

HUNTINGTON

Clean energy law revision requires nominal price change

HUNTINGTON — A revision in Massachusetts law has resulted in the need for nominal price adjustments in Huntington's Community Choice electricity program. Importantly, the rate residents pay will continue to remain below Eversource's current Basic Service rate.

The Clean Energy Standard Expansion, which was developed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and finalized in July, requires that utilities and suppliers annually demonstrate sourcing of an increasing amount of clean energy. This revision has resulted in a minor increase of 0.00102 cents per kilowatt hour in the overall cost of electricity.

Huntington consumers use an average 600-kilowatt hours of electricity per month. With the adjusted cost included, this means ratepayers' average bill will increase by approximately 61 cents a month compared to the program rates announced earlier this year. This price

adjustment will be effective with the January 2021 meter reads and remain fixed through January 2024, when the current contract ends.

The Huntington Community Choice Power Supply Program continues to provide local ratepayers with two different options for their electricity. The Standard Plan meets the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard of 28% plus 5% Massachusetts Class I Renewable Energy Certificates. Mass Class I RECs may serve to increase Massachusetts job opportunities in the renewable energy field. The Optional Plan involves the use MA RPS plus 25% Massachusetts Class I RECs,

The programs' initial cost per kilowatt hour and adjusted cost per kilowatt hour are as follows: The RPS plus 5% of Mass Class I RECs has a opt out increase of 1.08% for a new rate of 9.534 cents per kilowatt hour; the RPS plus 25% optional plan is 1% opt-out increase, for a total rate per kilowatt

hour of 10.22 cents.

It is important to note that all electricity suppliers operating in Massachusetts, including Eversource, are subject to the Clean Energy Standard Expansion regulation and the related pricing adjustment.

The creation of Huntington's energy program has allowed for greater control over the environmental characteristics and the price of the electricity residents use. Both of Huntington's program options help to decrease ratepayers' carbon footprint.

Huntington voted to join Franklin County Aggregation, along with 12 Franklin County communities, about two years ago. The group signed a 41-month agreement with energy consultant Colonial Power Group and electricity supplier Dynegy Energy Services to develop electricity programs that would be affordable and incorporate renewable energy. The communities signed a 41-month agreement during

which time Huntington customers will collectively save more than \$200,000 in electricity costs.

For added consumer protection, there are no enrollment, early termination, or cancellation fees attached to the Huntington electricity program. To date, approximately 150 Massachusetts communities have created their own community choice electricity programs to benefit residents.

Basic Service rates change twice a year or more, depending on rate class. As a result, the aggregation rate may not always be lower than the Basic Service rate. The goal of the aggregation is to deliver savings over the life of the program against Eversource Basic Service. However, such savings and future savings cannot be guaranteed.

For additional information about the Huntington Community Choice Power Supply Program, visit www.colonialpowergroup/huntington or call 866-485-5858, ext. 1.

TRAINING

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ing a dog as a cadaver dog, basically looking for a missing person who is presumed to have died," Helems said. "Many of the public locations, everybody's worried about having extra personnel in their buildings...We're kind of hurting in where we can train our dogs. I'm looking for new locations we can use."

The board expressed concern about having dogs in the building for safety and health reasons.

"I think my only concern, Ed [Renauld], is the potential liability if something should go wrong in the basement while they're down there," said Selectman Roger Booth.

Renauld, board chairman, added, "If they [a town employee] have an allergy to dog dander or whatever it is, I'm going to have to probably say no that one, at least in town hall. I'm not opposed to using a town building, but I'm not sure if town hall is the right one."

Helems has been offered the use of the Highway Garage and grounds by Highway Superintendent Charles Dazelle, pending town counsel drawing up a liability waiver for Helems to sign off on. Helems said it'll be a good situation for the dogs, as there's many strange smells they'll be able to learn to sift through with the location of the garage.

Helems is also working on crafting a bylaw amendment to make enforcement procedures clearer. Currently, there's little in guidance from the town bylaw in how to handle situations where a dog needs to be quarantined outside of its home and costs associated with it.

"Basically, we have very, very limited information on the books," he said. "There's been a couple times we've had a dog who had a dog bite, and the owner wasn't comfortable having it in the house. Who's going to board the dog? pay the fees? Stuff like that."

Helems said it's more about being prepared for future cases than reacting too past incidents. He's spoken with several local Animal Control officers to get an idea of what other communities have in their bylaws and will prepare a draft. Any bylaw amendments will have to come before town voters and go to the state for approval.

"I just wanted to get a more formalized document for if this does happen," he said.

His second request to the board was to make his one-year appointment a three-year appointment, which the board granted. He's been with the town as Dog Officer for the past three years.

"He's proven to be a pretty responsive dog officer. I don't have a problem with doing that," Renauld said.

HILLTOWNS

COVID-19 numbers rising across region

COVID-19 numbers have increased in the towns the Country Journal covers. All figures are from the state Department of Public Health. The agency cautions that no community should decrease prevention and mitigation strategies based on the current data.

Becket, 19 (total confirmed) cases, five from Nov. 7 to Nov. 20; Blandford, 15 cases total, five Nov. 7 to Nov. 20; Chester, six total, no new cases as of Nov. 20; Chesterfield, 10 cases, no new cases; Cummington, 7 cases, five since Nov. 7 to Nov. 20; Goshen, seven cases, five Nov. 7 to Nov. 20; Huntington, 31

cases, 8 new from Nov. 7 to Nov. 20; Middlefield, no incidence of COVID; Montgomery, 8 total cases, five from Nov. 7 to Nov. 20; Otis, 9 cases, five in the 14 days ending Nov. 20; Plainfield, 5 cases, all apparently in the last two weeks ending Nov. 20; Russell, 33 cases, five in the last two weeks ending Nov. 20; Sandisfield, 8 total cases, no new reported cases in the two weeks ending Nov. 20; Westhampton, 14 total cases, five from Nov. 7 to Nov. 20; Williamsburg, 21 total with five since Nov. 7; and Worthington, 6 cases with five since Nov. 7.

CUMMINGTON

Road closings for winter announced

CUMMINGTON — The Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to close the following roads from Dec. 1 to May 1 or from the first snow until the end of mud season.

Roads closed include Stage Road

from houses 200 to 132, Trow Road from houses 43 to 88, Tirrell Hill from houses 3 to 34, Bug hill from houses to 51, all of River Road, all of West Hill, and Bryant Road from Grout Road to Potash Hill Extension.

NORWICH HILL

The First Congregational Church of Huntington reminds everyone that even though our physical doors are closed until further notice, we are most definitely open for worship, praise, ministry and fellowship. We are an Open and Affirming Church and we invite and welcome everyone - seekers, believers, and wonderers alike, on their journey of faith, to join in 10 a.m. Zoom Sunday worship. We are also meeting for Friday Zoom Fellowship Time and the pastor is always available to speak with you. If you do not receive our emails and would like to connect with our Zoom worship service or fellowship time, please contact Pastor Carol at firstchurchofhuntington@gmail.com to receive the information you will need to participate.

This Sunday we begin the four-week season of Advent, which helps us get ready to celebrate Christmas. Over the next four weeks, we will look at the themes of hope, peace, joy and love. This year has been different than other years and it has been challenging in many ways. These days we find ourselves in the dark about so many things, longing for hope, question-

ing if it's even possible in this chaotic world. The reading for the first week of Advent Isaiah 9:2-7, invites us to wonder about Hope that shines in darkness.

We are offering free "Advent in a Bag" resources. Often the weeks leading up to Christmas can be challenging, this year perhaps even more than usual. "Advent in a Bag" provides faith at home resources to support, love, and connect us where and when we need it most. The resources offer the opportunity to hold back some of the Christmas crazy, and spend a few special moments together on the real purpose of the season. If you would like to receive "Advent in a Bag," call 860-798-7771 or 413-667-3935 and leave a message with your name and contact number.

Please use the phone numbers and email address provided to stay in touch or to contact the pastor. You are also invited to find us on Facebook at "Norwich Hill" for updates, information and spiritual encouragement. For more information, please contact 413-667-3935 or 860-798-7771 or firstchurchofhuntington@gmail.com.

OTIS

Town Hall, library make COVID adjustments

OTIS — Due to increasing cases in the area and across the Commonwealth, Town Hall is closed to the public until further notice. The town appreciates everyone's patience as the situation evolves. Offices will still be handling business; call or email with any questions.

Additionally, the Otis Public Library is returning to curbside pickup only as of Wednesday, Nov. 25.

Additional information and resources about COVID-19 is available at www.berkshirehealthsystems.org/coronavirus and www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information.

Collector's office closed during Thanksgiving

OTIS — The collector's office will be closed for vacation from Wednesday, Nov. 25, until Monday, Dec. 7. Please leave real estate, per-

sonal property, or sewer tax payments in the drop box outside or pay online at unipaygold.unibank.com.

MIDDLEFIELD

MIDDLEFIELD SENIOR CENTER

Lunch is served at the Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail, Middlefield, each Wednesday at noon.

A \$3 donation is suggested. Reservations should be made, and meal choice stated, by calling and leaving a message at 413-623-9990 the Monday

before. Pick-up and delivery are available.

The menu on Wednesday, Dec. 2, is homemade meatloaf with gravy, five-way mixed vegetables, whipped potatoes, rye bread, and fruited Jell-o with whipped topping.