



**CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION
Virtual Meeting**

August 31 2022 at 7:00 PM

This meeting of the Clean Energy Commission was conducted as a virtual meeting. A recording of the meeting is available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVK9IUqkUbw>

MEETING MINUTES

1. Meeting Opening – Call to order. *Meeting started at 7:32 PM due to technical difficulties with live streaming.*
 - Roll Call. Attendees – *Commissioners: Bernie Pelletier, Max DuBuisson, Catherine Diviney, Steve Sack. Others: Walter Morton, Chris Feely, Nick Matone, Sanil Khatri, Andrew Kollmeyer.*
 - Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 25, 2022 (no minutes June, July). *Approved.*

2. Old Business
 - HeatSmart – *Bernie provided an update on this campaign’s progress*
 - *199 registrants to date. Some people drop out for various reasons before getting an audit. HeatSmart is not the only avenue to get a Home Energy Solutions audit. WH’s total program numbers for the year to date (according to Eversource) are higher, but HeatSmart campaign is a big driver.*
 - *Future plans are to explore joint messaging the HeatSmart program with economic development and public safety*
 - *Table at 9/25 EV Drive Electric Event (also Farmer’s Market)*
 - *Table at Farmer’s market this Sunday 9/4.*
 - *Letter from Mayor to be sent to oil heated homes with A/C and landlords in 1 to 4 family homes.*
 - SolSmart – *Catherine indicated this certification process for the Town will likely be completed in 2024 in conjunction with next Sustainable CT certification application.*
 - Elementary School Air-Quality Projects – *Webster Hill & Duffy in design. Catherine indicated that preliminary budget estimates for these projects are high, as expected. The timeline on additional federal grant funding will not likely match up with these projects, but maybe the next ones. Web Hill & Duffy are the first 2 of 9 elementary school projects. She confirmed that energy recovery is to be included in the design.*
 - EV/EVSE - CMAQ (CTDOT, Congestion Mitigation Air Quality) grant - \$20,952 – *Catherine indicated that they are making progress and will likely be using this grant to fund part of the cost of a new Ford e-Transit van for Nutrition services. The van is at least 1 year to delivery.*
 - Town Sustainability website – *No progress on additional content. This could be a job for a new Sustainability Commission.*
 - New Elmwood Community Center – *Bernie and Joe are attending citizen advisory meetings. Sustainability and net zero are a big part of the discussions. There will be several community conversations about the project this fall for general public to attend. Clean Energy members*

can attend those meetings or provide input to Bernie, Joe or Catherine.

- Accessing Federal Funds – Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Inflation Reduction Act, etc. *Bernie asked if anyone was tracking these grants and potential for the Town. Catherine indicated CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is holding some boot camps to assist towns with the Bipartisan Act. Patti Lewis, Grant Manager, in Finance has been designated as town’s central point of contact. She also recommended to Town Manager that Town think more about coordinating their applications across departments. Max shared that ICLEI is holding a second training session on Sept 14.*

3. New Business

- Walter Morton from CTEMA gave a presentation about the state’s plans to push electrification. CTEMA’s goal is to make communities are aware that this plan could be costly and that there are other options and available technologies out there today, like biofuels, that can contribute to GHG reductions now.
 - *Bernie indicated that while he supports electrification, he believes that biofuels will definitely be part of the solution/transition and the town’s Energy Plan reflects that. He also mentioned there is State legislation mandating transition to higher blends of biodiesel over time.*
 - *Catherine agreed that the role of the Commission is to educate people on available options. The Town’s primary use of diesel is in vehicles and equipment, which is governed by Public Works Dept. They typically buy fuel from gas stations. The town does not have many sites that use fuel oil for heating. She and Steve Sack attempted in the past to do a pilot project but maintenance was not that supportive.*
- FOIA request about WH Natural Gas leaks – *Bernie shared some data that Sierra Club of CT had requested from CNG. There have been 286 gas leaks reported/repared in West Hartford in last 6 years (2022 is an incomplete year). There were some questions about what the report actually showed as well as what we plan to do with this information. Catherine suggested talking to the Town Engineer.*
- 9/25 10AM - 1PM. Town Hall lot. Drive Electric Week EV Showcase Event – EV, e-bike, e-lawn equipment. <https://driveelectricweek.org/event?eventid=3357>. *Should be a big event, joint with Farmer’s market. Planning is ongoing by Chris and Keven Feely and Samantha Dynowski (Sierra Club). Steve Sack is bringing his e-bike.*
- Update on joint meetings/merger of commissions (Clean Energy, Cons & Env’t, Ped Bike). *Bernie and Catherine summarized the discussion at the 2 joint in-person of the 3 Commissions held in June and July. Commissions were asked to discuss and vote on 3 options below. There was further discussion about the 3 options:*

1. Create the Mega Sustainable WH Commission, with the current three groups (+ Waste/Materials Mgmt?) being potential Committees within that commission.
2. Create the Mega Sustainable WH Commission, with just Clean Energy and CEC (+ Waste/Materials Mgmt?). Ped Bike remains its own commission, but is codified in the ordinance.
3. Move forward with the SAG’s initial recommendation of a Sustainable WH “Team” with liaisons from respective commissions. The three commissions remain intact (add Waste/Materials Mgmt?). Clean Energy and Ped Bike are codified in the ordinance, with the CEC getting an ordinance amendment.

- Preferred option for Clean Energy (Vote) – **Commission voted (4-0) for #1 or #2 if Ped Bike unwilling to merge. #3 was not preferred.**

- Next joint meeting in Sept 26 (Monday)

4. Staff Report – *Catherine shared the attached summary prepared for the Public Works, Facilities & Sustainability Council Committee meeting 9/1.*

- Energy Update/Budget – *see summary*
- Equity Officer hired – *It was suggested that the new equity officer, Roszena Haskins, be invited to end of Sept joint Commission meeting.*
- EV Charging (DPW) – VW Funds deadline 9/30. – *see summary*
- Public Works, Facilities & Sustainability Committee meeting 9/1 6PM. *Steve asked about the purpose of this meeting as well as a “mega” sustainability commission. Catherine indicated that the Council committee meeting is a public meeting, anyone can attend but it is used more for staff reporting and to keep councilors updated.*

5. Public Comment - *none*

6. Adjournment – *9:02 PM*

"ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEEDS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN A MEETING OR PUBLIC HEARING SHOULD CONTACT SUZANNE OSLANDER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, 860-561-7580 SEVEN DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING OR PUBLIC HEARING."

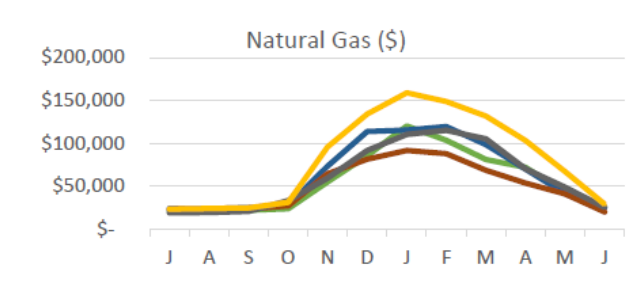
Highlights prepared by:

Catherine Diviney, Energy Specialist, catherine.diviney@westhartfordct.gov, 860-561-7581

Katherine Bruns, Recycling Coordinator, katherine.bruns@westhartfordct.gov, 860-561-8107

- Attached are FY2022 utility summaries.** According to our utility database reconciliation, **we were basically right on budget.** (Please note: the utility database numbers will differ slightly from financial system.) Record-high gas prices were offset by lower than anticipated electric rates. We will have to be careful with our FY23 budget if these trends continue, and may need to make adjustments when estimating the FY24 budget. We also need to focus more on water, as irrigation systems throughout Town and BOE properties are old and inefficient: a few big undetected leaks can destroy a budget.

- The Town’s utility biller payer vendor Capturis has been bought out** by another company Conserve. We are currently experiencing some issues with the transition, including much longer delays in bill processing.



- The Town’s Solar Virtual Net Metering (VNM) contract** on a Barrette Farm in Thompson, CT, **yielded savings of \$57,663.04 in FY22.** Under this contract, the Town’s beneficial municipal electric accounts receive VNM financial credits based on the farm’s solar production (kWh). The Town pays the owner of system (Onyx Renewables) 80% of the value of the credit, yielding savings of 20%. Since the start of operation in 2018, this project has generated nearly 12 million kWh and resulted in \$300,000 savings to the Town.
- The Town is negotiating another Solar Virtual Net Metering (VNM) contract on a project located in Torrington** owned by Verogy (who also owns the system on Town Hall and King Phillip MS). The terms of this contract are slightly different but should result in additional savings for the Town.
- West Hartford is hosting Sustainable CT’s 2022 certification awards** on November 14, 2022 in the Town Hall Auditorium.
- Town submitted its application for Sustainable CT’s 2022 Climate Leader Designation.** West Hartford is likely to be one of few towns to earn this designation in November.
- The Conservation & Environment, the Clean Energy, and Pedestrian Bicycle Commissions met “jointly” in June and July to **explore the idea of coming together as one larger “Sustainability”**



Commission (per the March 2022 recommendations of the Town Sustainability Advisory Group). There was general support for better communication and coordination on sustainability project and planning among commissions, staff and Town Council. There were mixed reactions to merging. Each Commission will be discussing the idea at their respective individual August meetings, and the combined group will reconvene at the end of September.

- The **Clean Energy Commission and Sierra Club CT Chapter are organizing a Drive Electric Week Event: Electric Vehicle Showcase on September 25, 2022 10 AM – 1 PM in Town Hall lot**, (alongside the Farmer’s Market). The event will showcase electric vehicles (owners can sign up to bring theirs), e-bikes, and electric lawn equipment. More details are here: <https://driveelectricweek.org/event?eventid=3357>



- **HeatSmart West Hartford**, program website: <https://heatsmartct.org/westhartford>. The Community Team is meeting bi-weekly to coordinate with the program contractors and plan future events.
 - To date, there are 199 sign-ups for Home Energy Solutions (HES) program through HeatSmart. HeatSmart continues to be a significant avenue for entry into the program. Eversource reports that the total number for HES in West Hartford in 2022 = 489.
 - HES = 317 complete; 129 scheduled
 - HES-Income Eligible = 34 complete; 9 scheduled
 - HeatSmart will be tabling at Farmers Market and Drive Electric Week EV Showcase Event.
 - We are finalizing a second mailing from the Mayor about HeatSmart and Home Energy Solutions to be sent in early September to subset of residents identified using the grand list as good candidates for heat pumps (oil heat and air conditioning), as well as landlords.



- **Braeburn, Bugbee, Charter Oak, Duffy, Morley, and Smith elementary schools will be continuing the food scrap collection program** right from the start of the school year. Other schools will be added this year (Whiting Lane and Aiken, next).
- **The Town was awarded a Sustainable Materials Management Grant** thru DEEP to pilot curbside food waste collection. Katherine Bruns (Recycling Coordinator) is still working them to finalize the numbers and scope.



- WHPS Nutrition Services & Plant & Facilities are working on a bunch of **commercial kitchen appliance and refrigeration upgrades**. In addition, there is **discussion about moving to reusable cafeteria trays district wide**.

- The Department of **Public Works is taking the lead on Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure** (aka EVSE). They are currently working on an RFP. There are several sources of funding available to augment the \$300,000 in ARRA funds allocated by the Town to this project, including:
 - DEEP (VW Funds) – applications **due September 30, 2022**, and
 - Eversource’s Make Ready Program – rolling applications with limited funds.



- Catherine Diviney (Energy Specialist) and Mike Ditaranto (Fleet Manager) are finally making progress on **spending the CMAQ federal grant award (\$20,952) towards to the Town first electric vehicle**. We are likely purchasing a Ford E350 Transit Van for Nutrition Services Manager. Lead time is almost a year.

- Kim Hughes, Conservation & Environment Commissioner, convened a meeting at Westmoor Park on August 23, 2022, bringing together multiple groups, individuals and Town staff to discuss plans to expand the Town pollinator gardens as part of a more comprehensive **Pollinator Pathways Project**. <https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/towns/west-hartford>



- Catherine Diviney (Energy Specialist) is working with **West Hartford Youth Baseball League** on utility incentives and a potential Sustainable CT Community Match Fund project to provide additional funding raising for their **new LED lights at Wolcott Park**. Leisure Services and Public Works are involved with project design, logistics and installation.



Board of Education

Utility Budget Summary, June 2022 (FY22)

501151



	Electricity		Natural Gas		Water		Total
	kWh	\$	CCF	\$	CCF	\$	\$
FY18	10,329,241	\$ 1,839,809	873,236	\$ 676,687	26,609	\$ 220,162	\$ 2,736,658
FY19	9,950,214	\$ 1,837,113	872,556	\$ 760,823	23,964	\$ 224,478	\$ 2,822,414
FY20	8,001,527	\$ 1,476,535	793,826	\$ 607,507	21,275	\$ 226,530	\$ 2,310,573
FY21	8,826,145	\$ 1,508,650	950,421	\$ 721,200	27,619	\$ 294,451	\$ 2,524,301
FY22	9,809,527	\$ 1,632,606	953,086	\$ 975,241	27,051	\$ 296,596	\$ 2,904,443
FY22 Budget	9,265,106	\$ 1,709,750	954,351	\$ 874,000	27,570	\$ 308,250	\$ 2,892,000
+/- FY22 Budget (surplus/deficit)							\$ (12,443)
FY23 Budget	9,531,812	\$ 1,701,757	969,945	\$ 909,434	23,644	\$ 278,761	\$ 2,889,952
+/- FY22 Budget (incr/decr)							-0.1%

FY18 FY19 FY20 FY21 FY22



Summary:
On budget. Electric use back to pre-COVID levels. Natural gas use up with additional COVID ventilation requirements. Natural gas prices reached record highs, but offset by lower than predicted electric cost. Water Use consistent with prior year.

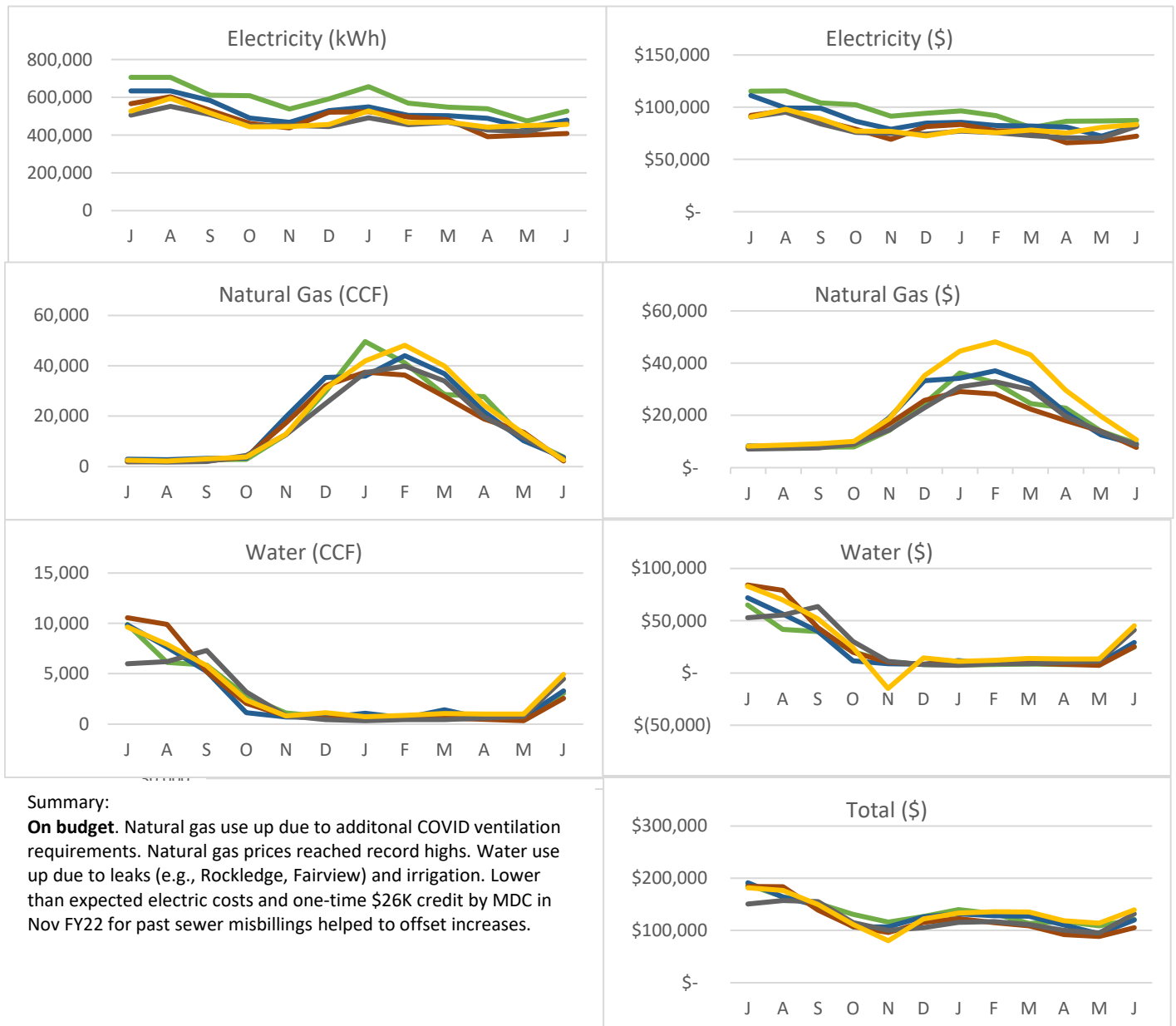
Town - USF

Utility Budget Summary, June 2022 (FY22)



	Electricity		Natural Gas		Water		Total
	kWh	\$	CCF	\$	CCF	\$	\$
FY18	7,069,152	\$ 1,151,251	214,663	\$ 208,753	32,735	\$ 249,430	\$ 1,609,434
FY19	6,297,872	\$ 1,044,256	219,753	\$ 232,337	32,792	\$ 276,294	\$ 1,552,888
FY20	5,817,344	\$ 949,044	195,706	\$ 194,468	34,345	\$ 313,439	\$ 1,456,951
FY21	5,630,830	\$ 942,493	193,295	\$ 203,698	31,063	\$ 307,467	\$ 1,453,657
FY22	5,792,571	\$ 974,308	225,428	\$ 285,650	37,307	\$ 336,921	\$ 1,596,879
FY22 Budget	6,122,280	\$ 1,040,361	217,034	\$ 225,995	33,615	\$ 334,395	\$ 1,600,751
+/- FY22 Budget (surplus/deficit)							\$ 3,872
FY23 Budget	5,732,285	\$ 988,866	197,796	\$ 259,202	35,679	\$ 341,746	\$ 1,589,814
+/- FY22 Budget (incr/decr)							-0.7%

— FY18 — FY19 — FY20 — FY21 — FY22



Summary:

On budget. Natural gas use up due to additional COVID ventilation requirements. Natural gas prices reached record highs. Water use up due to leaks (e.g., Rockledge, Fairview) and irrigation. Lower than expected electric costs and one-time \$26K credit by MDC in Nov FY22 for past sewer misbillings helped to offset increases.