

Thomaston moves forward with energy audit

Published: Thursday, March 24, 2011

JOHNNY J. BURNHAM
Special to the Express

THOMASTON — The Thomaston Board of Selectmen hopes an energy audit being done as early as next month by ECG Engineering will reveal ways the town can save on energy costs.

The energy audit, being done at no cost to Thomaston, was finalized at a board of selectmen meeting March 18.

Thomaston First Selectman Ed Mone said the board chose ECG Engineering, of Danbury, after months reviewing proposals from three energy efficiency firms.

ECG Engineering will audit all the town's buildings: Town Hall, the Thomaston Public Library, the Fire Department, the Volunteer Ambulance facility, the Seth Thomas-Bradstreet House, the public works building and each of the three schools.

"After having looked at all three and speaking with these companies further, as well as listening to references from towns that have dealt with each, we unanimously agreed to go with ECG," Mone said.

The board of selectmen had also considered the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and Celtic Energy to perform the audit.

The first selectman said he sent the paperwork to ECG's Danbury office March 22, and expects ECG staff to begin inspecting town buildings as soon as April.

"Right now, we've agreed to have them come in and do a preliminary audit and nothing further," Mone said. "They'll come in themselves and do the preliminary audit. This whole thing will have no tax impact on residents."

Mone expects the completed audit to be ready by the end of May.

ECG will also evaluate the town's energy cost and consumption data over the past year to determine if sufficient energy savings can be realized to justify pursuing a contract, according to the company's web site.

Thomaston Library Director Debra Radosevich was pleased with the selectmen's decision to move forward with the audit, as it could lead to much-needed updates at the library. She said the library's heating and cooling unit is in poor condition and should be replaced.

The town on the whole should become far more energy-efficient and save a substantial amount of money by moving forward with the audit, according to Town Hall Maintenance Coordinator Ken Hopkins.

"It's going to help save a lot of money," he said.

Hopkins said that several of town hall's air conditioning wall units are in dire need of being upgraded. The ensuing audit, he added, is part of Thomaston's overall effort to become more energy savvy.

But the board of selectman may not move past the auditing stage to implementing upgrades, Mone said.

"They'll come forward with their preliminary audit and some money-saving suggestions," Mone said. "We'll then either decide to move to the next phase or not. This energy audit and its possible implementation would be a means to take care of some of our infrastructure needs in the town's buildings. But whether we move forward or not is questionable at this point."

If the board of selectmen decides to move past the preliminary phase, ECG will then issue a request for proposal on behalf of Thomaston to secure competing proposals from other energy services companies to carry out the energy upgrades, Mone said.

A state grant for \$47,638 paid for new lighting units and thermostats in Thomaston Town Hall last fall, according to Sue Smith, finance director.

"This will be far more in-depth," Mone said. "We'll now be looking at just about everything that could save on energy."