

# SOLAR FOR THE SHELTER

By Mary Stenberg, CHA Board Member

Chequamegon Humane Association Board Members took action at their February board meeting to accept a bid from Jolma Electric to install a solar power system at the Animal Shelter. Work on this project began last fall when Board Members met with Bill Bailey of Chequamegon Bay Renewables. Bailey completed a cash flow assessment for CHA by analyzing the cost and amount of electricity usage at the Shelter facility for the previous year. Mr. Bailey is very knowledgeable about solar power and his expertise has been most helpful to CHA.

“New incentives for renewable energy in the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act have changed the playing field for municipalities and nonprofits like CHA. CHA can now use Direct Pay to lower project costs 40%, reducing payback times and making a project economically feasible that would not be otherwise,” Bailey said.

CHA received notice this past November that their application for a grant from Solar for Good had been approved. This grant will cover one-half the cost of the solar panels needed for the project. The panels are state-of-the-art bi-facial panels, with glass on both sides, which allows the solar cells to collect light that bounces off the ground (or snow in winter!), boosting their energy collection.

As a non-profit organization, CHA will apply for all available grants, incentives and rebates. Based on the estimates for the 15.2-kilowatt system, the total cost of the project would be \$35,116. Donations needed from the community are estimated to be \$16,659. Once installed, annual cost savings to CHA the first year would be \$2735 which would result in substantial savings in utility costs for the Shelter. “This savings would result in more money for animal rescues and surrenders and for the health and wellness services for needed for all the Shelter animals waiting for their forever homes” Executive Director, Kari Olinger said.

To complete the Solar Project at the CHA Animal Shelter, donations from the community will soon be accepted. One way to donate is to purchase one or more solar panels. Each panel costs \$350, and all panel donors (those donating \$350 or more) will be recognized. The goal is to have solar power installed by the end of August 2023.

Should you wish to donate to the Chequamegon Humane Association’s Solar Power Project, go on-line to the CHA website ([www.cheqhumane.org](http://www.cheqhumane.org)) and click on the donate button at the top of the page. Then click on Solar Power Project. You may also send a check to the Chequamegon Humane Association, PO Box 93, Ashland, WI 54806. Be sure to write “Solar Project” on your check’s memo line. Any donation amount will be very much appreciated. Visit the Chequamegon Humane Association’s Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/CHAadopt/](https://www.facebook.com/CHAadopt/)) for more about this exciting and innovative project!