

Town of Strafford

Green Procurement Policy

November 10, 2021

Overview

The purpose of this policy is to commit the Town of Strafford to a high level of fiscal, social, and environmental responsibility in the procurement of energy-related capital improvements, and to define the process for procuring these products. The Town of Strafford will prioritize improvements, systems, vehicles and equipment, and other energy-related products that are energy-efficient and powered by, or are capable of being powered by, renewable energy sources, and will eliminate, wherever feasible, the use of fossil fuel.

Background

The Town of Strafford has several energy and climate goals, including:

- Meet 90% of energy needs from renewable sources by 2050
- Net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030

With each purchase of goods and services, the Town has the opportunity to not only further these goals, but also to lead by example for the rest of the community and demonstrate the value of environmentally sound purchasing decisions.

This Policy provides a framework to utilize when making purchasing decisions, helping to ensure that the purchases the Town makes are in line with its stated goals and objectives related to energy and climate change. The Policy also outlines procedures that ensure the Town: utilizes the resources and incentives of the State's energy efficiency utility and the Town's electric utility, selects products that best meet the Town's operational needs, and reduces ongoing operational costs.

This Policy utilizes the Strafford Energy and Climate Committee to review proposals from Department Heads/Selectboard members for large capital improvements for consistency with this Policy, and to monitor, review, and, if necessary, develop new procedures and practices related to this Policy. The SECC will report progress and findings to the Selectboard at least annually and as appropriate, including any proposed alterations to the Policy.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring a department, vendor or contractor to procure goods or services that do not perform adequately for their intended use or are not available at a reasonable price or in a reasonable period of time. Decisions regarding adequacy or suitability for use shall be at the discretion of the Selectboard, in consultation with the SECC.

Definitions

“*Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV)*” is defined as an all-electric, Plug-in Hybrid Electric (PHEV), hybrid-electric, or biodiesel vehicle.

“*Building Modifications*” are defined as additions, alterations, renovations, and repairs to existing buildings.

“*Emergency Repair/Replacement*” is defined as a repair/replacement for which immediate action is needed to avoid harm to Town property or personnel, and/or would substantially impact the Town’s ability to provide adequate services. The Selectboard shall have full discretion to determine what constitutes an *Emergency Repair/Replacement*, and whether, in light of the emergency situation, the procedures defined in this Policy should apply as defined or in an amended form.

“*Large Capital Improvements*” include vehicles, equipment, and machinery (VE&M); heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) replacements, and; building modifications and new construction.

“*Requestor*” is the Department Head, Selectboard, or other individual making a purchase request under this Policy.

“*Small Capital Improvements*” is defined as appliances and electronics, lighting, cooking equipment, and pumps, motors, and drives.

“*Vehicles, equipment, and machinery (VE&M)*” VE&M is defined as all light-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicles and equipment (e.g., loaders, graders, excavators), small machinery, including but not limited to mini-excavators, ATVs, snow blowers, and lawn mowers, and small equipment, including but not limited to chainsaws and leaf blowers.

Policies

Vehicles, Equipment, and Machinery (VE&M)

It is the policy of the Town to utilize VE&M that will achieve the largest reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions possible, while meeting the operational needs of the Town and without putting an undue financial burden on the Town. As of 2020, VE&M are responsible for almost 90% of the Town’s direct GHG emissions, and about three-quarters of the Town’s energy budget. VE&M also contribute significantly to other air pollutants that are harmful to human health and the environment. Lowering emissions and costs from VE&M should be achieved by optimizing the fleet size, reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), reducing idle time, transitioning to AFVs, and increasing fuel economy.

Space Heating and Water Heating Replacements

It is the policy of the Town not to install new fossil fuel-based heating systems. Water heaters can last for a decade or more, and heating systems can continue to operate for several decades. Thus, decisions made today will either avoid, or lock in, fossil fuel use for many years to come. The significance of these decisions necessitates careful planning, potentially over multiple years. Replacement heating systems in particular should be evaluated in the context of current and future plans for the building. For example, in general buildings should be weatherized prior to replacing the heating system to avoid installing an oversized heating system. Evaluation of whether the existing heat distribution system (i.e., forced-air, steam, etc.) best meets the needs of the building is also necessary before selecting a replacement.

Ventilation

It is the policy of the Town to utilize effective and energy-efficient ventilation systems in municipal buildings wherever economically feasible. Installing new ventilation systems should be considered during building renovations or modifications, and replacing existing ventilation systems should be considered when the systems are not adequately protecting the health and safety of building occupants and/or the building, or when the existing system fails. Controls are an important piece of an effective, efficient ventilation system.

Air Conditioning

It is the policy of the Town to limit the use of air conditioning systems, and to utilize heat pump systems that can simultaneously replace or offset fossil-fuel use for heating wherever possible. Like a replacement heating system, new air conditioning systems can last for decades and should be evaluated in the context of existing and future plans for the building.

Building Modifications and New Construction

It is the policy of the Town to utilize best practices for efficiency during Building Modifications; to build all new construction to net-zero energy standards, and; not to install new fossil-fuel-based systems in new construction or Building Modifications. Modifications to existing buildings or the construction of new municipal buildings are opportunities to significantly lower the Town's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions for generations. Additionally, proper construction techniques lower or eliminate ongoing energy costs and can significantly extend the lifespan of buildings.

Small Capital Improvements

It is the policy of the Town that Small Capital Improvements are efficient and do not use fossil fuel. Small Capital Improvements should be ENERGY STAR certified and/or qualify for incentives through Efficiency Vermont, where possible.

Municipal Inventory and Reporting

It is the policy of the Town maintain an inventory of the municipal vehicle fleet, facilities, energy use, and GHG emissions, and to report on these inventories annually in the Town Report.

Procedures

1. Large Capital Improvements (Capital Improvement Request Form Required)

Large Capital Improvements include:

- Vehicles, equipment and machinery (VE&M)
- HVAC replacements (heating/domestic hot water, ventilation, air conditioning)
- Building modifications and new construction

For Large Capital Improvements, Requestors must follow the respective procedure described at Attachment A (VE&M), Attachment B (HVAC), and Attachment C (building modifications and new construction). The procedures shall apply during the budget process (i.e., prior to formal adoption of the budget by the Selectboard and voters). With the exception of building modifications and new construction, Requestors must complete a Capital Improvement Request Form for review by the Strafford Energy and Climate Committee (SECC). The Selectboard may waive the requirements detailed at Attachments A, B, and C for Emergency Repairs and Emergency Replacements only.

2. Review by the Strafford Energy and Climate Committee

The SECC will review the applicable capital improvement request form once submitted by Requestor and respond in writing no later than five (5) weeks after receiving submission. The review will assess whether the Requestor followed the applicable procedures, and whether the request meets the standards and guidelines described in this policy, and will make a recommendation to accept, amend, or reject the request. The SECC's review is a recommendation; all purchasing decisions shall be at the Selectboard's full discretion.

Accepting the request means the SECC has found the request to be in line with the Policy. A recommendation to amend the request means that the SECC finds the request does not meet this Policy's criteria (e.g., a fossil-fuel heating system is proposed when a heat pump would be effective), and may suggest an alternative option to the Requestor. A recommendation to reject the request means that the request is not necessary for meeting the operational needs of the Town (e.g., a vehicle within the Town's existing fleet could be better utilized instead of purchasing a new vehicle)

The SECC's review shall be presented at a duly warned Selectboard meeting, at which members of the Selectboard or public may ask questions or request additional information from the SECC to justify their recommendation. The SECC shall have up to one month to respond to questions/requests for additional information, and all responses shall be made at a duly warned Selectboard meeting.

3. Small Capital Improvements

For Small Capital Improvements, review by the SECC is not necessary. The Selectboard shall ensure that all requirements detailed at Attachment D are met during the procurement process.

4. Municipal Inventory and Reporting

Inventories shall be maintained by the SECC, and meet the following requirements:

The inventory metrics should include the following information for the vehicle fleet:

- I. Make, model, and year of all vehicles and equipment.
- II. Annual miles driven (or annual hours of metered equipment).
- III. Quantity of fuel consumed by fuel type.
- IV. Cost of fuel consumed by fuel type.

This inventory shall be maintained in a database of the SECC's choosing.

The inventory metrics should include at least the following information for Town facilities:

- I. kWh consumed and cost of electricity
- II. Gallons of fuel (if applicable) consumed and cost of fuel

This inventory shall be in Energy Star Portfolio Manager.

The Town shall maintain a GHG emission inventory, following the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories. Inventories shall be maintained in the U.S. EPA's Local Greenhouse Gas Inventory Tool.

A summary of these inventories, including fuel use and cost by vehicles and facilities, and GHG emissions by scope (i.e., direct emissions, emissions from purchased electricity, and indirect emissions) shall be published annually in the Town Report.

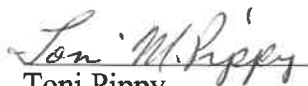
Contacts/Responsible Official

Questions related to the daily operational interpretation of this policy should be directed to:

Strafford Selectboard

Effective Date

Approved by:


Toni Pippy

Selectboard Chair

11/15/21
Date