

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 13, 2024
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:00PM

APPROVED

3/12/24

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Myra Sinnott called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 5 members

Members Present: Chair Myra Sinnott, Vice Chair Bill Thomas, Dick DeGrasse, Cressica Brazier, Monica Mullins, Melissa Burns, Ex Officio, and Toby Martin (5:15)

Via Zoom: Harriet Bering

Members Absent: Holly Fields and Josh Leach

Others Present: Kizzi Barton, Mike Boardman, Kathy Kerr, Michael Kerr, and Melissa Olson

Others Present via Zoom: Christine Robb, Elizabeth Hayden, Howard Krum, Philip Seymour, Johnna Brazier, Pam Filoramo, Michael Giardino, Pat Mitchell, Sue Stafford, Trevor Blackford, Barry Wherren, Jane Wherren, Bob ____, Judy ____

3. Rural Energy Prize Presentation – Kizzi Barton

- Energy Prize Coordinator Kizzi Barton presented a slide show, illustrating and explaining the Dept of Energy's Energizing Rural Communities Prize and the work done so far.
- The Islesboro Energy Hub is a collaboration between Kizzi, Energy Committee members, several community members, and organizations.
- Kizzi explained how the Town got to participate in this prize, the activities the Energy Hub is doing to prepare for the Round 2 competition (for \$200,00) this coming July, and how every community member can help the Town achieve its goals for solar arrays and home energy efficiency upgrades.
- The full presentation and more information can be found at the Energy Hub's website at: <https://islesboroenergy.org/>
- To win the next prize, we need as much community involvement as we can get. Contact the Energy Hub with ideas for Island-wide energy plans, make a home-energy plan with the Hub, and take part in a community project, such as weatherizing parties, heat-pump installs, or a Window Dressers Community Build.
- Melissa Olson gave kudos to the Committee for getting this Prize. She stated that the library is working with members of the Energy Committee on getting a Sustainable Library Initiative Certification.
- Myra stated she is excited to have a pipe-wrapping party at her house, and encouraged people to host similar parties for their homes.
- Trevor Blackford asked about bulk-buying of solar panels, and about micro-grids on the island. He also asked about the home energy assessments. Do we need to do 200 by July for the Round 2 prize? Cressica answered that we need to do Home Energy Plans, but they don't have to be fully involved assessments. Some can be done remotely. Trevor offered to help spread the word. Regarding the bulk-buying of solar panels, Cressica answered that it is challenging, but we hope to get enough people together so

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 13, 2024
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:00PM

that we can bulk-buy some of the equipment, even if it's not the entire installation. Trevor offered to help create a mailing list for island solar builders. Discussion about resilience solar hubs.

- Barry and Jane Wherren stated they have a solar array on their house that they built themselves. They have a complete set of plans and materials list that they're happy to share if someone would like to emulate their work. They have a net-zero home, and are generating more electricity than they need, and would be glad to contribute to an island grid. They also offered to open their home if anyone would like to see how they are set up. They would like to participate in an assessment to see how good they're doing. They have an air-to-water heat pump that others may be interested in learning about. Barry designed their solar system, and would be happy to help others design. They put it in for less than half what it would cost if they had it professionally installed.
- Kathy Kerr stated she's drafted knowledge from Barry Wherren and John Kauer in the design of their new home. They have a hydronic heat pump that's doing radiant heating in the floor. Investing in a solar array might not bring back a return for older folks, so Island grids are appealing. It's easier to get assistance if you have a drafty old home. Myra responded that they could participate in the home energy plans; it doesn't matter what level you're at. Bill Thomas stated he paid back his first solar array in seven years.
- Dick DeGrasse stated that Round 2 will provide an opportunity for real innovation, especially if we can incorporate the Time-of-use rates with storage batteries, especially in the new municipal buildings.

4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Motion: To approve Minutes of January 9, 2024, as written, B. Thomas, seconded by C. Brazier. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 7 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

5. Discussion 2024-2025 Budget Approval

- Myra reported that last week the Committee had a good budget meeting. She handed out the proposed budget and went over upcoming items. The budget adds up to \$65,000, which is \$15,000 higher than previous years, because the cost of heat pumps and other equipment has gone up, and we have more extensive projects to complete.
- Library heat pump installation and possible electrical upgrade are big items.
- Toby stated he sent an extensive list of things he recommended the committee discuss, but some of those things were not discussed at the budget meeting. We didn't explore why the items we were proposing were the best choices.
- Toby also asked how the fire suppression equipment that's in the budget relates to energy and the committee's mission. He feels the fire suppression equipment should be a part of the Fire Department's budget. Monica explained that when the EV Charger was installed at the municipal building, the committee didn't discuss it with Public Safety. The Public Safety Director and the Town Manager have since come to us to

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 13, 2024
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:00PM

express their concerns about the safety of the charger. The Energy Committee is now tasked with providing fire suppression equipment for the EV charger.

- Myra stated next year's budget does not include the fire suppression equipment—it is in this year's budget—so it isn't relevant to the budget we're hoping to approve tonight. We did go over all the items in detail at the budget workshop.
- Toby feels it's his responsibility as a member of the Energy Committee to bring up this kind of question to make sure that it belongs in our budget and not the budget of the fire program. Myra reiterated that we are trying to vote on 2024-2025 budget, which has other items. We can talk about the EV items later.
- Monica had to leave the meeting early.

Motion: To close discussion and move to vote to approve the budget as presented, B. Thomas, seconded by C. Brazier. Further discussion as below. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, T. Martin abstained.

- Dick stated that if he had one year's oil bills for the library, he could calculate the heat loss for the building. We can then ask for a quote for heat pumps. Cressica replied that we've already provided enough information to an HVAC engineer and they've given us a preliminary quote that is within the budget, so we're on track. In order to get the Efficiency Maine Rebate, we have to have a qualified partner do the calculation and design.

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

a. Committee Chair meeting update (Myra)

- Myra reported that the Select Board is starting to hold Committee Chair meetings, perhaps quarterly, as a way to connect and report on their activities. Melissa added that committees will have the ability to be heard, and it's also an opportunity to see if there are committees that aren't active and need to be disbanded.
- Myra will be attending the meeting on Thursday, February 15.

b. Energy Prize update (Cressica)

- Cressica stated that Kizzi covered everything we wanted to share, and the information is all outlined on the handout.

c. Fire/Public Safety projects update

- Bill reported that the thermostat for the fire station garage has been ordered, and it is partially wired. It could be done by the end of the week.
- We did an inspection of the building and have an idea of how to proceed. Most of it can be done by us or local help, except for insulation above. We may need a professional assessment of the insulation upstairs. It's possible we can use the space above to control the humidity of the building.
- Bill stated he knows how to fix the hanging light fixture.

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 13, 2024
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:00PM

- d. Municipal Building Project update (Cressica)
- Cressica has no update.
 - Dick stated he will call the MPUC to open the possibility of including something for the new buildings in Round 2 of the Energy Prize.
 - Bill added we are in discussions with Midcoast Energy about the design for the heat pump installation in this building. We're looking for a second company to bid on it. He has called Solar Logix, but they have not responded yet. Myra explained that we are trying to get these quotes so we can put in an RFP through Efficiency Maine, which then gives us a good chance of getting rebates for variable-flow heat pumps, which are more moveable for when the building gets renovated.
- e. EV Charger update (Monica/Holly)
- Myra stated that Monica could go ahead and order the fire suppression equipment.
 - To address Toby's concerns, Myra stated that the Town asked the Energy Committee to look into the equipment. We have taken it on in support of the Fire Department and Public Safety Department.
 - Bill added we received an email this week from Fred Porter, putting forth his concern again. We can't use the EV charger if we don't deal with the potential fire hazard. The Town Manager specifically asked us to address this issue.
 - Toby stated he felt the fire suppression equipment is more appropriately handled through the fire program, not us. We could better put to use those funds for an energy-related project.
 - Melissa stated that the Fire Department doesn't have the funds in their budget this year. If we want to turn on the EV charger, the Energy Committee has to contribute to it. If we no longer want to have the charging station, we lose the money that's been invested in it. The Select Board has asked us to take care of it. Harriet pointed out that, at the end of the day, it all comes out of the same pot. The Town is buying this equipment with taxpayer money. This group is encouraging electric chargers and vehicles, and that's why they asked us to do it. Myra added that we can look at it as one package: we get the charger and the safety equipment that goes with it.
 - Melissa stated that for next budget, this group is asking for \$15,000 more, and showing that we have contributed to the fire suppression equipment looks good and will work in our favor for approval of an increased budget.
 - The majority of the group believes this is a worthwhile expenditure in this budget. It would be more energy efficient to allow the EV chargers to be used.

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 13, 2024
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:00PM

- f. Maine utility policy/rates update (Dick)
 - Dick provided a handout and stated his plan is to talk with the MPUC informally, and possibly Efficiency Maine, so that we might have some ammunition for Round 2 of the Energy Prize.

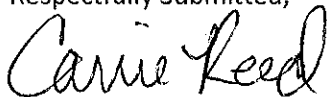
- g. Annual Report update (Toby)
 - Toby provided a budget update with a current spreadsheet detailing current and proposed FY 25 budget.
 - Regarding the Annual Report, Toby is still waiting for information from members. Bill stated he sent information via email this afternoon.
 - Melissa requested the Energy Hub have a separate report for the Annual Report and for Islesboro Looking Ahead.

- 7. Coordination/Communication with Other Groups
 - Bill reported that coordination is in the works with ICC. He will be talking with Philip Ladd soon.

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

- 9. Adjourn
**Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:22pm, B. Thomas, seconded by D. DeGrasse. Roll Call.
Motion passed, 6 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary

