

BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC MEETING
September 9, 2014

IN ATTENDANCE

Chairman Robert G. Gatto
Commissioner Gregan T. Crawford
Commissioner James M. Raley

County Administrator R. Lamont Pagenhardt

PUBLIC SESSION

CALL TO ORDER OF PUBLIC SESSION

PRAYER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1. Additions/deletions to public meeting agenda. Mr. Pagenhardt indicated there were no additions or deletions to the Public Meeting Agenda for September 9, 2014 but made note that Commissioner Raley would like to make a public statement. The Board, on a motion by Commissioner Raley, which was seconded by Chairman Gatto, and made unanimous by Commissioner Crawford, approved the Public Meeting Agenda for September 9, 2014.
2. Commissioner Raley announced that he had accepted the position of Executive Director with the Office of Consumer Advocates which is a non-profit mental health wellness and recovery program serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties.
3. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Crawford, which was seconded by Commissioner Raley, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, approved the Public Meeting Minutes for August 5, 2014 and Administrative Session Minutes for August 20, 2014.
4. The Board of County Commissioners provided an update of the boards, committees, and commission meetings they have attended and participated in since the last public meeting.
5. PROCLAMATIONS :
 - "Constitution Week"
 - "Suicide Prevention Month"
 - "University of Maryland Extension – 100th Anniversary"
6. The Board of County Commissioners was presented with a briefing by the Mountain Maryland Energy Administration Committee to include an update and first round recommendations. Michael Koch, Executive Director, Department of Community Planning and Development and Cheryl DeBerry, Natural Resources Business Specialist (and Liaison between the Board of County Commissioners, the Department of Community Planning and Development, and the Committee), Department of Community Planning and Development were in attendance for this session. Attached to these public meeting minutes as an Exhibit are four identified initiatives. The Board, on a motion by Commissioner Raley, which was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and made unanimous by

Chairman Gatto, agreed with the conceptual initiatives presented on this date, asked that the Committee proceed with their direction for final adoption, and advise the Board on the progress.

7. Edward Kelley, County Airport Manager, briefed the Board of County Commissioners with an update on operations of the County Airport. Review of 2014 “Wings and Wheels” event; statistical and financial reports; status of update to the County Airport Layout Plan; and other related documentation is on file with Mr. Kelley or the Office of the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Kelley shared a Proclamation executed by Governor Martin O’Malley designating September as “General Aviation and Community Support Month”. Mr. Koch was in attendance for this session.
8. Margaret Jamison, Mayor, Town of Oakland, along with the Town Council of Oakland presented a request of \$25,000 for “Communities of Distinction” which is a marketing opportunity for the Town of Oakland. Mr. Koch was in attendance for this session. The Board, on a motion by Commissioner Crawford, which was seconded by Commissioner Raley, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, approved this request for funding. Funding will be appropriated from the contingency fund. Commissioner Raley suggested that the Mayor and Town Council coordinate this program with the Greater Oakland Business Association which Mayor Jamison agreed to. The Towns of Grantsville and Friendsville have also received funding for similar municipal revitalization projects.
9. Public Commentary. The Board addressed questions from the media in attendance to include the status of approval to the Amendments to the County Water and Sewer Master Plan. Chairman Gatto stated that no decision has been finalized by the Board who continues to take this under advisement. Commissioner Raley stated that he would like the Board to make a final decision on this matter at the October 7, 2014 Public Meeting.
10. Carol Riley-Alexander, Executive Assistant to the Board of County Commissioners and County Administrator, reviewed the Board’s meeting and committee schedule for the forthcoming weeks.

ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC SESSION

ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION

1. The Board of County Commissioners met with members of the Emergency Services Advisory Board (ESB). Discussion points were County staffing, volunteer coverage, and response time. In attendance for this session were the following persons:

- Lou Battistella, Chairman, Emergency Services Advisory Board
- Wayne Tiemersma, Emergency Medical Service Chief
- John Frank, Director, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management

Points of discussion included a determined insufficiency of emergency medical service due to personnel shortage and continued shortage trend of volunteers as it relates to Countywide standards of care. The boards also reviewed the Advance Life Support Memorandum of Understanding which the ESB will continue to take under advisement and monitor.

2. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Raley, which was seconded by Commissioner Crawford, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto, reappointed the following persons to the Emergency Services Advisory Board for a period not to exceed November 30, 2014 to allow full ESB membership at the scheduled November meeting. Also, the Board will solicit names

from Northern Garrett Rescue Squad, Southern Garrett Rescue Squad, the Garrett County Fire Association Chief's Committee, and the Garrett County Fire & Rescue Association for consideration of appointment.

- Louis Battistella, Member of the General Public
- Richard Carlson, Garrett County Fire Chief's Association
- John Frank, Director, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management
- Paul Harman, Northern Garrett Rescue Association
- Johnny Mayne, Southern Garrett Rescue Association
- Alex Mellot, Garrett County Fire and Rescue Association
- Ed McLellan, Member of the General Public
- George Vincent, Member of the General Public

A recommendation was also presented to add the County Chief of Emergency Medical Services as an additional voting member of the ESB. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Raley, which was seconded by Commissioner Crawford, and made unanimous by Chairman Gatto approved this recommendation. The By-Laws will be amended to reflect this membership composition.

3. Mr. Pagenhardt reviewed a number of administrative, personnel, and managerial matters under his authority and jurisdiction with the Board of County Commissioners.

Attest:

By Order of the Board,

R. Lamont Pagenhardt,
County Administrator

Robert G. Gatto, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

Date

Biomass Energy Initiative

EXHIBIT

Overview

The focus of this project involves developing a biomass energy system demonstration project at a publicly accessible site. The expected benefits associated with the implementation of this project include; reduced fuel costs at the host facility and the development of a system that could be used to train students on operation, maintenance, financing, installation, and supply chains for a commercial biomass energy system, which supports local workforce development. We would seek a turn-key provider to assist with site selection and implementation of this project.

Background

Committee members have visited biomass energy systems in use at schools, hospitals, and greenhouses in Pennsylvania. Sites visited include Hughesville High School, Sullivan County High School, Penn Valley School, Evangelical Community Hospital, and Esbenshades Greenhouse. The biomass systems burn undried wood chips of varying sizes. Chips are sourced locally from sawmills, logging operations, and from companies that dispose of municipal biomass waste. Several businesses have been created to supply biomass for the increasing number of systems in Pennsylvania. In the spring of 2014, the Maryland Department of the Environment amended COMAR 26.11.09, which establishes guidelines for the use of small and medium sized biomass systems. Systems that meet the amended regulation use best available technology, which minimizes pollution and protects public health.

Specifics

Several suitable sites exist in both Allegany and Garrett County based on knowledge gained from visiting sites in Pennsylvania. In Allegany County, the proposed new Allegany High School could be a potential site for a biomass energy system. In Garrett County, the CARC (Community Aquatic and Recreation Complex at Garrett College in McHenry) or the CTTC (Career Technology and Training Center at Central Garrett Industrial Park in Accident) have potential. Both sites have ample room for the facility, ample need for heat, and are situated where Garrett College could use them for training programs. These sites and others throughout the region should be evaluated for the feasibility of using a biomass system.

Financing

Financing for facility construction and equipment purchase will likely include a mixture of grants, loans, or bonds. A long term agreement for feedstock supply (including quality, specifications, price, etc.) will need to be negotiated and presented as part of the financing discussion. Payback periods will vary depending on the type of fuel being replaced, the cost of the feedstock, the amount of retrofitting needed to connect the new system, and the amount of grant funding acquired.

Mountain Maryland Energy Efficiency Event Initiative

Overview

This initiative aims to form a cooperative effort between homeowners, businesses, government, and non-profits that facilitates the understanding and implementation of options that can increase energy efficiency across various sectors with the goal of producing positive economic value within the region. We propose a focused “energy event” to bring together homeowners, builders, service providers, energy experts, government officials, non-profits, etc. to facilitate interaction and highlight success stories. Event attendees would also learn about other established programs that incentivize energy efficiency.

Background

Energy efficiency may refer to efficient energy use or energy conservation. The construction of a new home using the “passive house” concept, which has the ability to reduce typical energy consumption by 90%, is one example of efficient energy use. Installing a programmable thermostat or switching to more efficient lighting that uses less electricity are examples of energy conservation measures.

Energy conservation, often overlooked in energy planning discussions, is the cheapest way to help meet future demand for energy. Any form of electricity generation or other use of fuels comes with economic and environmental costs, whereas implementing energy efficiency measures can produce immediate savings and may help reduce associated impacts.

The US Environmental Protection Agency states that energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective ways to address the challenges of high energy prices, energy security and independence, air pollution, and global climate change.

In Maryland, the EmPOWER program has established the goal of reducing energy use by 15% by the year 2015. Five Maryland utilities offer programs designed to save money through reduced energy use.

Specifics

We propose a fall 2015 “energy event”. This event could potentially be held at a County facility, Garrett College, or Frostburg State. Participants may include:

- public participants
- utility representatives
- lenders and grant sources
- contractors, service providers, manufacturers, etc.
- government representatives
- non-profit

An RFP would be issued to solicit professional event management groups who would develop, market, and organize the event.

Financing

Once identified through an RFP process, we propose leveraging the expertise of a professional event management group, under a success based compensation structure, to finance the event. The selected event management group would raise funds through corporate sponsors and vendor/participant fees. A portion of the funds collected would be used to cover their fees with a majority of the funds used to cover event costs.

Mountain Maryland Solar Initiative for County Government and Schools

Overview

This initiative involves further exploring an opportunity that was presented to the MMEAC by Solar City. Solar City is the largest solar power provider within the United States with offices in Maryland and across the country. Their offering leverages a third party financing model. Through this model, Solar City is able to offer a 20 year power purchase agreement (PPA) to the host site with zero up-front costs and, under the PPA agreement, the host site would purchase all of the electricity generated by the solar project at a rate less than they are currently paying. These are large solar installations, generally ranging between 500KW and 2MW capacity and capable of producing approximately 650 to 2,600 MWh per year or more depending on site characteristics.

Background

Specific details and questions still need to be explored and answered surrounding this opportunity, which is the main focus of this initiative. In order to move forward to the proposal stage, appropriate County owned project sites will need to be identified. The solar array can either be roof or ground mounted, must have southern exposure, must be free of shade, and must have an electric meter present on-site. A 500KW solar energy system will require approximately 2.5 acres of available land or roof space.

County facilities or schools may make an ideal project site as they can take advantage of virtual net metering (VNM) regulations. VNM allows electricity credits produced at a host site to be transferred to another site if the electricity account owner is the same. For example, excess electricity generated at the host County site could be transferred to another County facility, which would offset electricity costs at both sites.

At this time, Solar City has provided a preliminary rate for electricity of 5 cents per KWh. This is based on the current economics associated with incentives and electricity costs within our region and Maryland. It is possible that the rate could drop as low as 4.5 cents per Kwh depending on site characteristics and other factors yet to be determined.

A large commercial entity, located within Garrett County, is currently exploring its options under this project structure with Solar City to develop a project. Solar City is also currently working with Wicomico County to explore ways to save the County money on energy costs.

Financing

Costs associated with exploring this opportunity are minimal. We foresee some staff time required to research historical electricity consumption levels, costs, and to identify appropriate sites. Members of the MMEAC are also available to assist with developing this project.

Mountain Maryland Solarize Initiative

Overview

The focus of this project involves developing and releasing a RFP/RFQ to develop a Solarize Program that would encompass outreach, education, and marketing to targeted regional business and residential customers. The RFQ/RFP would seek a “turn-key” solar energy provider(s) capable of providing bundled services (design, installation, financing) for small- to mid-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) installations (~3 - ~50 kW) and discounted pricing based on aggregation of regional demand. We also hope to explore the benefits associated with different ownership structures (own, lease, power purchase agreement, etc.).

Background

Residential and small business solar PV generation is a viable source of renewable energy generation in our region with the economics continually improving. The major factors driving these improved economics are tax credits, decreasing solar panel costs coupled with an increase in energy costs, the availability of net metering, and rapid depreciation benefits. Various state and federal grants may also be available to participants based on their individual circumstances.

- Tax credits: both business and homeowners are entitled to a 30% federal tax credit on the system purchase and installation of solar panels. This current tax credit remains in effect to 2016, and allows the taxpayer who installs the solar panels, to reduce their tax burden by 30% of the total capital investment of the solar installation.
- Solar panel costs: due to improvements in manufacturing processes, advances in productivity, and increased global competition, solar panel prices have steadily declined over the past several years.
- Depreciation: commercial customers installing solar panels can fully depreciate the capital investment of the solar panels, up to \$500,000 in the first year.
- Net metering: when excess energy is generated, net metering rules allow for the excess electricity to flow back into the power grid, providing a credit for the generator. This credit is used to offset the current or successive month's bill so that the generator is only charged for net consumption of electricity.
- Solar renewable energy credits (SREC): Maryland has mandated that a portion of the renewable energy generation target come from solar installations. Many utilities have elected to buy energy generated by the private sector, rather than install the solar generation themselves. These purchases are in the form of SRECs, which are equal to one megawatt hour of electricity, generated by a solar installation. Currently, SRECs in MD, are selling for \$125-140 per MWh.

Specifics

We propose to issue the RFQ/RFP in the fall of 2014 so that a turnkey provider(s) can be assessed and selected for a spring 2015 launch. Outreach to targeted businesses and residents would commence at this time, targeting installations in the summer and fall of 2015

Financing

Some resources will need to be spent to develop and execute this program. Marketing funds will be required to produce necessary communications materials; it is assumed that event outreach can be arranged at no cost. An additional professional services budget is recommended such that consultant services might be separately secured for project management.