

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

 APPROVED

11/10/25

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, Holly Fields, Monica Mullins, Ava Schlottman, Peter Rothschild, Ex Officio

Members Present via Zoom: Kathy Kerr, Cressica Brazier (5:24), Janis Petzel (5:35)

Members Absent: Trevor Blackford

Others Present: Elizabeth Dyer

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

- Kathy noted a correction to the spelling of "lightning" on the last page.

Motion: To approve the Minutes of September 9, 2025, as amended, M. Mullins, seconded by A. Schlottman. No further discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 6 yes, 0 no. B. Thomas abstained.

4. Project updates

a. Fire station

- Bill stated he's talked with Fred and Murt. Both seem satisfied that things have functioned well to date.
- Monica added that she spoke with Josh Leach, who is open to having Energy Committee members come to a firefighter meeting to explain projects we have done and would like to do at the fire stations. The first Monday of the month is the best time to attend.
- Bill stated that we need to get a contractor. He has spoken with Chris Bolduc, who said he can't promise to do the work because he's busy. We need to find someone to get this done before heating season kicks in, by mid-December. We need a ballpark estimate of what we think it's going to cost, because the Town has rules around projects that are over \$10,000, with bidding and RFPs. Bill thinks this work should cost around \$2,000 or \$3,000.
- Harriet stated she would like to get a few bids. Bill will be out of the country. Monica will help spread the word.

b. Health Center Solar

- Bill reported that the solar panels have been producing for the past two months. We have a record of production, but CMP is not registering it and has no record. Bill called Tim Larson to find out what he knew about the paperwork for setting up the connectivity with CMP. He is supposed to get back to us on that. Bill is uncertain if we will have lost the two months of productivity, or if they will retroactively credit us. It is stored in the inverter. Bill will try to follow up on that in the next couple of days.
- Harriet stated that the next step is to do a ground array, which will be located off to the right of the health center. The Town owns a lot of land back there, but it's mostly

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wetlands. The proposed site will need some clearing. We met with one of the engineers, Tim, from Sundog. We asked him to get us a ballpark figure of how large an array that area can handle, and what that might cost. There is money budgeted for it through the CDS grant for the Health Center. We are waiting to hear back from Tim. We will have to go through an RFP process for this project.

- Bill explained that there are different levels of billing for CMP accounts. The main municipal building has Small General Service (SGS). SGS does not impose a supplemental demand fee for the kilowatt hours that we use because historically, the peak demand for the municipal building never exceeds a 20kW threshold at any time during a billing cycle (typically 30 days). By contrast, the Health Center has Medium General Service (MGS), which does impose a supplemental demand fee for each kilowatt hour used in that building. As a result, we've been paying a large monthly fee (surcharge) for the electricity used in the Health Center. We can escape that surcharge by keeping the demand use (peak kW use in any given month) down. Specifically, to shift the Health Center from MGS to SGS, we have to stay below the 20-kW demand threshold for 12 consecutive months. If usage in the building exceeds that threshold for even a second during that probationary year, even if it is in the last minute of the 12th month, the clock starts again for another 12 months. Usage in the Health Center has remained below the 20kW threshold for 7 consecutive months. If we can maintain that level of usage for another five months, then the Health Center will drop down into the SGS category, and we will cease having to pay the supplemental demand fee for the kWh we use there. This would be an excellent outcome, because it is much easier to maintain SGS status than it is to earn it. An account can exceed the 20kW threshold six times in a year without being moved automatically to MGS status, but once the SGS status is lost, the account must submit to another 12-month probationary period (with all the attendant surcharges) to regain SGS status.
- Peter asked if we can use the generator to provide power if we're approaching the 20-kWh threshold. Bill doesn't know the answer to this. It depends on the CMP algorithm.
- Harriet explained that the solar array is before the meter, so any production will reduce that. It's one of the reasons we want to get going on the larger array.
- Bill will try to have more information by the end of the week.

c. EV chargers – Holly

- Holly reported that Tyson from SolarLogix looked at the post with the conduit and said the conduit can't hold two lines because it's too narrow.
- There is another option. He can set up one charger for \$4,000, or two chargers using a subpanel for about \$5,800. He wants to make sure that's a viable option.
- Bill stated a subpanel would allow us to put multiple chargers in that area in the future. \$1,800 seems like an inexpensive surcharge for the option of future expansion.
- Harriet asked about the billing system that would be used. Bill doesn't remember what company the ICC uses. Discussion about how the money comes in. Bill will check on the ICC service and how it works. Brian Bohanon was asking. Bill remembers you can specify how much you want to charge/how much of a profit you will make.
- Harriet stated we would want to cover the cost. We're not out to make a profit, but want to provide a service to the community.

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d. Fellow

- Elizabeth Dyer reported that she's been here for about a month now, and has started making Introductory meetings. She attended the Maine Islands Coalition meeting in Rockland. Michael Nelson was also there. That was a successful meeting talking about resilience across island communities.
- Elizabeth has also started doing data analysis for the Energy Committee, with the goal of understanding how energy efficiency auditing and projects are going at the town level, and also in residential projects. She's been talking with Cressica and Janis, and she and Bill will talk tomorrow about looking at different data representations and how we can get everything together in one spot so we can start analyzing it.
- Elizabeth, Cressica, and Janis also went to the Climate Resilience Fair in Belfast.
- Elizabeth will be taking over Island Institute's Instagram page.

5. Community event

- Harriet stated she would like some feedback on the community event that took place on September 21st, and start thinking about what the next event will be.
- Elizabeth will email the survey evaluation summary to the group.
- About 70 people attended, and 21 people filled out surveys, many as couples, so about 40 responses. Overwhelmingly, people responded positively to the question of getting useful information, the timing, the food, etc. They also felt encouraged to try energy-saving projects at home from the lightning-round talks. They liked the format of the talks, and were glad they attended. People said they'd go to another event like this. They suggested topics such as climate change in general, heat-pump history and future on Islesboro, tidal-wave power, sea-level rise, and community solar. They also were interested in the chance to have individualized consultations on their own homes. This seems to be in alignment with what this committee has been doing and planning.
- Monica stated that everyone did an incredible job stepping up so quickly.
- Kathy added that she's received a lot of positive feedback. People liked the lightning-round format, and the whole event was informative and pleasant.
- Bill stated he has the impression that we are still mostly communicating with those who already "drink the Kool Aid." We need to reach out more actively to those who are not in that sphere, find out why, and address their concerns in a practical way.
- Holly stated that in her work at the ferry terminal, she gets a chance to talk to a lot of people who don't necessarily read their mail. Many people didn't know about the event. They sounded like they would want to attend if they knew about it. Holly has been getting conversations going. She feels there is a different level of the community that doesn't necessarily feel like they are invited to events like this, but they really do want to be included. Perhaps Energy Committee members could come to the terminal and talk up future events.
- Monica suggested a banner for the ICC fence for the next event.
- Harriet suggested planning an event for summer, so we can get more seasonal people, and perhaps an event in winter.

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- Kathy stated she was struck by how little it cost to do this past event. She asked if there's a time limit on leftover funds in the budget. Harriet stated that we're allowed to carry over funds from one year to the next, as long as they're used for the originally intended purpose.
- Janis, Bill, Monica, Kathy, Ava, and Holly volunteered to plan the next events. We should think about invited speakers. The subcommittee will meet in two weeks.
- Bill suggested for the summer event gathering the various island groups who are doing something, and give each one prominence to show the collective efforts groups are making.
- Harriet stated that some have proposed the idea of getting some champions from among the seasonal residents to talk about energy improvements they are making to their homes.
- Peter stated that if this committee could find a speaker or a group of speakers, he could make sure they have a slot at the Islesboro Forum. Generally, the inviter offers a dinner, overnight accommodations, and/or a Quicksilver back to Lincolnvile.
- Monica asked Cressica about getting speakers who were at the NREL event in Colorado. Cressica replied that there are good options from that event. We can make a list, and also ask the Island Institute. Bill stated that many of the NREL people are scientists, and not necessarily speakers. We would want to look for people who are good speakers.
- Bill added that if a someone speaks as a prelude to our event, the speaker could be available during the event the next day for discussion with people, because the discussion is often curtailed in the evening.
- Janis added that she is interested in finding someone who could talk about making use of modern renewable-energy technology while preserving the historic nature of the home.

6. Budget

- Harriet stated she circulated a diagram earlier today. This is not an official document. On the Town ledger, there is one budget category for the Energy Committee, and one for the Prize. Harriet created the chart in order to break down the different projects.
- The rebate applications for the library heat pumps have been submitted, but the rebates haven't been received yet. Once that is received, we'll be about \$5,000 under budget.
- The fire station heat pumps are in and running, but that went under a different rebate program, because the fire station heat pumps provide supplemental heat. It didn't qualify for as big a rebate, but the project did come in under budget.
- We have money budgeted for other fire station upgrades. We had anticipated buying a new generator and installing it outside, but Murt doesn't actually want us to do that, so we're not going to use all of those funds.
- The EV chargers are probably going to come in under budget. The secretarial funds are no longer being billed on the committee budget. We have money left over from the community events, and money for the Prize balance. We are going to be using some of the Prize money for the Window Dressers project to help supplement for people who want more than the ten free inserts Window Dressers provides, making a donation to Window Dressers to cover that.
- We need to be thinking ahead about next projects. We may want to contribute something to the Health Center ground array.
- Holly stated she started sending emails to companies that make back-up batteries for power outages. Perhaps we can get a couple of those.

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- Bill suggested asking those companies if they would be willing to loan us a battery as a demo.
- Cressica clarified that the Prize money is to be used for community-scale energy planning and outreach, energy audits, materials, and community-facing energy projects. \$25,000 was for a community solar and grid planning study. We are waiting on ETIPP to find out whether we can consider reallocating some of these funds with their support. We might need to find another way to engage with grid resilience planners in order to do that work. \$10,000 - \$15,000 was a salary for a community energy coordinator that went unused. We have the option of using that for a community energy coordinator or going through a budgeting process to reallocate that. The rest of the funds went to weatherization project materials, which is why we can use it on the Window Dressers project.
- Monica asked if it would be possible to use the Prize funds to get a small generator for either of the two island stores, allowing people to get food during power outages. Cressica replied that the funds are really for small projects and a generator is a large capital investment. It wouldn't be doing the community planning work that it's supposed to do. We could include a generator for Durkee's in the next proposal for community planning projects. The Prize is planning funds. We'd need to apply for project funds for generators.
- Bill asked if we have a grants officer to whom we can speak about reallocation of funds. Cressica replied that it's at our discretion. We could go through the process of reallocation, as long as it's a planned and public process.
- Bill stated that Efficiency Maine is good at stimulating people who have money to spend it on upgrades and then give them rebates. They are not good at giving people with no money the opportunity to do something. Would it be possible to allocate some of these funds in a temporary way to be seed money for people who don't have money to initiate the loan program and take advantage of the rebates? Could we try one or two pilot efforts? Cressica replied that gap financing is possible, but these funds are small, and the Prize funds are our only unrestricted funds—the only funds we can use to assist residents directly—so we would have to think carefully about what we could do with them over the next two years. Now that we have Elizabeth here, we could identify smaller scale projects, and that kind of gap funding could be part of it. Other groups are looking at that, and it was also part of our original proposal to have a revolving loan fund.
- Harriet stated that by February, we have to decide what our budget requests will be for next year. We should be brainstorming around what we want to get done in the next year. Most of the Town buildings have been done. There is a west-facing roof on the fire station, which is another potential location for a solar array.
- Bill stated that Jeff Boley has brought up the small building between the Transfer Station and the Salt Shed. It's in need of upgrading, because people work on projects in there, fixing things.
- Kathy asked about the possibility of pursuing some kind of community buying program, such as the one Bill brought up last time, where there are price reductions for buying in volume. Something that wouldn't be a big-ticket item. Bill stated insulation can be purchased in bulk.

7. Window Dressers

- Harriet reported that we've met the quota on orders. Trevor's been in touch with Window Dressers, and told them that we have enough to go ahead with the build.
- Harriet has been doing measurements this week.
- Cressica added that we probably won't be able to hold a community build next year.

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- The build is scheduled for November 3-9.

8. REC recap

- The committee voted by email to recommend Knollwood Energy to manage the Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) for the Town. The Select Board wanted us to weigh in on Knollwood, who will sell the RECs on behalf of the Town.
- **Roll Call for voting in favor of Knollwood via email, 10/1/25 – 10/2/25: Cressica, Monica, Harriet, Bill, Ava, Janis, Holly. Kathy abstained. No reply from Trevor.**
- Bill added that he believes the ~\$1,100 the Town received was for the fourth quarter of last year for the one array on the Town Office building. We will soon be getting RECs from four arrays.

9. Next meeting to be determined via email. Most are available on November 10th.


10. Other Business

- Janis reported that Candice Provey has heard from a lot of ICC donors that they're concerned about the number of projects that are happening across a number of groups. The preschool and the Sporting Club are both thinking of becoming 501c3 entities, and the IIT and the Sporting Club would like to become official warming centers. Candice is trying to develop a way to get groups not to overlap with each other so much, and she's hoping the Energy Committee wants to be part of that.
- Harriet stated that this can be added to the next agenda.

11. Adjourn

**Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:18 pm, M. Mullins, seconded by B. Thomas. No Discussion. Roll Call.
Motion passed, 8 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary