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Town energy savings effort pushes ahead

North Hampton committee moves to new initiatives

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NORTH HAMPTON — The town's Energy Committee is not resting on its laurels. It is continuing to seek ways to reduce energy costs.

The committee solicited the help of the Boston-based Peregrine Energy Group to both follow up on the recommendations for savings the committee made in 2009, and to come up with suggestions on ways the town can save even more. Peregrine's report was submitted to the Select Board late last month.

"This memorandum summarizes accomplishments to date under the committee's efficiency initiatives, and identifies further opportunities to reduce utility use with potential cost and savings implications," Peregrine employees Kaj Huld and Steven Weisman wrote in an Oct. 19 report to the committee. "We commend the committee for creating a valuable and comprehensive planning document, and also commend the town for moving forward and implementing many committee recommendations."

Peregrine's review of the 2009 energy audit prepared by the committee showed that 12 of the 24 recommendations made at that time have been addressed. Four other recommendations were judged to be unnecessary or to offer a poor economic return by the consultants.

The items left to address from the 2009 audit range from something as simple as resetting the thermostat in the computer server room in the town offices to seeking insulation bids for several town buildings. Town Administrator Steve Fournier and Public Works Director John Hubbard have indicated they are actively working on the remaining

audit recommendations.

In addition to the review of the 2009 audit, Peregrine came up with 24 new recommendations for efficiencies throughout the town complex on Atlantic Avenue. The consultants recommended that 14 of those items be done immediately.

Those 14 recommendations include such things as going to more energy efficient lighting in the police station, insulating a hot-water pipe in the fire station, installing insulation over the boiler in the library and adding programmable thermostats in the town offices.

"The cost for the recommended subset of measures is around \$6,050 and will result in annual savings of \$1,430, for a simple payback of just over four years," the Peregrine report indicated.

The payback period for the other 10 recommendations made by Peregrine would be substantially longer. The costs of those items was estimated at approximately \$89,100, with a yearly savings of \$2,170, making the payback period about 41 years.

Included in those 10 additional recommendations were \$20,000 for insulating the roof of the fire station, \$15,000 for insulating the meeting room walls and attic of the old Town Hall, \$27,000 for reconfiguring the duct work at the library and \$15,000 to replace the fire station boiler.

With town officials working to present a warrant article to voters at the 2012 Town Meeting for funding for a complete renovation of the town complex, many of the more expensive recommendations could be dealt with through that process, Town Administrator Steve Fournier said.

The cost of the consultants' work was paid for by the state, Huld and Weisman indicated.

"Our work is funded by the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning's Energy Technical Assistance and Planning Program with the goal of supporting the town's efforts with respect to energy efficiency improvements and capital upgrades," the Peregrine report stated.