

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING
40 Gleneida Avenue Room #318
Carmel, NY 10512**

Committee Members: Chairman Greg Ellner, Legislators Addonizio & Crowley

Wednesday

June 21, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM by Chairman Ellner who requested Legislator Crowley lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Addonizio, Crowley and Chairman Ellner were present.

Item #3 – Acceptance/ Economic Development and Energy Meeting Minutes/ March 22, 2023

Chairman Ellner stated the minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 – Discussion/Update/NYSEG Smart Meter Rollout/Government and Community Relations Program Manager Dylan Miyoshi

Chairman Ellner invited New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi to speak to the issue.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi provided an update regarding NYSEG's rollout of Smart Meters. He stated the rollout had been ongoing for five or six weeks, starting in the western sector of their territory in Putnam County, which includes Kent and Putnam Valley, and then moving into Mahopac, where NYSEG is currently. He stated NYSEG is about to start to move into Carmel proper, and then move on into Southeast, Patterson, and eventually the rest of the county. He stated from the perspective of NYSEG, the rollout has been going well. He stated NYSEG has been dealing with customer inquiries as they have come in. He acknowledged that a letter was sent to NYSEG Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Patricia Nilsen. He stated NYSEG CEO Patricia Nilsen responded with information regarding the fee NYSEG charges customers who opt out of the Smart Meter rollout. He stated the opt-out fee for customers is \$13.47 a month, as was approved by the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC). He stated the reason for the opt-out fee was because NYSEG would have to maintain two systems for the purpose of ensuring customers are receiving their bills.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated the opt-out fee also involved the handheld units that NYSEG currently used which would not be needed for the Smart Meters.

Legislator Crowley requested NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi explain what a Smart Meter was.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi explained three benefits of the Smart Meters: it would completely eliminate estimated bill reading, it would allow crews to respond to power outages faster, as it would pinpoint to the level of individual houses which customers are out of power, contrasted with the previous system which only went to the level of streets, and that an app would be provided to customers which would allow them to see their power usage broken down by the hour so they could anticipate the cost of their monthly bills, and standardize their monthly billing.

Legislator Crowley questioned if this rollout would remove NYSEG's Budget Billing program, a service which spreads customers' energy costs evenly over twelve months.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated the budget program would not be removed.

Legislator Crowley questioned if NYSEG had received feedback regarding the rollout.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated the Smart Meter is proven technology, and that millions of meters have been installed nationwide. He stated NYSEG's parent company, Avangrid, has already used the technology through another subsidiary, Central Maine Power (CMP). He stated NYSEG was working on Smart Meter rollouts in the Ithaca, Rochester, and Brewster regions.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated NYSEG also did a pilot program in Ithaca which was very successful. He stated that the Smart Meters being rolled out by NYSEG were based on the latest technology.

Legislator Crowley questioned who it was that was bearing the costs of the rollout.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated the Smart Meters were part of a Capital Project in the last rate increase, which passed in 2018. He stated no costs would be passed on to the customer as a result of this.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated that postcards would be mailed out to customers to notify them that NYSEG will be coming to install Smart Meters, as well as a phone call a day or two prior to NYSEG workers coming to install the Smart Meters, as well as knock on the front door of the property to let customers know they are

going to install the Smart Meter. He stated during the installation process, there would be a power outage of around 10 minutes, and so if the customer is home, the technician will work with them to coordinate the best time for the installation.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated NYSEG had installed 8,000 or 9,000 Smart Meters in the western part of Putnam County.

Chairman Ellner stated his constituents had voiced concerns to him about the opt-out fee was essentially a rate hike for customers who opted out, as well as how the Smart Meter rollout would affect their privacy, particularly in terms of gaining information about peak usage that NYSEG could not access previously.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated the information regarding peak usage would only go to the customer, and the information that NYSEG received would not change.

Chairman Ellner stated another constituent complaint regarded billing errors which would result in extreme overcharging. He requested Mr. Miyoshi explain that phenomenon.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated NYSEG had been updating its billing system, which was causing issues. He stated NYSEG had been working with local governments when these issues arose. He stated NYSEG has hired 45 more customer service employees, with more currently in training in order to handle the increase in customer complaints. He stated NYSEG had been working to improve the situation every day, and that it would hopefully be resolved soon.

Chairman Ellner requested NYSEG to keep the Committee apprised of the situation as it developed. He further emphasized that customers were receiving bills that were five (5) times, or even ten times higher than normal.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated billing errors may originate from human error, which would be eliminated with the installation of Smart Meters.

Legislator Crowley questioned if late fees were still being held off on as the Smart Meters were being rolled out, as well as how long this would continue.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated collections on late fees restarted at the end of May. He stated, however, that as long as customers with late fees

are showing goodwill and continuing to make payments, NYSEG will work with them in order to coordinate workable payment plans.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated in the event that a customer's late fees become substantial, NYSEG will reach out to them.

Legislator Crowley questioned if the most recent rate hike from NYSEG was in May.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated NYSEG filed a joint proposal with the PSC which has not been passed yet, and which would take retroactive effect starting in May.

Legislator Crowley questioned if it was possible to hold off on the rate hike similar to how late fees were held off, citing the economic anxieties of customers.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated that the issue may be reconsidered as winter comes, but emphasized that he did not have the power to implement that policy.

Legislator Jonke questioned if the Smart Meters would empower NYSEG to turn customers' power off remotely.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated NYSEG would not be doing that, and would be sticking to the current protocol of a letter being sent out to customers, and then a worker coming to turn the power off in person, outside of circumstances where customers call and ask for it to be turned off.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated that NYSEG would have the ability to turn on the Smart Meter remotely for the convenience of new customers moving into their homes. He stated that NYSEG would cut the power in cooperation with emergency services, for example, with firefighters.

Legislator Jonke questioned if NYSEG would remotely cut off customers' power in the event that a power surge becomes likely.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated power surges were not a serious concern.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated in the event that a power surge becomes likely, NYSEG would contact its commercial customers, and ask them to reduce their energy consumption.

Chairman Ellner questioned if customers with Smart Meters could get their power shut off in the event NYSEG gets hacked.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated he was not sure, as he was not an Information Technology (IT) expert.

Chairman Ellner questioned if NYSEG had an action plan in the event that they get hacked.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated the IT team for Avangrid had an action plan. He stated that other energy companies have used Smart Meters, and not encountered that issue.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated they would get in touch with NYSEG's IT Department for more information.

Carmel resident Kathryn Velazquez questioned if Smart Meters would emit more radiation than the previous electricity meters.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated cellphones have 1,000 to 10,000 more radiation frequencies than Smart Meters.

Carmel resident Kathryn Velazquez questioned what the change was between the radiation of the previous meter and the Smart Meter.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated he would have to get back to the County Legislature on that information.

Chairman Ellner stated the current electricity meters should emit no radiation, since they are analog.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated Smart Meters have been analyzed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and American Cancer Society, and have been approved by both as safe for consumers.

Kent resident Tatiana Ibrahim questioned if the opt-out fee was for sustaining the estimated billing.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated the purpose of the opt-out fee was for maintaining the two platforms needed to support both types of electricity meters.

Kent resident Tatiana Ibrahim stated her belief that NYSEG customers will be entering a lose-lose situation, as those who opt out of having Smart Meters will have to pay a fee, and those who opt in will be subject to having NYSEG be able to turn off their power at any time. She further questioned if NYSEG would have the ability to turn off customers' power.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated NYSEG would have the ability to turn off customers' power, but would only do so in the event of emergencies.

Kent resident Tatiana Ibrahim stated she was one of the customers who received a large erroneous electricity bill, and questioned where the money that was paid for erroneous bills was.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi questioned if Ms. Ibrahim was not reimbursed for the erroneous bill.

Kent resident Tatiana Ibrahim stated she was not.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Regional Manager Tom Garrity stated Ms. Ibrahim could provide her information to Mr. Miyoshi in order to get that issue resolved.

Chairman Ellner stated members of the public could provide lists of questions for the NYSEG representatives, and the Legislature would make sure that those questions are given to them after the meeting.

Carmel resident Adriana Wise questioned how the Smart Meters would connect with NYSEG's network.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated NYSEG has a mesh network which is powered by nodes NYSEG has already installed in areas where they have customers.

Carmel resident Adriana Wise questioned what the range was between the endpoint and the node.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated his belief that the range was around several blocks, which is why there were over 1,000 nodes in the area of the

Brewster division that was being discussed. Those nodes would connect to customers' meters and deliver their information to NYSEG, who would then be able to calculate customers' bills.

Carmel resident Adriana Wise questioned how the app which could be used by Smart Meter customers to track energy usage would connect to the Smart Meter.

NYSEG Government and Community Relations Manager Dylan Miyoshi stated the Smart Meter would communicate to NYSEG, which would then provide the information to the app.

Item #5 – Discussion/Update/Industrial Development Agency/IDA Board Chairman Bill Nulk

Chairman Ellner invited IDA Board Chairman Bill Nulk to speak to the issue.

IDA Board Chairman Bill Nulk stated the IDA had been in the best shape it has been since May of 2016, when Mr. Nulk, among others, was appointed to reconstruct the IDA. He spoke to the recent history of the IDA, stating the previous board of the IDA had resigned en masse in January in 2016 due to a period of economic stagnation, as well as complications with personalities and politics in trying to get funding from the County. Mr. Nulk, among others, took over with the IDA having only \$38 in terms of budget. He stated the IDA started with a \$32,000 contribution from the County to pay for the auditing, consulting, and basic operating expenses for the IDA. He stated it took the IDA two years to get its records, website, and mandated reporting reestablished in order to be in compliance to award benefits to Ace Endico for their first expansion. He stated his appreciation for the annual allocation provided to the IDA by the County, in case it is needed. He stated the IDA has not needed to use it, with the result being over \$200,000 currently at the disposal of the IDA. He stated the IDA is finalizing several projects which allow it to become self-funding, as was envisioned by the original New York State legislation that was provided to the IDA. He stated Ace Endico continues to be the star performer of the IDA, with them finishing their third expansion, and also setting up a fourth expansion to occur around the end of 2024 or the beginning of 2025. He stated Ace Endico has outperformed their job creation projection on every application they have presented to the IDA. He stated the Fox Ridge Hotel, previously lingering for a decade, is now Putnam County's first national franchise hotel, located near an exit off of Interstate 84. He stated the hotel had a shaky start due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but is now doing well, and hoping for a sewer option along U.S. Route 6 so that they may expand along their property. He stated the Pugsley Road development has received benefits from the IDA and has opened up an area for property development which was previously inaccessible. He stated he met yesterday with a board member from Alexandrion, the parent company of Gleneida Distillery. He stated Gleneida Distillery will be coming to Carmel in the near future and are only waiting to finish their final contractor design arrangements. He stated Gleneida Distillery has a water system for their own production, as well as a deep well water capacity which has already been drilled and is available, and which is not draining Lake Gleneida. He stated other projects are in the pipeline, such as the Brewster Crossings redevelopment and the Braemar Assisted Living project, among others. He stated the IDA is a toolbox for the Putnam County Economic Development team, helping to incentivize businesses to build and grow in Putnam County. He stated he looks forward to the

IDA transitioning to a different form of operating, as he has had to fill numerous administrative roles in his time as the IDA Board Chairman, and he would be looking to the County Executive and Deputy County Executive, among others, to help structure the IDA to work best for Putnam County.

Legislators Addonizio, Crowley, and Jonke thanked IDA Board Chairman Bill Nulk for his and the IDA's work in facilitating numerous economic development projects in Putnam County.

Legislator Jonke questioned the amount of money the IDA had set aside from allocations from the County.

IDA Board Chairman Bill Nulk stated most of the money the IDA had had come from the Pugsley Road project, as well as the Ace Endico project. He explained that the way the IDA makes its money is through receiving a portion of the benefits they provide to applicants.

Legislator Jonke questioned if this meant the IDA would not be coming to the County for further allocations.

IDA Board Chairman Bill Nulk stated it was likely the IDA would ask for further allocations as a precaution against insolvency, though perhaps in smaller amounts than in previous years, as well as less frequently. He explained that the troubles the IDA encountered in 2015 and 2016 originated from insolvency. He stated his confidence in the way the IDA was managing the money it had.

Legislator Montgomery questioned about Braemar Assisted Living.

IDA Board Chairman Bill Nulk stated its parent company is the FilBen Group, and it has several facilities in New York. He stated they have not yet broken ground in Carmel, as their funding was with Silicon Valley Bank, whose collapse caused a setback.

Legislator Montgomery thanked IDA Board Chairman Bill Nulk for his work.

Item #6 – FYI/Unemployment Report – Duly Noted

Item #7 – Other Business – None

Item #8 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 6:38 pm Chairman Ellner made a motion to adjourn;
Seconded by Legislators Addonizio and Crowley. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by PILOT Intern, Eamon Howley.