

CO-OP POWER ANNUAL OWNER-MEMBER MEETING MINUTES

May 1st, 2009 from 5-7 pm at the Campus Center UMass Amherst

Facilitators: Erik Hoffner and Ken Downes

1. Welcome and Introductions

We began this year's annual meeting with introductions and reports from each of the organizing councils that make up Co-op Power.

Mela Bush and Danilo Morales from Co-op Power Metro East described the Community-Owned Business organizing project Co-op Power began in Boston with Alternatives for Community and Environment more than a year ago. They described the business development projects that have emerged from that work including an Energy Services Company, a Thermal Windows Co-op, and a Solar Installation Co-op. They organized a heating oil buying group last winter. They received a grant to do Weatherization barnraisings in Roxbury and Dorchester over this coming summer and fall. They're doing extensive outreach to new partners and new supporters on an ongoing basis.

Co-op Power Nuestras Raices serving Holyoke and Hampden County is building an energy services company, running a training program for solar hot water installers working with low income people from Holyoke and Springfield, and working on solar installations in Hampden County.

Co-op Power Hampshire County is meeting regularly, providing educational sessions on energy efficiency and renewable energy for members. They worked to get the biodiesel plant together several years ago.

Co-op Power Franklin County also worked to get the biodiesel plant together several years ago. There has been considerable interest in biomass – support for small scale development and concern about large scale development. The Co-op Power Sustainable Biomass Working Group is working in collaboration with Mass Woodlands Cooperative to look into building a wood pellet, wood chip, and cord wood processing center.

Co-op Power of Southern Vermont is meeting twice a month – once with leaders of municipalities in Windham County exploring ways for towns to lower their energy costs and build sustainable energy resources – and once with people interested in building Co-op Power's products and services in Southern Vermont. They are exploring geothermal, wind, solar, small hydro, LED street lights, energy efficiency, and district heating, and a major school initiative where they'll have barnraisings to insulate school buildings, install solar, and bring educational resources into the schools and their communities.

II. Co-op Power Report Card

Lynn Benander gave a presentation on what has been accomplished in the last five years and what are options are for moving forward together.

We have build a decentralized network of five organizing councils, including Co-op Power Metro East serving the greater Boston area, Co-op Power Nuestras Raices serving Holyoke and Hampden County, Co-op Power Hampshire County, Co-op Power Franklin County, and Co-op Power of Southern VT.

Instead of focusing on making money in wealthy white communities, we have done extensive organizing in low-income communities and in communities of color in order to move forward on our mission to be a multi-class, multi-racial

movement for a just and sustainable future. It was our belief that this could not be done later. Consequently, we are still spending member equity to support this work. We've held quarterly Co-op Power Leader Training programs to build relationships between the leaders of these organizing councils and to help us become more effective in living our mission. It has been exciting work, challenging work, and important work, building the organizing councils and core leadership for Co-op Power.

We have continued to support the development of Northeast Biodiesel in collaboration with Lawrence Union, the plant's CEO and the Northeast Biodiesel board and investors and we have a plan that is likely to work that will allow us to begin building this new business in the fall of 2009. We have supported the development of many other community-owned sustainable energy businesses across southern New England including Energy Service Companies, District Heating, Solar Installers, Wood Pellet/Chip/Cordwood Plant, Contractors' Cooperative, Wind, Thermal Windows, Geothermal, and more. We have developed an innovative financing model that turns a small amount of local equity into significant community owned assets. Stimulus funding will give us an opportunity to raise funds to get some of these businesses up and running soon.

Members at the meeting agreed we have done a lot, but there is much more we need to do. 55 members responded to the pre-meeting survey, evaluating Co-op Power's accomplishments to date:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
in terms of helping members secure affordable, clean energy	21	38	5	1
in terms of developing community owned sustainable energy resources	12	29	19	2
in terms of increasing the sustainability of our region	12	33	15	1
in terms of building a multi-class, multi-racial movement & working for justice	12	22	17	0
in terms of establishing a strong cooperative enterprise that will bring members and the region value for years to come	22	30	9	1

III. Our Community Planning Process

Ken Downes presented information on our current plan for creating a shared vision and a plan for Co-op Power's next five years. While Co-op Power is a large group of doers, not planners, after so many changes in the world, after all we've done together, after so many new people have joined us, it's time to sit together again to discern the best direction for our future efforts. Members agreed to the plan proposed and agreed to participate in the planning process this coming year.

IV. Elections

Mela Bush and Erik Hoffner were elected to three year terms on the board of Co-op Power. Erik Hoffner was elected to a three year term on the board of Northeast Biodiesel.