

MINUTES
February 8, 2022
Committee of the Whole – Hybrid Meeting
City of Batavia

Please **NOTE:** These minutes are not a word-for-word transcription of the statements made at the meeting, nor intended to be a comprehensive review of all discussions. They are intended to make an official record of the actions taken by the Committee/City Council, and to include some description of discussion points as understood by the minute-taker. They may not reference some of the individual attendee's comments, nor the complete comments if referenced.

Chair Wolff called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Wolff; Ald. Miller, Russotto, Beck (joined remotely at 7:04pm), Connelly, Chanzit (remote), Solfa, Baerren (remote), Leman (joined at 7:02pm), Ajazi (remote), Malay, Uher, Cerone, and Vogelsinger

Members Absent: Ald. Malay

Also Present: Mayor Schielke; Laura Newman, City Administrator; Gary Holm, Director of Public Works; Wendy Bednarek, Director of Human Resources; Rahat Bari, City Engineer; Anthony Isom, Assistant to the City Administrator; and Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary (remote)

2. Reminder: Please speak into the microphone for BATV recording

3. Discussion: Proposed Cellular Antenna Installation – West Side Water Tower (GH 2/2/22) CS

Russotto summarized the memo. Holm discussed the proposed cellular antenna installation for the west side water tower with the Committee of the Whole (COW). Holm stated that staff is here tonight to ask if a base rent of \$3,600 is appropriate. The other carrier on the tower is very similar to that base rent. Staff is comfortable recommending the \$3,600 monthly base rent value. It represents consistency with the other carriers.

The COW directed staff to proceed with negotiations. Holm stated he would return with a formal resolution.

4. Discussion: Batavia Renewable Self-Generation Policy and Regulations (GH 2/3/22) PU

Cerone summarized the memo. Holm stated that the draft policy is before the COW tonight. The draft policy was presented to the COW last week and we are circling back on it this week to focus more on the policy itself as opposed to background information. Holm noted that he highlighted key sections of the policy in the memo. Holm discussed draft policy with the COW including the type of policy, background, size limitation, small commercial rate class, residential, estimated kilowatts, compliance, and the March 7th meeting agenda will have the approval of documents.

The Committee discussed the policy and regulations. Beck stated that she worries that when people are looking to move to new places or looking to go renewable themselves that we are going to farther behind the eight ball and put ourselves into more of a detriment once Prairie State is gone. Holm stated that is coming at the cost of everyone else. Someone has to pay for that extra six cents or three cents because the City is not getting that money. We are only selling electrons back at wholesale. We have thirty-two customers and if we expecting more customers now might be the time to change the policies. What we are proposing is not unfair. We are giving the value what the electrons have. Now might be the perfect time to go with the new model before we have more solar customers.

Chair Wolff stated that the goal of the Clean Energy and Jobs Act (CEJA) is for people to be able to generate what they need. Not so that they could generate enough to make money with. Beck stated that they are not going to make money; they are going to lose money. It will cost a lot more under this new plan than it currently does. Holm stated that means what she is currently getting is being subsidized by everyone else. Beck suggested having a discussion with the residents asking would they rather spend the extra six cents to transition to clean energy despite the harm coal has done over the past two hundred years, she thinks it is a fair subsidy to pay to transition to a much better world. It seems that more and more people, especially younger people, are getting on board and saying that this is the price we are going to pay to get there.

The COW discussed socioeconomic considerations, CEJA legislation, infrastructure, and how to make the policy fair for the solar and non-solar customers in our system. Chair Wolff commented that as we move forward we would need to think about the electric vehicle movement and the system changes we will have to make to our system to be able to handle the demand.

Chair Wolff opened the floor for public comment. Brian Vogelsinger addressed the Committee. He stated that are several misconceptions regarding net metering and solar in general that he would like to dispel. First, solar customers are not looking to make money. Net metering was designed across the country to incentivize people to get solar, not to make money. Other areas in the Country (California, Arizona, Nevada) where they have a lot more solar incursion they cap net metering at a certain percentage. They grandfather in the original adopters because they made their decision to get solar based on that additional cost defrayment of net metering. There is a lot of up front costs to solar and everything helps your break-even point over the years. As it is now we have 32 installations. That is not a lot of residential systems in this town. CEJA does not incentivize the customers any more than they currently are. There is no additional financial incentive for customers under CEJA to get solar. The Federal rebate is sun setting at the end of 2022. That would make it less attractive to get solar for your regular residential customer until costs come down more. Solar is not growing out here as quickly as it is out west where there is a lot more sun. Worrying about many more houses having solar over the next decade is not a realistic concern. We have not seen exponential growth. Electric vehicles (EVs) have been increasing and they will use more energy. He just bought a EV two years ago. He used to have a credit over the summer on his solar and now he does not make enough to cover what his house uses and the charge it uses with his system. He stated you will not see as much reduction in electrons being used from the system, you will see a lot more being used because EVs are going to grow a lot faster than solar. You could cap net metering, cap at the current or phase it out. Net

metering is a good incentive for the small amount of customers who do want to adopt solar. Finally, as far as neighbors subsidizing his solar, that is tough. The benefits of solar are far more than just to the house that has it.

Bob Flora, Engineering Physicist, presented a PowerPoint titled “Solar Value in Batavia” that included the following information:

- Batavia Solar Assumptions
- Proposed Solar Credit
- Wholesale Value of Solar Energy
- Wholesale Price/Solar Source Coherence
- Solar Power Unloads the Grid
- Value of Unloading the Batavia Grid
- Grid Capacity
- Grid Load/Solar Source Coherence
- Batavia Retail Energy Cost
- Batavia Solar Electricity Fair Value
- Solar Penetration (Installation %)
 - Recommends keeping things simple by keeping net metering
- Recommendations

The COW discussed unloading of the infrastructure, paying back the capital expenditure, direct billing, fair market, fair credit, accommodating and realistic planning for renewable energy. Holm stated that this discussion would be brought back to the COW.

5. Project Status

Newman reported that the Batavia Fire Department has sent a ladder truck to the Bartlett fire today.

6. Other

Uher asked where the City is on the RFP for downtown properties. Newman answered that staff met on that today and we expect that it would be published before the end of the month and it would be out for about a month.

Solfa asked for an update on the Park District meeting regarding the dam and river. Newman stated she would contact the Park District to see if we could get that meeting scheduled.

7. Executive Session: Collective Bargaining

Motion: To enter into Executive Session for the purpose of Collective Bargaining

Maker: Uher

Second: Cerone

Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** Uher, Cerone, Vogelsinger, Miller, Russotto, Beck, Connelly, Chanzit, Solfa, Wolff, Baerren, Leman, Ajazi

Nay:

13-0 Vote, 1 Absent, Motion carried.

The Committee of the Whole entered Executive Session at 9:22pm and exited at 9:56pm.

8. Adjournment

There being no other business to discuss, Chair Wolff asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:56pm; Made by Uher; Seconded by Solfa. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary