

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, October 8, 2024
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:15 PM

APPROVED

11/12/24

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Harriet Bering called the meeting to order at 5:25 pm.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 5 members

Members Present: Chair Harriet Bering, Vice Chair Bill Thomas, Holly Fields, Dick DeGrasse,

Members Present via Zoom: Cressica Brazier

Members Absent: Janice Petzel, Monica Mullins, Myra Sinnott, Trevor Blackford, Melissa Burns, Ex Officio

Others Present: None

3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Motion: To approve Minutes of September 17, 2024, as written, B. Thomas, seconded by H. Fields.

Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

Harriet stated that someone from the Waldo County Climate Change Coalition reached out. They have an energy subgroup, and are concentrating on looking at ways of helping low-income residents, particularly those in trailers, with weatherizing. They have invited the Energy Committee to attend an Energy Solutions Subgroup meeting. They meet every few weeks on Thursday morning at the Bangor Library. The whole Coalition group meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month, also in the Bangor Library, 9-12.

We've also been asked to provide a representative to the Maine Island Coalition, along with Nancy Alexander from the Sea Level Rise Committee, and Michael Nelson from the Housing Committee. It's an advocacy group. They discuss problems that are common to islands, and energy is one of them. They meet quarterly, and also have subgroups that meet more frequently. They meet in-person and by Zoom. Harriet will send an email with more information. If any members are interested, let her know.

Harriet was made aware of the USDA Rural Development Agency, which has an office in Bangor. They have rural community development grants for low-income families, up to \$10,000 for a family of four earning under \$37,000. The grants can be used for weatherization, roof repair, electrical work, furnace repair, etc. They also provide low-interest loans, up to \$40,000, to anyone, regardless of income level. We should get the word out to our residents. Cressica will look into it. Bill stated we might think about the different organizations on the island that could benefit from this, and collectively put out a notification to the community.

Project Leads. Harriet would like to clearly define who is the lead person for each Energy Committee Project, especially for those in which we are working with contractors and other agencies. We have a lot of people on the committee who are interested in what's going on, but it gets confusing when we have multiple people interacting. We need one person to be the primary communicator for each project.

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

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

- Cressica reported that we are moving forward on the solar project. We are getting the roofing done within October, and then we'll get the final contract from Solar Logix for the solar array, also likely within October.
- Last week, Efficiency Maine brought back online their municipal rebate program, so now we have a rebate for the heat pumps that is three times higher than the industrial/commercial rebate that we were working with. The cost of the heat pumps will be well below the budget we had set. We're looking at a cost between \$10,000 - \$35,000 instead of over \$40,000. We haven't finalized any quotes yet. We have to go back and make sure we're fully eligible with the equipment we have.
- Harriet requested that when we have all the quotes, to bring them to the committee.
- Bill would like to see the contract for the solar array.

b. Municipal Building Project Update

- Cressica had no update.

c. EV Charger update

- Holly stated that Murt has invited the Energy Committee to a training on Lithium-Ion Battery Fires, Saturday, November 9th, 9am – 1pm.

d. Maine utility policy/rates update (Dick)

- Dick reported that he did an analysis on library solar at the request of Priscilla and Dudley Fort. It looks like the solar system will double the value of the heating system.
- The solar policy that's being implemented in the state is going to be relatively short-lived from the point of view of the governor's energy office and the legislature, because it's beginning to affect the rate structure. Without storage accompanying the solar, it's a difficult sell for the long term. We should take advantage of it while we can.
- Long-term is different. Maine's structure of rates makes it difficult because the supply is separate from the transmission and distribution. Because of that separation, it's hard to affect the supply side. They can't keep offering bonuses for solar energy without understanding the impact it has for the entire year on the rest of the customers, but they are beginning to understand that.
- Dick has 3 pages of solar scams. We have a bigger problem in this state because the supply is unregulated. That means outside vendors can advertise, and CMP has to deliver it. That makes us vulnerable.

e. Community Event

- Harriet stated that, at the last meeting, we discussed having a community event in the winter. She would like to identify a subgroup of members to work on this event. If anyone is interested, please let Harriet know.

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- f. Firehouse Project
- Bill stated that the team is evaluating options. We need to know a little more about how the building is responding to outside temperature before we can determine insulation needs. The recording thermostat will help us to do that.
 - In the short-term, we can work at sealing leaks: generator room, the two small entrance doors, the big doors, and the windows.
 - We can come back at a later time with a report.
 - Discussion about split plastic curtains for the bay doors. Cressica recommended talking to the drivers. Harriet stated that this will be the next step.
 - Holly suggested maybe an air curtain, which blows hot air to prevent cold air from entering. It might be worth looking into.
5. Prize Activities Update
- Cressica reported on the Window Dressers project. Kizzi has finalized the window order. Looking for volunteers to sign up for the community build at the end of the month.
 - NREL filming dates uncertain.
 - We're done with Energy Audits.
 - Kizzi is looking into doing group purchases for heat pump installations.
 - We had a nice Sporting Club Weatherization Workshop, with Carrie, Janis, Kizzi, Cressica, and Colin. We installed the duct sealing and insulation, and fixed the flue in the kitchen. Bill stated that it will be useful to have the energy data before and after. Has anyone done anything to accumulate these data? Cressica stated we can ask them for their bills.
6. Budget Update
- Harriet shared the budget summary spreadsheet, based on Brian Bohanon's reports.
 - This calendar year we haven't spent very much. She summarized the 2023-2024 expenses.
 - There were still a couple of expenses labelled "reimbursement" that added up to about \$3,000. Harriet asked Cressica if these were reimbursements for lights in the library. Cressica stated that these were reimbursements to her for materials for the Prize projects. She has one item for the library lighting that she hasn't submitted yet, but it's for roughly \$50.
 - Harriet stated that it's confusing because of the overlapping of fiscal years. The money was budgeted and we spent less than what was budgeted.
7. Future Funding Opportunities
- Harriet asked about the Community Resilience Partnership, which the Sea Level Rise Committee obtained a couple years ago. It's up for renewal. We had talked about setting up a meeting with Shey Conover to apply for the renewal of that funding. Cressica clarified that there are two parts to that. There's the Community Resilience Partnership renewal, which we will need to submit in order to be eligible for the Community Action Grant. The Sea Level Rise Committee got the Community Action Grant last time, for \$50,000. This time, it can be up to \$75,000, and we hope to collaborate with the Sea Level Rise Committee, and possibly other groups, in order to apply for the \$75,000. The deadline is at the beginning of December.

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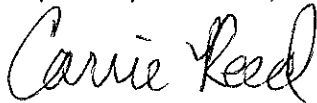
- Cressica stated we are waiting on C2C Grant. She also hasn't heard back from any potential partners that wanted us to join them for DOE Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations Grant. We probably won't have time to apply for that because it's due next Friday. They approached us about it two weeks ago and said they'd try to find a partner for us, but they haven't yet.
- The next one from the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations is the main grant that we're gearing towards, which is the Energy Improvements in Rural and Remote Areas Grant. It has been announced. The concept paper is due in a couple months. We need to put a team together for this. This will probably require cooperation from NREL. Waiting to hear back.
- Cressica will do more research on other opportunities.

8. Next meeting Tuesday, November 12th, at 5:15pm.

9. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:00 pm, B. Thomas, seconded by D. DeGrasse. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary