

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee
Tuesday, 8/26/25, 7 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Rob Gere, Linda Gray, Tom Griggs, Charlie Lindner, Erich Rentz, Brad Wible

1. The 7/29 minutes and the 8/26 agenda were approved by consensus.

2. Upcoming events:

a. Transfer station outreach (8/23) debrief: Charlie reported that the general/all-topic (“Home Energy Dr. is In”) outreach went well, with a steady flow of conversations with residents, including ~6 new residents who knew nothing about Efficiency VT or NEC. There was consensus to skip outreach in September, given multiple other events.

b. Norwich Historical Society collaboration: Tom reported that dates, speakers, topics are now set for Zoom presentations on Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings. 10/7, 6:30 pm, will have Sarah Rooker, NHS, and Tom, NEC, introduce the discussions, plus Elizabeth Peebles, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. 10/14, 6:30 pm, will feature Steve Spatz, Efficiency VT, and Nate Gusakov of Green Mountain Enclosure Consulting. Tom will provide Linda with text about the presentations for the NEC home page, by mid-September. Tom noted that there has been no mention by the speakers of honoraria; he will confirm that none are expected.

c. EV Expo (September 6): Charlie and Linda are volunteering at the expo; organizers are publicizing thoroughly.

d. Sun Day (September 21): Linda reported on [Upper Valley Sun Day](#). A parade/march will start at the NH end of the Ledyard Bridge at 10:30, go to the Norwich green by 11, with activities/demos until 1 pm. Participants on the green include Revision Energy, Fogg’s, SunCommon, the Norwich Bookstore, area churches, NHS, “Ask A Neighbor” resources, NH & VT advocacy groups, and state legislators. There will be music and food. Organizers are listed as “Energy Committees of Lyme, Norwich, Thetford; Sustainable Hanover, Sustainable Lebanon.” The SAU, MCS administrators, Norwich police, Asst. Town Manager, Rec Dept director have all been notified. NEC members are needed to help with set-up on 9/21 morning.

e. WindowDressers Build (9/25-10/2): Linda reported that the wood for our Build’s inserts will be cut next week; volunteer signups are going well (similar to last year), further outreach for volunteers is all that’s needed in advance.

f. Button Up 2025: Charlie reported that he and Linda will attend a webinar on 8/27 to get details on the 2025 campaign. Regarding events in October, he noted that he will be away the entire month.

3. Tracy Hall energy upgrades: Erich shared a draft memo to the Selectboard on the need to act on a more comprehensive plan for weatherization and electrification in Tracy Hall. Some revisions were discussed; Erich will append the memo to minutes of this meeting, so he must receive any additional edits by 8/28 morning.

4. Shared Energy Coordinator Report: Linda reported that Harry Falconer has not been involved with Tracy Hall work to date; the Level 2 charging station at Norwich Sr. Housing (funded through a state grant program) has been installed; plans for the Level 3 charging station at D&W (privately funded) are

proceeding. Planning Director Steven True will work with Harry on the enhanced energy plan that the Planning Commission is undertaking.

6. Other Business: none.

7. Public comments, correspondence and announcements: none.

8. Adjourned at 8:10. The fourth Tuesday in September is 9/23.

Submitted by Linda Gray

To: Selectboard
From: Energy Committee
Date: 8/28/2025

[Draft Memo] Tracy Hall Energy Upgrades Next Steps

As the Town moves forward with the replacement of the existing boilers used for heating, the Energy Committee thinks now is the time for discussing next steps. Tracy Hall is the second largest user of fossil fuels by the Town and the replacement of the old oil boilers with new propane units will not fully address the need for action. The Town should develop a roadmap for reducing fossil fuel consumption and thereby reducing emissions.

We must take article 36¹ as our starting point. At the 2019 Town Meeting, Norwich voters overwhelmingly recognized and endorsed the need to reduce fossil fuels in municipal operations. The Town can take adequate steps towards fulfilling the commitments in article 36 at any time. The Town can reduce fossil fuel consumption, reduce energy consumption, and reduce emissions all while saving money long term by following the steps recommended for homeowners:

1. Do an energy audit to understand how the building uses energy and heat
2. Target insulation and air-sealing first, to reduce the building's heating (and cooling) need
3. Switch from fossil heating to electric heat pump heating and cooling
4. Add solar to ensure a clean source of electricity.

The Town is set with Step #1 through four different energy audits/assessments since 2019. These assessments include those done by Studio Nexus (2025),² DuBois & King (2024),³ Living Buildings (2023),⁴ and Energy Efficient Investments (2020).⁵ Fortunately, they present agreement on several themes. Additionally, they all recommend the same three essentials for Tracy Hall: 1.) insulation and air sealing in the attic; 2.) installation of either air- or ground-source heat pumps; 3.) replacing the existing

¹ Approved at the 2019 Town Meeting by a vote of 792 to 189 “take immediate and sustained efforts to gradually and continually reduce the Town’s direct use of fossil fuels, beginning at a rate of no less than 5% per year starting in the 2019-20 and continuing until they are eliminated entirely.”

² <https://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/00-2025-02-26-SB-packet-indexed.pdf> and <https://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-0513-Tracy-Hall-Feasibility-Report.pdf>

³ https://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/240925_SB-PACKET.pdf (4)

⁴ <https://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/000-SB-Packet-06-21-2023.pdf> (88)

⁵ <https://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SB-packet-01-15-20.pdf> (46)

boilers. Two cycles of recommendations from Town committees since 2019 point in the same direction.⁶

The replacement of the existing, aging oil boilers is a necessary first step, but we cannot see this as the end state. Replacing the boilers aligns with the three most recent audits, which include propane boilers as back-up heating. Of crucial importance is that propane heating is consistently recommended as back-up, not main, heating while always in the context of a broader energy action plan including weatherization and heat pumps. We must develop the roadmap that includes the next steps in our plan for increasing efficiency of Tracy Hall.

In developing this roadmap, we suggest the following two actions for the Town: 1.) engage the SEC (Shared Energy Coordinator) to work with Town staff in developing a phased plan with appropriate financing; 2.) revive the Article 36 Task Force to work with Town staff and the SEC to establish timelines for phases of work on Tracy Hall.

⁶ <https://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SB-packet-11-20-19.pdf> (26), <https://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SB-packet-01-08-20.pdf> (113), and <https://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Final-A36TF-report-021022.pdf>