

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 14, 2025
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:15 PM

APPROVED

2/11/25

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Harriet Bering called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 5 members

Members Present: Chair Harriet Bering, Vice Chair Bill Thomas, Dick De Grasse, Monica Mullins.

Members Present via Zoom: Janis Petzel, Cressica Brazier, Melissa Burns, Ex Officio

Members Absent: Holly Fields, Trevor Blackford

Others Present via Zoom: Chistine Robb

3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Motion: To approve Minutes of December 10, 2024, as amended, B. Thomas, seconded by M. Mullins. No further discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 7 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

4. Quick Updates on On-going Projects/Old Business

a. Library update—heat pumps and solar (Cressica)

- Harriet reported that the solar is moving along.
- For the heat pumps, we've been trying to get additional bids, and we're waiting to hear back from people. We need to decide in the next couple of weeks; we don't want to miss out on the current rebate opportunity.
- Bill stated that he understands we've been looking for lower cost providers of heat pumps, but wants to point out that, in general, when Evergreen and ReVision do a job for us, it's well done. They are reliable, they show up. It's hard to put a price on that.
- Harriet clarified that we have a bid from SolarLogix, and for the sake of due diligence, we are trying to get a couple other bids. If we don't get the other bids, we will decide whether to go with the one we have.
- Janis asked if the committee needs to vote on which company we approve. Cressica answered that we will come to a consensus to make a recommendation.
- Harriet stated that if we need to make a decision before the next committee meeting, we can circulate an email. The contract will be signed by the Town Manager, based on our recommendation. Carrie added that the committee can have a special meeting if a vote is needed.

Melissa Burns asked about the contact person for the Energy Hub. She received an email from a citizen who had understood Kizzi to be the point person, but now needs further information regarding a hot water heat pump. Cressica replied that Melissa could forward the email to Harriet, Janis, and Cressica, or the whole Energy Committee list if that's easier.

b. Municipal Building Project Update (Cressica)

- Cressica stated that updates will be provided at tomorrow's Select Board meeting.

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c. EV Charger update (Monica/Holly)

- No update.

d. Maine utility policy/rates update (Dick)

- Dick stated that, regarding the last Select Board meeting and the Constellation contract, he wanted something other than the standard offer because we could get off-peak power rates. The contract for the CMP standard offer for the State of Maine prohibits time-of-use pricing on small and medium-sized customers, but not on large customers. Dick wanted to go with a different supplier, Constellation, because the contract doesn't apply to them, and they can offer different rates.
- Dick reported that the state legislature will vote on a cabinet-level position for the energy office. This would give the officials the authority to make reasonable changes to the rate structure.
- Dick suggested going back and voting on the Constellation contract, even though the price difference is very small. He got a call back from CMP recommending that they could find a contract for us for off-peak power.
- Dick provided a handout for Steffes small thermal heat storage units that could be used in a home, which will allow for storing energy if you have a low, off-peak rate. Steffes has installed 10,500 of these units in Nova Scotia, and they amounted to 40 megawatts of off-peak power. These are huge savings. They've been popular all over the world, but not in Maine because of the contract that has been in effect on the standard offer.
- Bill stated that he understands Dick's concern that the Town didn't sign the Constellation contract, missing an opportunity for off-peak rates. Maybe it's a loss, but it's only for a few months, and it's not likely that we would see a lot of these units installed within that period of time before the next contract comes up.
- Cressica added that the Constellation contract is for the municipality, not for residents who would be installing these units.
- Harriet stated that this can be revisited as more information comes along.
- Harriet added that before taking something like this to the Select Board, we either have a special Zoom call or email exchange with members of the committee to make sure a majority is on board with whatever is recommended.
- Bill proposed that in the coming months, we use some of our time at events to popularize these ideas to see what the interest would be.
- Janis suggested that before we recommend these units to people, we need to have cost comparisons vs. heat pumps so people can make informed decisions.
- Bill clarified that he wasn't suggesting that we recommend, but that we inform and inquire about interest, conditional to lower rates in the future.

e. Firehouse Project

- Monica reported that she, Bill, Murt, and Fred met with Nate from Evergreen today about the attic space. He was able to evaluate what's going on in the attic. There is

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strapping that could possibly help with fixing the light fixtures in the fire station to make sure they don't fall on anyone's head. We need to figure out the layout.

- For insulation, he saw that there is fiberglass rolled out between the rafters, and cellulose was blown on top of it. His company most likely did not put in that cellulose, because they normally take out the fiberglass before putting in the cellulose.
- We are going to talk with Janet and Brian to see if we can find a bill to determine which company did that installation.
- Fred Porter wants to put in a new HVAC system, with proper exhaust/airflow, that will comply with the new OSHA regulations. Nate recommended doing this before putting in any type of insulation.
- Nate also recommended contacting the generator maintenance company to see if they have an engineer who could possibly build a motorized valve system to open and close the louvres that vent exhaust from the generator room. He recommended tightening up the generator room to help with heat loss.
- Bill added that Nate commented that we could do something to improve the door that leads off the northwestern corner, but didn't talk about details.
- Bill clarified that for the generator room, there is a fixed open vent for the intake, and that's what brings in cold air. Nate and Bill discussed a manifold system that limits the air flow to a conduit that goes right to the motor for the generator, and then is exhausted through the opening louvres. We ought to have an airflow engineer verify the demand, the diameters, and volumes involved.
- Monica stated that Murt explained that there is a piece on the generator that needs open air flow, which could be an issue if we went with a manifold system.
- The generator currently serves the whole building, including the Town Office and the Health Center.
- Cressica stated that the new Health Center building will have its own generator.
- Monica added that Nate recommended looking into grants to build a generator house on the outside of the municipal building, which would be better than having it inside. This would provide more space in the garage as well.
- Fred mentioned that there may be paper archives or microfilms of plans or blueprints for the firehouse, from 1987 or 1989. Monica will check with Janet or Tina. Bill stated that it would be nice to have any documents for the municipal building as well.
- Harriet summarized that for our immediate plans, we still want to shore up that generator room a little, and get some kind of proposal for the HVAC system. Bill suggested that if we're going to move the generator outside, it's probably not worth putting a lot of money into sealing that room adequately at this point, depending on timing. Better to put the carpentry money into an outside enclosure. But if it's going to take three years to move the generator, maybe we should do the insulating now.
- Nate said he'd send info on an HVAC company he recommends.
- Melissa suggested that Cressica ask the Municipal Building Project Committee if we could place this generator next to the new Health Center generator, if they are already building an enclosure. Cressica stated that in this case, the generators are ready-made

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units that have their own enclosures. It would be better if we could put the firehouse generator just outside of where it is now, in the back of the building, where the fuel supply and the existing electrical system are in place already.

- Bill added that he learned that the fuel for the generator comes from the same tank as the fuel for the furnace. When we evaluate the heating costs for the fire station, we have to remember this. Bill told Murt that he will be able to average the summer demand on fuel over the last 10 years and estimate from that how much went to the generator and subtract that from the heating cost of the building.

f. Island Institute Fellow Application

- Janis reported that the ICC and potentially the IIT expressed an interest in working with us to get the Fellow. Janis is meeting with Candice Provey from the ICC on Friday to work that out.
- The good thing about collaborating is it will cost our committee less. We won't have to take the full Fellow cost out of our budget. It also may enhance the application.
- They have changed their criteria for the fellowship. It needs to be marine employment-based or sustainability-based. We can make the argument, but it's a little more complicated.
- The application is due at the end of January.

5. Discussion of Events

- Harriet stated we had an event in December, and we have funding for additional community events. We had talked about doing one this week to provide information on the grant application, but we aren't ready to go ahead with that.
- We could put together a relatively small event fairly quickly. We may want to plan a bigger, community-wide event for spring or June when more of the seasonal residents will be here.
- Monica suggested if we want to include seasonal residents, July might be better.
- Bill suggested that we think about how to draw in people who haven't already participated in events that we've done.
- Bill suggested thinking about how much energy will go into the grant-writing in the next month and ask if we want to dilute that with the planning of an event.
- Janis stated that at the lunch event in December, we promised a follow-up meeting in January to provide information on the grant process. If we get the OCED grant, we'll have to start having a lot more community involvement.
- Cressica mentioned that the concept paper just gets us in the door. In August, we submit the application for the OCED ERA grant.
- Monica suggested tacking on to the ICC soup Wednesdays or Dinners. If we're unable to have an event right now, maybe create flyers of information about the grant process and include contact info for questions.
- Bill stated that we raised that idea with regard to the upcoming Dinner & Music event. We don't have to present anything. We can hand out a questionnaire to find out what they'd like to hear about. That might help us plan.

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- Janice likes that idea for the Soup events because people come in and out. We could have handouts and discuss one-on-one with people.
 - Melissa added that either of these events would show collaboration with the ICC for the Island Fellow application.
 - Bill suggested each member who has time could write 3-5 questions for the questionnaire. We'll pull them together and limit it to a very few questions.
6. Maggy Willcox – request for summary and planned events
- Harriet reported that Maggy requested a summary of this past year's activities for the Islesboro Island News.
 - Janis stated that Maggy is also putting together the summer calendar, so if we have anything for that to let her know.
 - Harriet offered to write a brief summary. Bill will help.
7. Ferry Connection Information – Dick
- Dick stated that this ties in with the rate structure changes he spoke about earlier. He is concerned about a 3-month delay. It's going to be hard to talk with any supplier like Constellation, when they don't have a contract in place. Dick said he will go back to Constellation and see about establishing some kind of connection with off-peak power. We have a lot of metering and control questions that have to come up.
 - The ferry is going to require time-of-use pricing. It's not good to charge batteries during the day at peak prices. Dick is thinking about a pilot program to the ferry system. The more we can pull Islesboro into the loop, the better. That's one more arrow in our quiver.
 - Dick believes the cable under the bay is big enough to handle the charging of the batteries. The ferry battery system is 2.45 megawatts. If you charge them off-peak, they will probably need to have 3 or 4 megawatts. Dick stated he remembers from conversations with CMP that the cable under the bay is 6 megawatts, so it should have enough.
 - A battery system with a solar field will help with power failures, as well.
8. Budget Update
- No update.
9. OCED concept paper and next steps
- Harriet stated that the OCED grant is a big grant. We can apply for up to \$10M.
 - The concept paper is a 7-page document that's a broad overview. The more detailed, full application would be due in August.
 - We've developed a project list of things that we would pursue. These include a battery storage system and charging capacity for the ferry. It also includes the microgrids we've talked about: one for the town center, one up island, one in Dark Harbor, and the interconnection between them, and that will include some form of storage capacity, possibly hydrogen fuel cells or a combination of hydrogen fuel with other types of batteries.

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- We're hoping to get funding that we can then offer to residents on the island in the form of low-interest loans and grants for homeowners to improve weatherization, get heat pumps, and get solar, etc.
- We'd also like to look at ways to protect our existing power lines.
- The concept paper has to describe the island, what makes us unique, why these solutions work for the island, and a description of the things we have in mind. We have a very rough draft now. We're going to share this with the engineers at NREL, who offered to help put it together.
- Senator King's office has offered to provide a letter of support if we get our draft to him.
- Once the draft has been worked on a bit more, we will circulate it to the committee. These drafts are not a public document, and are not to be shared outside the committee.
- Cressica will check whether a DOE recommendation is required to continue to the full application after the concept paper.
- Janis believes that the DOE will give a recommendation to "ought to continue" or "ought not to continue." However, even if they say you ought not to, they won't refuse your application.
- Harriet stated that once the concept paper is in, we need to be looking at other funding opportunities for the ferry, or for other pieces of what we're talking about.
- Discussion about the possibilities for battery storage on shore for the ferry.

10. Next meeting Tuesday, February 11th, at 5:15pm.

- Monica will not be in attendance, as she is expecting her baby around that time. She would still like to be as involved as she can. She plans to come back in person around summertime.

11. Other business

- Harriet reiterated that members should be conscientious when speaking to the Select Board, other committees, or members of the community. We need to be very clear about whether we are speaking on behalf of the committee, or as an individual. When we are speaking on behalf of the committee, make sure that we are actually representing the opinion of the majority of the committee. It's also a good idea, when we're meeting with another group, that more than one committee member be there. We can support each other, back each other up, verify information, etc.
- Cressica added for the record that we had serious concerns about what happened at the Select Board meeting on December 18th. We had a discussion at the previous Energy Committee meeting about our consensus regarding renewing the Constellation contract with the Town. We had come to a consensus, but not a recommendation, to wait until spring. We had wanted to come to a recommendation and present that to the Select Board, as Janet and the Select Board had asked us to do. After Dick called Janis earlier in the day before the Select Board meeting, Janis and Cressica discussed needing to represent the Energy Committee's previous discussion accurately. They attended the Select Board meeting and heard Dick recommended that the Select Board sign the contract. The Board voted before they were able to hear our representation of the committee's conversation, which included that Kay Mann from Maine Power Options and Michael Cloutier from Constellation recommended waiting until March. We had also discussed that if Dick could provide the Energy Committee with the same-day rate

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quote that he was going to present to the Select Board, we would be able to evaluate that and perhaps make a committee recommendation to the Select Board. However, Dick did not provide the quote, but he recommended, without showing us the quote and without showing the contract to the Select Board, that they sign the Constellation contract. Janis and Cressica tried to represent what the committee had discussed previously. They were able to do so after the Select Board vote, which was then rescinded in light of this information.

- Cressica also entered an objection to Dick's letter that was circulated to committee members just before tonight's meeting. If Dick is going to be making *ad hominem* insinuations about Cressica, he should just name her. She objects to the majority of his statements in the letter. Calling someone an "off-island Energy Committee member" without knowing the person's living situation is unacceptable. Cressica is a full-time resident of Islesboro who spends half the week on island, and happens to work half the time off island. A number of other claims made in the letter are false. Cressica never talked to CMP, or spoke about CMP's renegotiation of rates in March. What she did talk about was quoting emails that Constellation Energy and Maine Power Options had sent to the Town and to Dick. Cressica was cc'd on those emails and saw that they were recommending that we renegotiate the contract with Constellation Energy in March.
- Cressica hopes that in the future, Dick is able to review the facts and review the record before he makes such statements about fellow Energy Committee members.
- Harriet stated that we definitely should avoid personal attacks. We are here to represent the Town and to make recommendations that are in the Town's best interest. Having a special meeting prior to making any recommendations is a good way to avoid similar problems in the future. Each of us needs to be very careful about what we are representing.
- Janis stated that Cindy Satchfield sent her a message stating the pickleball players are unhappy with the lights in the gym. She is wondering if the Energy Committee can help get new lights. Janis believes this would fall under the jurisdiction of the school and not this committee, but wants to make sure that's accurate. Melissa replied that the Kinnicut Center is a municipally owned building. The costs are split with the school, 50-50. Melissa recommends that the holes in the roof be sealed before doing anything with the lighting. The Town is aware of the state of the roof, and the Town and the school are currently battling out who will pay for repairs.
- Discussion about the ICC possibly helping the school with LED upgrades in the past.
- Bill responded to Janis' inquiry. It would be great if the school could be more communicative on all levels having to do with activities, energy, construction, etc. Even though the school is a member of the municipality, it acts autonomously. It has its own budget, but the money comes from the Town. A lot would be solved if the school were more communicative.
- Janis stated that we have our hands full until this grant is done. Maybe we bring this issue up in March, when we discuss next year's budget.
- Melissa recommended for budget planning that the committee be cautious and know exactly what the projects are. This upcoming budget is going to be very tight.
- Dick responded to the earlier conversation about representing the Energy Committee. He stated he did not claim to represent this committee at the Select Board meeting. He's been having discussions with the state, which will continue. He made a recommendation because the committee decided that he would make a proposal to the Select Board.

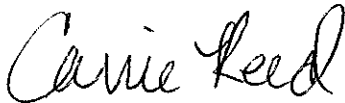
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- Monica pointed out that he agreed at the last Energy Committee meeting to inform the committee of the quote that he'd receive on the day of the Select Board meeting. This agreement was recorded in the minutes, but Dick did not send the information to the Energy Committee on that day.
- Dick left the meeting early, stating he would resign from this committee if this continues.

12. Adjourn

**Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:23 pm, B. Thomas, seconded by M. Mullins. Roll Call. No Discussion.
Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Reed".

Carrie Reed, Secretary