

Regional Energy Manager for the Merrimack Valley: Bringing energy expertise to 15 towns

Energy management services Owner's Agent services

challenge

Make it possible for a group of 15 under-resourced communities to address energy issues and implement performance contracting projects quickly and cost effectively.

solution

Regional Energy Manager

Regional ESCO procurement

Owner's agent services
for municipalities

results

- Dramatically accelerated performance contracting process and progress in energy project implementation
- Access to energy expertise for all communities, regardless of staff and budget
- Group efficiencies with no loss of individual community control

For the 15 member communities of Massachusetts' Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, reducing costs and finding efficiencies had become municipal imperatives. Energy efficiency presented critical opportunities for both, but budget cuts had left most communities with limited, overburdened staff and without in-house energy expertise.

As MVPC Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio explained, "It was clear that they wanted to do something, but at the same time, they didn't know the first couple of steps to take." If they were going to develop and execute an energy strategy, they would need outside help.

Making it easy with a regional approach

DiZoglio jumped in with the first part of a solution, issuing an RFP and selecting Peregrine Energy Group as a Regional Energy Coordinator whose expert services would be available to all communities.

The next step was performance contracting. Member communities wanted to engage energy service companies (ESCOs), but separate procurement processes would be overwhelming, time consuming, and cost prohibitive for each community. So Peregrine suggested a collaborative approach: a single regional ESCO procurement.

Peregrine did the heavy lifting - helped to write and issue the RFP, supported communities with energy data collection, reviewed ESCO responses and created a short list, and coached communities on how to interview the ESCOs.

The communities remained in the driver's seat, chose the ESCO, and signed a regional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU),



Merrimack Valley communities originally founded thriving industrial economies on the Merrimack River's water power.

enabling each member community to engage the ESCO without an RFP.

"Peregrine's work really allowed these communities to engage in something that normally they wouldn't be able to without considerable extra effort," said DiZoglio.

Accelerating with an Owner's Agent

Several communities then engaged Peregrine as an Owner's Agent - a trusted advisor that sits on their side of the table during ESCO negotiations, reviews ESCO recommendations and work, and ensures that the community gets the savings they were promised. The benefits came quickly.

"We noticed that those communities that said 'We'll handle it on our own' are still developing or considering the idea," explained DiZoglio. "Those communities, however, that used Peregrine as an owner's agent have actually moved forward."

Delivering results

11 out of the 15 member communities participated in the procurement, as well as 2 regional school districts. 6 communities had progressed to investment-grade audits as of this writing.

"I feel real, real comfortable with Peregrine," concluded DiZoglio. "I rely on them. It's been a great partnership. Love to continue it."