

**Watertown Industrial Center Local Development Corporation
Facility Committee Meeting
March 14, 2024
Minutes**

The Watertown Industrial Center Local Development Corporation Facility Committee held a meeting on Thursday, March 14, 2024, at the Watertown Center for Business and Industry, located at 800 Starbuck Ave. Watertown, NY, Building A Conference Room.

Present: Don Rutherford, Paul Morgan, Michelle Capone

Excused: None

Staff: Billy Soluri

Others Present: Kylee McGrath, Marshall Weir, Matt Morris (Convalt Energy), Thomas Slomski (Convalt Energy)

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:35 AM.

II. New Business: B. Soluri introduced Matt Morris and Thomas Slomski of Convalt Energy. B. Soluri stated they were going to be presenting a Solar Canopy/Carport system to be installed in the parking area of both Building A/B and the side of C. B. Soluri noted these systems would then be connected to the facility for use by the tenants as well as our common meters.

T. Slomski discussed the scope of work that had been provided at the meeting and he noted that their had been discussion with WIC staff previously about changing the location of the systems from the front of the property to the rear. T. Slomski stated they could change the location but would need to perform some measurements first. T. Slomski stated the current proposal calls for the installation of 816 Convalt Solar Panels, along with 9 inverters, and 5 carports.

P. Morgan asked why the carport design as opposed to a solar field. T. Slomski stated the area proposed out front of the property using the carport design was sufficient to meet the electrical demands of the facility and he did not think the WIC had an adequate amount of open field space. T. Slomski stated the carport design is very efficient and close to existing service connections. M. Capone asked what the kilowatt size of this project was. T. Slomski stated the total project size is 456 kilowatts or close to a half of a megawatt. T. Slomski stated the size of the system should supply enough power for an entire year's worth of usage, allowing a large reduction in the service fee we pay to National Grid.

M. Capone asked how the project would be funded. T. Slomski stated there would be a 25-year land-lease agreement relating to the location of the equipment and all expenses associated with the project would be paid for by Convalt Energy. T. Slomski stated WIC would then purchase power from Convalt Energy at a discounted rate. B. Soluri asked if the purchase rate would change over time. T. Slomski stated the rate would remain constant for the first 10 years and after that point it could fluctuate.

M. Weir asked if the panels located near Starbuck ave would require the trees to be removed. M. Morris stated it would only be over the parking spaces as there is a 15-foot

setback requirement from the road. M. Morris stated it would be like having a carport for parking but with the ability to generate power through the Convalt solar panel system. D. Rutherford asked about liability issues relating to someone damaging one of these carport systems. T. Slomski stated it would be the driver's insurance that would ultimately have to pay for any damage to the system. D. Rutherford asked if Convalt would have additional insurance on the systems. T. Slomski stated the systems would also be insured by Convalt. B. Soluri stated he is concerned with plowing and salting during the winter months. B. Soluri stated the snow removal contractor uses large loaders to plow and these carports would make it difficult if not impossible to plow. D. Rutherford asked if the system were to become damaged would that have an impact on the electrical systems for the facility. T. Slomski stated there would be no loss of power to the facility unless National Grid had a loss of power.

T. Slomski stated the system feeds national grid, and then national grid gives credits based on the amount of energy being generated by the panels. T. Slomski stated this is why the service fee received from National Grid will be reduced. M. Capone asked if there would be any battery systems associated with this system. T. Slomski stated the cost of having a battery system is not worth it and this system of connecting directly to the grid and then using the credits is more beneficial to city consumers. T. Slomski stated that normally excess power would be generated during summer and then that additional production would carry you through winter when you're not producing as much electricity through the panels.

M. Capone asked if Convalt has received our National Grid bills. B. Soluri stated they have copies from a year ago or so. B. Soluri stated he would provide them with the more recent bills to allow for a better savings calculation. P. Morgan stated we have electrical accounts that are in the name of the WIC as well as the tenants. T. Slomski stated each tenant would have to have a separate agreement if they wanted to receive the benefit of these solar systems. B. Soluri stated if the project was to move forward, he would have Convalt meet with the tenants to explain the system and how they would be able to benefit from it. B. Soluri asked if the tenants needed to agree to participate in this project. T. Slomski stated they did not have to participate.

Discussion occurred relating to the system and how power is brought to the facility. T. Slomski stated that if National Grid were to suffer a power outage, then there would be no power at the facility as the system is designed to back feed to National Grid. M. Capone asked what the benefit is of having this system in place as opposed to just buying from another provider. T. Slomski stated the benefit relates to the reduction in the National Grid service fee as the solar system is on site as opposed to buying from an offsite provider. M. Capone asked if the proposed system would meet zoning requirements. T. Slomski stated the system does meet zoning/code requirements.

B. Soluri asked about the maintenance, upgrades, and decommissioning of the system. T. Slomski stated Convalt would be responsible for all upgrades, and maintenance of the system. T. Slomski stated the decommissioning plan would need to be approved by the county and in general would say at the end of 25 years the system would be torn down or the system would be turned over to the WIC as the new owner and responsible party of the system. M. Capone stated any decommissioning plan would be part of negotiations.

M. Capone asked if the panels would be manufactured locally or would they be sourced.
T. Slomski stated they would be Convalt panels sourced and built overseas.

Discussion occurred relating to using the front auxiliary lot as a carport solar system and then relocating the rest of the solar system to the rear of the property between the concrete slabs. It was decided that Convalt would look at relocating the system to the rear of the property. Convalt will redesign the system as well as update the cost savings analysis and report back to the committee.

III. Adjournment: the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 AM.