

Islesboro Energy Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, January 13, 2026  
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:15 PM

APPROVED

2/10/26

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Harriet Bering called the meeting to order at 5:16 pm.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 4 members

Members Present: Chair Harriet Bering, Vice Chair Bill Thomas, Monica Mullins, Kathy Kerr, Ava Schlottman, Peter Rothschild, Ex Officio, Janis Petzel (5:30)

Members Present via Zoom: Cressica Brazier

Members Absent: Holly Fields, Trevor Blackford

Others Present: Island Fellow Elizabeth Dyer

Others Present via Zoom: Linda Gillies

3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting: December 9, 2025.

Elizabeth made a correction for the Event Subcommittee section. Cressica and Elizabeth have been doing online training with Rewiring America, not Rocky Mountain Institute.

Bill corrected the discussion on the solar output cascade. The accumulated generation goes into the Salt Shed account, not the Transfer Station.

**Motion: To approve the Minutes of December 9, 2025, as amended, K. Kerr, seconded by M. Mullins. No further discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 6 yes, 0 no.**

4. Project updates

a. Fire station

- No update.

b. EV chargers

- Holly wasn't present to provide an update. Harriet reported that the new units have been installed. She needs to check on whether the town account has been set up for credit card purchases.

5. ETIPP Update

- Harriet reported that the group had its first of the regular biweekly meetings, and talked generally about goals. The meetings will be every other Thursday at 11:00 am.
- Harriet added that every other Monday, Kate Klibansky at the Island Institute is having an open forum for groups that are doing the ETIPP program. Harriet signed on yesterday. Other than Kate, there were only three people: Harriet, Peter Arnold from Wiscasset, and Jim Tisher from Deer Island. It was an open discussion, and it was interesting because they talked about some things that we've had discussions about, including the possibility of becoming a community aggregator, which is something Dick de Grasse wanted to pursue. Deer Island has similar issues as we do, getting all of their electricity from a cable. Anyone is welcome to join in.

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- Bill stated he hadn't been upbeat about the ETIPP grant, and didn't see that it had a lot to offer us, but in fact came away from the first meeting feeling more positive in that granting is evolving differently than we thought, and there may be more granting opportunities. Also, the information from National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLOR) left him feeling that there may be possibilities that surprised him. He's feeling more positive about this endeavor.
- Harriet added that we now have approval to make public announcements. They sent out an announcement template, which we could use. Harriet has been in touch with Dan Tutor. The deadline for the next issue of the Islesboro Island News is February 2<sup>nd</sup>. We can also submit something to other media outlets.
- Elizabeth asked if the Energy Committee has a Facebook page. Ava stated that she is supposed to be the administrator for that, but she is waiting for Kizzi Barton to sort out the password issue, as it is connected to her personal password.
- Monica suggested creating a new page instead of waiting. Bill suggested seeing if there is a technical expert who can help migrate the account.
- Bill and Elizabeth offered to edit and customize the ETIPP announcement template.

6. MAINECAN Conference

- Harriet stated that the conference will be held on March 26<sup>th</sup> in Augusta. She emailed the organizers and indicated we might do a poster.
- Monica and Bill will make a poster. Monica stated she could take what she has and condense it into a more professional version.

7. Event Subcommittee Update

- Kathy reported that she offered to work on finding a speaker for the Forum lecture series. She has made a number of phone calls and inquiries. She spoke with Patrick O'Bannon and got some ideas from him.
- Kathy spoke with a staffer at Maine Preservation in Augusta. The staffer said she would take our request to a staff meeting tomorrow and call back by early next week.
- Kathy stated she also has a phone call out to the Maine State Historical Preservation Society.
- Peter stated that the Forum Lecture Series committee has a meeting this coming Friday to discuss the panoply of speakers that have been proposed. Peter will be happy to promote someone who is proposed by this group.
- Janis stated that Allen Cross will demonstrate small house batteries on Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 at the Library. We should put this on the Community Calendar that Dan Tutor has created.

8. Island Fellow Update

- Elizabeth reported that she's been working on the technical report this month and will share the data from that at the next Energy Committee meeting. Right now, it's just raw data from the Home Energy Survey that was done in 2024. She would like to compile how people have responded to the questions and get a general landscape of residential energy. Cressica has been helping a lot with this. Hopefully we can use the report and those numbers to create models and think about larger applied questions about energy on the island.

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- For the Islesboro Community Center side of the fellowship, she is planning a fashion show of items made from all recycled materials. She will be sending out flyers about what they will be collecting. There will be volunteer opportunities. The show will take place on April 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Kate Klibansky at the Island Institute had shared a bit about battery generators and her experience of finding one. She sent some resources for the battery talk on February 17<sup>th</sup>. The Island Institute asked if we could send some bullet points about the talk, to share as educational material.

9. Budget Follow-up

- Harriet stated she got an email from Janet asking for our budget request, due at the end of the month. We will have an opportunity to justify our request at a Select Board meeting in March.
- We had consensus at the budget workshop last Friday that our priority is to maximize the town's solar production. We talked about possibly adding more panels to the Salt Shed and the new Up-Island Public Safety Garage. We also talked about a possible ground-mounted array near the shed. Bill estimates the roof panels will cost around \$100K.
- Cressica stated she calculated the town's need for additional solar electricity generation. In order to propose that we should build more solar, we want to make sure we'll actually use the solar. She added up all the electricity that the town is buying from the grid that isn't covered by solar currently. If the Health Center ground-mount array we're building is as big as we want it to be, based on the budget, then we would still have a need in the town buildings for about 20 to 25% more electricity than that array will provide. That means we have about 24,000 kilowatt hours that we still need to cover at minimum, once we get the Up-Island PS Garage online. If it's a roof-mount array on the salt shed (east-oriented), we would need a 24-kilowatt array, which would be almost \$70K. That array can't fit on the roof there, but if you split it between the salt shed roof and the Up-Island Garage roof before the end of next year, that would be a much better option than fully covering the salt shed array. The \$100K will likely go as far as we need, but there will be some design decisions to be made along the way.
- Harriet stated that what we need at this time is justification and verification that we're asking for the appropriate amount for our budget, so we can defend it to the Select Board. It would be great if we were able to put in enough that exceeded the town usage.
- We have \$7,250 for the Island Fellow.
- Harriet added a line to the budget summary. The current balance is \$57,000 plus \$56,000 for the prize balance. On Brian Bohanon's ledger, the library's solar has been completely paid for, and Brian is still working on the tax credits. He said that he submitted the preliminary paperwork, and will be submitting the final paperwork for the library solar and the health center solar credits with the town's quarterly tax return this week. Right now, the \$16,500 that we expect to get in credits for the library solar is on the ledger as an Energy Committee expense. The Friends of the Library have indicated they would pay that if the credits don't come through.
- Harriet is estimating that we're going to have about \$30,000 residual funds. We proposed moving that forward towards the big ask for next year.
- There was also discussion about creating a capital fund for microgrid and solar. Some members have commented that maybe this isn't the time to do that.

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- Bill stated that this kind of fund is a great idea, but it's leveraging against a future need that is indeterminate. Right now, the 30% tax credit leverages against an immediate need that is obvious. And we have a deadline against which we can apply the money that we do have to get as many solar panels installed as possible. Bill suggests putting off the contingency fund for a year, with the caveat that if we can't implement all the dollars we have by the time the opportunity isn't available any longer, then that money would roll into a contingency account. The priority is to cover our electrical need as quickly and effectively as we can.
- Janis asked if asking for \$100,000 means we're actually getting \$130,000 worth of solar panels. Bill replied that this is correct, but we have to come up with \$130,000 first and get \$30,000 back.
- Projects need to be started by July 6<sup>th</sup> or completed by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2027.
- Harriet suggested that we roll over \$30,000 from last year and ask the Town for \$77,250 (\$70,000 for solar arrays and \$7,250 for Elizabeth's fellowship).
- Bill stated another consideration is that everything is slow these days. We don't know how quickly we can get materials.
- Harriet explained that we will still have the community events fund and the Prize fund, which can be used toward community events.
- Harriet asked about adding money to a capital reserve fund, to build up funds for a big project. Janis suggested waiting until next year. Bill added that if things move quickly and we set contracts in place, and there's a surplus, then that money can go this year rather than next year.
- Kathy stated that conceptually, a capital fund is a good idea, but with the deadlines for the rebates, that should be the prime focus for the next year.
- Discussion about the benefits of a capital reserve fund or contingency fund.
- Janis added that we'll also have ETIPP money coming in.

**Motion:** The proposed budget includes the \$7,250 for Island Fellow fees and a total of \$100,000 to go toward solar, with \$30,000 of that coming from current funds, J. Petzel, seconded by K. Kerr.  
**Discussion as below. Roll Call. Motion passed, 7 yes, 0 no.**

- Peter stated that there are many expensive things being proposed this year, and Waldo County is asking for half a million dollars from the island. However, this all sounds reasonable.
- Janis added that for every \$100 we spend on solar, we end up netting \$200 over its lifetime. It more than pays for itself and saves the Town money.
- Harriet asked about the current payback time. Cressica answered it's 8 to 10 years with the quotes we recently got. They're expected to have a 30-year lifespan. For the \$100,000 we spend, we'll get \$200,000 savings for taxpayers in the long run.

#### 10. Other Budget items

- Harriet talked about the Health Center array. It was part of the original grant proposal that Cressica wrote for the Health Center. The funding is still there. Sundog Solar estimated \$178K. We have to do a formal RFP.
- Cressica added that we had asked them to do a proposal that avoided impacting the wetlands, and they didn't, but there's really no way to avoid impacting the wetlands if they are maximizing

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the budget and getting the array size that we need. That site is still the only option. We will have to get state and potentially federal permits, and pay wetland-impact fees. We need to talk to the permitting specialist and find out what the process is now. Once we know the process, we can go to the Planning Board with our proposal, and then proceed with the permitting process. The goal of proceeding with the permitting process first is to ensure that it's possible to build the array in the configuration we want before we get bids.

- Harriet is willing to do some of the legwork. Kathy will help.
- An idea from the budget workshop was to purchase a small battery unit to loan out to people and use for demonstrations. Details would need to be worked out. To be saved for next month.

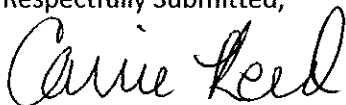
**Motion: To approve \$200 for food for the February event, B. Thomas, seconded by M. Mullins. No further discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 7 yes, 0 no.**

11. Next regular meeting: February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

12. Adjourn

**Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:11 pm, K. Kerr, seconded by M. Mullins. No Discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 7 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary

