

Electric Committee Meeting February 10, 2021

Present: Ms. DeBenedictis, Mr. Burnett, Mr. Smith, Town Foreman Mr. Hurlock, Recording Secretary Melissa Knight, Mr. Dias and Mr. Ross.

Ms. DeBenedictis started the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the following items:

- To discuss and vote on the solar applications and fees
- To discuss and vote on the capacity of net metering within the Town of Clayton
- To discuss and vote on the AMI and other options for the town

Ms. DeBenedictis turned the meeting over to Mr. Hurlock to discuss the solar applications and fees. The fees run approximately \$878.00 for the engineer from Smart Utility Management to review the applications. The fees are different for each applicant. The solar can only be 110% of what the customer uses from the previous year. There is a lot of information needed for a solar application. The applicant cannot be charged for the bi-directional meter per state law. Mr. Hurlock will contact Smart Utility Management to find out why the fees are so much. The traditional electric meters cost is \$69.00 and solar meters cost \$425.00. As long as the town maintains our minimum standard set by the state for percentage of renewable energy we are not required to provide net metering. After research Delaware Electric Cooperative charges \$50.00 for their application fee; Delmarva Power charges from \$300.00 to \$325.00 based upon the kilowatts the application is based upon. Then again those companies have someone in house doing the reviews and calculations. The Town of Smyrna does not have a charge on the website for the application and fee. The solar meter Town of Smyrna provides to the resident is \$160.00; not \$425.00. Mr. Burnett spoke with DEMEC and Scott about the town's fees. They stated if you have a normal evaluation residential not commercial nothing out of the ordinary; if we are paying more than \$150.00 is completely out of line. Mr. Hurlock stated the Town of Clayton does not buy back that much power from our residents. Mr. Smith stated the fee should be transferred to the applicant until it is communicated that this is against the law. The last time that Mr. Hurlock asked Ms. Muncey how many checks were issued for solar reimbursement; she stated only a couple were issued. A solar customer never has a zero utility bill; the customer will receive a minimum bill of \$35.00. The applicant will receive a breakdown of the fees for the solar application. If the customer would like a copy of the bill that was given to the town by the engineer it will be able to provide to the applicant upon request. The application that was in question might have been a higher fee because the applicant or solar company did not provide enough information. The engineer charges \$185.00 an hour. The Town of Middletown does not do any net metering; the town does not buy back any power it just goes back on the grid. If the town is meeting its net metering percentage which is 5%; as of January 20, 2021, the town is at 6.4% well above the 5% which means the town does not have to provide net metering. Net metering is the ability to monitor and buy back.

Mr. Smith made a motion to an additional review fee at the time of the permits being submitted for solar panels and that a fee equal to the cost that is charged to the town to be forwarded to the applicant. Mr. Burnett stated instead of solar panels should it be for

renewable energy. The motion reads “to an additional review fee at the time of the permits being submitted for renewable energy and that fee to be equal cost that is charges to the town to be forwarded to the applicant”, seconded by Mr. Burnett. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. DeBenedictis stated since the town has reached 5% net metering the town could refuse to change the meter but we cannot refuse the customer from installing solar panels. Mr. Burnett stated that changing the meter benefits the town. DEMEC is asking the municipalities to exclude from the bill since they have exceeded the renewable expeditions. The town has some options for the net metering either reimbursing the customer for the extra kilowatts generated or letting the extra kilowatts go back on the grid. Some towns are putting the extra renewable energy percentage into the green energy fund. Those towns are able to install solar panels and being able control their infastructure and the transformers they are going on. The meters are not designed to take loads back through the transformer. Customers are finding out their investment is not the greatest investment. Mr. Hurlock recommendation is to keep the net metering alone. Mr. Hurlock stated that he was confused as he thought that once the town reached the 5% then the town could refuse anymore solar panels to be installed in the town. Mr. Smith stated the net metering should be left alone. Mr. Burnett stated a possible concern would be if a resident installs solar panels then decides to go to Florida for the winter could cause them to generate more energy back on the grid. As long as DEMEC meets the requirement for the renewable energy quota of 40% to 50% the town will meet the quota. Pat from DEMEC has bought a lot of power. He is very good at what he does.

Mr. Burnett asked for the AMI and other options for town to be on the agenda. This was started when Ms. Benedictis was out. Mr. Burnett would like the chair and the committee member’s approval to gather information on the Tantalus program. We are looking at AMP for the AMI. Council had agreed to go with AMP. The agreed was put in writing what was discussed with them; after reviewing the contract is stated the town would need to purchase 500 meters at a time. The fee for would be \$29,000.00 for the meters. At that point, Mr. Burnett stopped. Mr. Burnett started calling around to the neighboring towns to see what program they are using. The one good conversation that Mr. Burnett had was with the gentleman in IT from Smyrna. The program that Smyrna uses is Tantalus. He just wants to present this information to the chair and the committee of the information he has gathered. When he started looking at the numbers for AMP program it will cost the town \$800,000.00. The cost for just the meters with AMP will cost \$680,000.00 just meters. He compared it with Tantalus \$61,920.00 for meters. With Tantalus it is not one meter per house; you change out 1 per every 5. When the town truck rides around town it is picking up the radio waves. The Tantalus reads all the meters around it and reports back. Mr. Burnett use 1 out of every 4 houses. Mr. Burnett was just trying to figure out for cost what this program would be compared to AMP. The other reason so low the town would not have to change out the water meters. When Smyrna went to this program they changed out the customers that we disconnected, new construction and rental properties first. They like it so much they are replace all the meters throughout the town. If we were to change all the meters throughout the town is would cost \$247,000.00, saving the town a lot of money with this program compared to AMP. The water meters will not be able to be shut off by either program. The Town of Smyrna moved the server that gathers all the information to basically purchasing space in the cloud to store the information. Smyrna has additional space and is willing to let the Town of Clayton utilize space in their cloud. Smyrna would not be able to assess our information and vice versa. Mr. Burnett wants to see how much it would cost the town to have their own cloud. To get started we could use their cloud and figure out a monthly cost. The

town might be able to minimize the number of towers with Smyrna being so close. Tantalus is going to forward information for infrastructure cost and networking cost to Mr. Burnett. The towers are \$1,800.00 to \$3,400.00 per tower. The \$1,800.00 handles 1,000 meters and the \$3,400.00 handles 3,000. Mr. Burnett did not want to move forward with gathering more information until he had more guidance from the chair to pursue talks with Tantalus. Ms. DeBenedictis stated we should take a step back. Just doing a piece of this and that doesn't seem productive. She would like to talk to other municipalities to find out what are the pros and cons. She would also like to see if other towns would recommend part of the program or go fully into the program. The town would be able to keep buying the current meters with Tantalus program. Mr. Hurlock purchases 48 meters at a time. With the Tantalus meters they read every 5 to 10 minutes. This will allow the administrative to review the meters to see if there is a problem before meter reading or if the customer is using a lot more at any given time. Mr. Smith and Mr. Hurlock would like to know will that information be accessible to the customer. If the customer is not able to access this information then the customer could request the information.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

Melissa J. Knight