

APPROVED
6/13/23

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Myra Sinnott called the meeting to order at 5:18 pm.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 5 members

Members Present: Myra Sinnott (via phone), Bill Thomas, Dick DeGrasse, Cressica Brazier, Toby Martin, and Melissa Burns, Ex Officio.

Members Absent: Josh Leach and Holly Fields.

Others Present: Monica Mullins, Harriet Bering, and Larry Hoder.

3. Introduce visitors—potential new members:

- a. Monica Mullins introduced herself. She and her husband moved to Islesboro about 4 years ago. She attended the University of Alabama, where she studied criminology and English. She took some courses in grant writing, and is willing to learn more. While she doesn't know much about clean energy, she feels it's important to start working on it now.
- b. Harriet Bering introduced herself. She's a retired physician looking for ways to give back. Doing something for the planet is one of the things she cares most about. When she saw the Energy Committee was looking for people, she thought she might be able to contribute. She spends most of the year on the island since retiring.

4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Motion: To approve Minutes of April 11, 2023, as written, B. Thomas, seconded by D. DeGrasse. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

5. Updates on Ongoing Projects/Old Business

a. ETIPP

- Myra explained that ETIPP is a program we went through at the National Labs, who worked with island communities to study their energy use and come up with strategies for renewable energy, microgrants, or whatever the community was interested in. They are writing a report for us now, which we will be sharing with the Town to help frame some of the ideas we have for energy efficiency initiatives.
- Cressica and Myra met with Johannah Blackman from Mt. Desert Island, a current ETIPP participant (round 2). We spoke with her at length about our experience and how to get the most out of the program. She is also the executive director of A Climate To Thrive, an organization here in Maine working on climate-change initiatives.

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b. Energy Efficiency Projects

- Bill explained that the committee has installed new LED lighting in the library to reduce energy consumption. About 1/3 of the work has been done, including the new canister lights on the ground level as you enter the building. The lights have come in for the downstairs; they will be installed Thursday morning. Dimmer switches will go in as well. We've been planning to replace the strip lighting, but alternatives are expensive. We've decided that rather than replace them, we will just keep them off. We will see what the lighting requirements dictate down the road and will do those upgrades when we have a better sense of what's needed.
- Melissa Olson is interested in having an EV charger at the library. Joshua, the electrician doing some of our work, projected the demand on the system, which will include heat pumps we hope to install. He said we need to hire an electrical engineer to reconstruct the electrical service to the building. It will probably need 400 amps. It is currently 100 amps.
- Insulation: Evergreen did the work as planned. The invoice is incorrect; it did not specify the work that was done, but rather the work that was projected. Bill spoke with Brian, who will resolve the issue.
- We are rescheduling the blower door test due to a conflict.
- Town Office LED upgrades: Cressica compared the current layout with the proposed renovation to the Public Safety end of the building and found where we can install lighting now and reuse after renovation in two years. We can get the savings and rebates now, and get them billed this fiscal year.
- We are also planning to put a heat pump in that space, though it will be a larger space, so we have to figure that out.
- The Town Office EV charger upgrade will cost about \$2500, and we will get a rebate on that as well.

c. Library

- Toby stated that he recommended to Bill and Melissa that they have a meeting to go over all the work that's happened already and any projected projects so we can frame up a library budget.
- We will then need estimates for the work that will be done in the coming year, and we need accurate numbers for our budget.
- Myra recommends having a budget-only meeting where we discuss how we will spend money on the library projects.

d. Islesboro Energy Dept

- Dick summarized the rate and utility structure in Maine and how it impacts Islesboro.

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- Dick ran into an obstacle with setting up an agreement with Vermont. Vermont would have to create a license in Maine to sell us wholesale power. It's more complicated than working with New Brunswick Power, who can sell us power for less than 10 cent/kwh. We are currently paying 17 cents. The difference amounts to \$35,000 to \$40,000 per month for the island.
- We need to know the off-peak rate we will be working with in order to design the new ferry battery system. Dick explained TOU rates and energy storage to the visitors.
- Jim Cohen, a utility lawyer in the State of Maine, is suggesting that Islesboro set up an electric energy aggregation group—a municipal entity that takes responsibility for the electric supply on the island. We may need money for legal fees to set it up.
- Myra added that she sent an article to group that highlights how the Canadian hydro companies are oversubscribed and are thinking about building new dams. This is not something we want to be involved in, because it is harmful to the environment in many ways. This is something we should think about.
- Bill summarized that there are two elements: 1.) The structuring of the entity here that will marshal the electricity coming in wholesale. 2.) The source of the electricity. Bill suggests having a conversation about how to talk with New Brunswick Power regarding their future demands and the dams. We can still move forward with creating the entity.
- Discussion about Maine goals and laws in renewable energy.
- Myra pointed out that Maine has a goal to have 80% renewable energy by 2030, and 100% by 2050.
- We will discuss this more as we progress.

Energizing Rural Communities Prize

Cressica explained the Energizing Rural Communities Prize of up to \$100,000. She pointed out that what Dick is working on is a structure to transition to more affordable energy until the state has more solar power and we have more control of our energy sources. This prize is trying to take that next step, based on the Energy Transitions Partnership Project that Myra mentioned earlier in the meeting. The report that's coming out is scoping our goals as an entire island to achieve residential energy efficiency in electrification, solar power, and, potentially, grid resilience and resilience hubs through microgrids. The goal of this prize is to take that initiative forward in facilitating cleaner, cheaper energy for the Town, and making us more energy independent in the process. This prize is for creating partnerships that will build our capacity to achieve those goals. We need to get a clean energy proposal out of it, which could be a solar array proposal, and we also want to partner with Islesboro organizations in order to support more low- and middle-income residents to help them

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get access to funding that will help them weatherize their houses, move to heat pumps, and have solar on premises or in a co-op.

Bill added that he has been speaking with groups on the island to encourage them to be partners for this program. We have many groups on this island with different focuses. We need concerted effort from all these groups to overlap and form a coherent core effort. Some have jumped on board quickly, such as John Kauer and his organization, which builds efficient houses. The IESC is more reticent because it's not their mandate. There are many 0% interest loans to support businesses that can only be channeled through the town if we pool our funds. Cressica and Bill will speak with the Islesboro Community Fund on Thursday night to make the pitch. They've been working to create the partnerships that Cressica needs in writing this grant proposal for us to be a winning proposal. The deadline is in two weeks. There are benefits to this process whether or not we get the prize, in creating the partnerships and organizing for other grant opportunities.

e. Municipal Building Project Update

- Cressica reported that there was a meeting last Wednesday. The day before they had interviewed for the position of Construction Manager, and are well prepared to hire now, as they had three good candidates out of the four interviewed.
- The architects are now involved with a more detailed design of the Health Center. They will be here tomorrow to meet with the Health Center staff to determine their needs.
- The Construction Manager will start to develop the budget and figure out the HVAC with the architects. We are starting to get more details about the energy systems.
- The Congressionally Directed Spending Grant that we submitted to Senators King and Collins is moving forward. They both responded to the Town saying the application was submitted to the Appropriations Committee, so we are on track with that. We will probably hear by September. It's for about \$850,000. Our chances seem to be good.

f. Treasury Report

- Toby stated that one of the things he's looking at is how to solidify all the steps we take as a committee, to make sure that all our funding objectives are met. Toby's intention is for anyone involved in spending to give him the information as soon as it's available so it can be included in monthly reports.
- Toby has found the Town's accounting system a little more haphazard than he had hoped, and he's been trying to filter info in order to interpret it for the committee. All bills are Town based. We all have to be on the same page with common information.

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- The last transaction that Toby is aware of was for \$126.59 for a fixture at the library. \$18,920.78 is what we have to spend between now and the end of the fiscal year.

6. Discussion

a. Update on Bill's trip to Colorado for ETIPP

- Bill reported that there were people from all over North America—a representative from each of the communities that ETIPP has been working with. Each community represented was an isolated, rural, island-type community. Many communities face much greater challenges than we do.
- Bill found that all communities face similar problems. The solar array/battery backup idea is a common solution to the problems that many of these communities have. We are unique in that our ETIPP project was initiated by our Energy Committee without the full knowledge of the entire community.
- The NREL scientists expressed that they are available to answer phone calls with any questions.
- This was the inaugural annual ETIPP meeting. Roughly half of the groups were Cohort 1, and half in Cohort 2. MDI is in Cohort 2. They've been doing this kind of stuff for years, but they are learning about the process from Cohort 1. Bill invited Luke from Martha's Vineyard to come visit Islesboro.
- Bill had great conversations, and learned a lot. He may write up a more detailed report.
- Bill gave this idea for modular, turn-key systems to the directors: strategically placed microgrids with battery and/or generator backup that would form the nuclei of an island-wide network where we produce all the electricity we need, but we remain connected to CMP. We may be able to sell electricity in the long run.

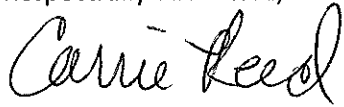
b. IEC projects/spending for remainder of 2023 into 2024

- Myra gave a budget update. We should have a separate meeting outside of our normal meeting schedule to talk about the budget in more detail.
- Proposed ideas: EV chargers at the library and Town Office, heat pumps in the library, LED upgrades in the Town Office, and \$5000 for the Energy Jamboree.
- A larger electrical upgrade will be needed at the library, and we can talk about that for later. We can budget for an electrical engineering study.
- Additional items that were brought up at last month's meeting: \$5000 or less for legal costs for the Islesboro Electric Dept., additional heat pumps in the Town Office, updates to the Fire Station and Transfer Station.
- Bill suggested we need funds for a grassroots outreach effort to the community—cookouts, etc.
- Monica is the secretary for the Sporting Club and suggested coordinating so that the Energy Committee could use that venue for outreach.

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- Dick offered to write an article for the Islesboro Island News when a deal goes through with New Brunswick Power. Cressica suggested another separate meeting for organizing info for presentations.
 - c. IEC grant opportunities
 - Covered in Cressica's report with the Energizing Rural Communities Prize.
7. Coordination/Communication with Other Groups
 8. Homework for next meeting
 9. Next meeting, Tuesday, June 13th, at 5:15pm.
 10. Adjourn
Motion to adjourn at 6:55pm, B. Thomas, seconded by D. DeGrasse. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary