "utility model") or through NYPA following the Town's purchase of its street lights from NYSEG (the "municipal ownership model").

NVRC is a quasi-governmental entity that offers planning and technical assistance to the region's municipalities as part of NYS' Climate Smart Communities and Clean Energy Programs. Carla Castillo, Deputy Executive Director of HVRC, has worked closely with Sustainable Bethel to review and analyze the Town's options and believes that municipal ownership of its streetlights would be a "win-win" for the Town. Sustainable Bethel believes HVRC's estimates are the best predictor of the impact of conversion.

NYPA is a NYS public-benefit corporation and the largest state public power utility in the US. It has a longstanding commitment to the environment and is a national leader in promotion energy efficiency, the development of clean energy technologies and electric vehicles. In its LED street lighting initiative – begun in 2015 – it has worked statewide, and sometimes nationally, to secure optimal prices for materials and expertise in its program to help NYS municipalities take advantage of energy conservation through the adoption of LED technology.

What is the Big Picture

Both street lighting LED conversion proposals offer significant reductions in long-term costs and GHG emissions, with the utility model providing simplicity and greater cost reductions in the initial decade post-conversion and the municipal model offering future-oriented technology, greater GHG and electricity usage reductions, and cost-savings long term.

Public Comment

Ray Neuenhoff – Go with NYPA.

Ira Liff - The Light District cost should be evenly distributed not by assessment. Who is paying the light district? Mr. Sturm - 80% light district, 20% general fund. Mr. Liff asked are the bulbs insured if there is a surge?

Mr. Sturm – The board will review and vote on it with a full board possibility on January 22, 2020. Offered as a lease so we don't have to bond.

Mike Richardson - Are we using local vendor(s) for maintenance? Jeffrey Allison - First two years maintenance is with NYPA. May have to go out regionally for vendor.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by Mrs. Simpson to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mrs. Hendrickson, put to a vote and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita S. Sheehan, Town Clerk