

# LEGISLATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 15, 2021

- Present:** Anthony Suffriti - Chair  
Rosemary Sandlin – Vice Chair  
George Bitzas  
Mario Tedeschi
- Absent:** Gina Letellier
- Also Present:** Councilors Calabrese, Cavallo, Mercadante and Smith along with Mayor Sapelli and Solicitor Buoniconti, Marc Strange (remote)
- Called to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Chairman Suffriti at 6:00pm.in the AJHS Teachers’ Conference Room

## AGENDA

### **1. Approval of Minutes dated February 16, 2021**

Motion to approve the minutes was moved by Councilor Sandlin and seconded by Councilor Tedeschi.

The vote was 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Letellier) approving the minutes.

### **2. TOR-2021-1 - An Ordinance to amend Chapter 103 of the Code of the Town of Agawam for electric vehicle charging station fees (Mayor Sapelli)**

Discussion opened up with the Mayor speaking about reducing the \$1.00 fee down to \$.060. The town should not subsidize the cost and Eversource should reconsidered the Go Green concept and lower the cost in the near future. The Solicitor explained the reasoning behind the reduction. Councilor Sandlin asked if we have to amend the resolution and the Solicitor confirmed. The \$.40 annual subscription fee was already paid in full and the Mayor felt that it was fair to absorb that cost and not pass it on to the taxpayers and lower the fee may boost the attraction of the EV charging stations. The Solicitor also explained the confusion about the relationship with Eversource and the DPU and the tariff. Councilor Sandlin asked if we could be proactive and send the DPU a letter to renegotiate the tariff especially considering Agawam is a Green Community. The Solicitor confirmed that could be done. Councilor Sandlin also asked if the EV charging stations bills could be combined in one master bill so the rate might be cheaper however Marc Strange noted that they have individual bills and are not tied to the nearest facility. Councilor Tedeschi questioned the next year’s demand if we charge the \$.60 and Mayor agreed the demand should go down. Marc Strange said regardless if demand goes up or down, the charge for demand is the same. He does not think it will affect the demand charge and \$.60 would be our cost no matter what. Solicitor confirmed that what matters in the future is if the DPU alters the tariff which is expected by 2022. Councilor Tedeschi noted that Agawam has decided to Go Green but regardless the town has decided that it wants to be in the Electric Vehicle business and with these costs, the EV owners will be pushed away. Councilor Bitzas asked what other communities are charging and we should have a fair and comparable rate. People shouldn’t be paying for this out of their own pockets – it needs to be fair. Councilor Mercadante said it is fair that we drop the \$.40 subscription fee because it has already been paid for – it wouldn’t be fair to include that in the total fee since it is already paid. The Governor has an ambitious plan with electric vehicles so the question is how we can promote his plan to go electric but not burden the taxpayers. He said the reality is when you have EVs, the higher the rate the less people will use them and the rate will remain high if the demand is reduced. We should watch this over this coming year to evaluate but this needs to be tantalizing to use according to the Governor’s plan but not put that burden on the taxpayer – a middle ground needs to be found. Councilor Smith said it is not fair for taxpayers to fund this. There are already many perks available and rebates available to EV owners and we should not hand this to them for free. They chose to purchase an electric vehicle and again are already receiving many perks. Councilor Cavallo agreed with the recommended \$.60 fee but also asked about what we can do with poor performing charging stations. The Solicitor confirmed that the town has the ability to have them removed and it would not affect any connected grant money and the only cost would be to remove or disconnect them. Mayor said he was not looking to phase any charging stations out but wants to promote them. We need to offset our costs and does not want to lose money or make money on these. Councilor Tedeschi feels any cost increase will deter usage of the EV stations. Councilor Bitzas stated that the town should not pay any added costs to charge cars for out of town visitors. Councilor Sandlin said she would support the recommended \$.60 but wants a letter sent to the DPU to push the discussion to lower the tariff rate. Councilor Mercadante mentioned delaying this vote until the DPU adjusts the rate within the year and then come back to the Council at that time? Councilor Tedeschi still believed it should be free and we can always raise the price once the rate is set. He made the Motion to adjust the rate to \$.25 – if we set it at \$.60 it is harder to adjust. It’s better to start small and raise it later. Chair Suffriti said we need to either send a positive or negative recommendation for the \$.60 rate as recommended by the Mayor and noted that the time to make that type of Motion is during the regular City Council meeting.

Motion to send a positive recommendation to the Full Council made by Councilor Bitzas and seconded by Councilor Sandlin. The vote was **3 Yes, 1 No** (Councilor Tedeschi), **1 Absent** (Councilor Letellier)

**3. Any other business that may legally come before the Committee.**

None.

**4. Adjournment.**

Motion to adjourn was moved by Councilor Bitzas and seconded by Councilor Sandlin. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Councilor Anthony Suffriti, Chair  
Legislative Committee