

Islesboro Energy Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, July 9, 2024  
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:15 PM

APPROVED

8/13/24

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, Cressica Brazier, Dick DeGrasse, Monica Mullins, and Melissa Burns, Ex Officio

Members Present via Zoom: Myra Sinnott

Members Absent: Toby Martin, Josh Leach, and Holly Fields

Others Present via Zoom: Christine Robb

3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

**Motion: To approve Minutes of June 11, 2024, as written, C. Brazier, seconded by M. Sinnott. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. B. Thomas abstained.**

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

a. Library/Town Office update (Cressica)

- Bill reported that the heat pump system at the Town Office should be done by Thursday. The invoice is dated as of last fiscal year.
- The heat pump that used to be in this room is now installed at the Transfer Station.
- Monica reported that the lighting fixture that's been hanging in the PS Garage by one bolt is now half off the ceiling. It may damage a fire truck or fall on someone's head. We need to get this fixed. Monica will ask the Fire Chief who should do this. We may need a licensed contractor. Monica will check.
- Cressica reported that the LED upgrade at the library has been completed. The motion sensors are working.
- We got a heat pump proposal for the library from SolarLogix. We were waiting to see how they did in this building first. Melissa will review it with them, in terms of locations. We got two bids, and SolarLogix was the better bid.
- They will not go through ceiling (insulation recently installed) or the historical structure.
- Dick asked about a financial analysis and data for fuel usage over 12 months. Bill will provide a copy.
- Cressica stated that SolarLogix has very good engineers who designed the system. We can rely on them. They are calculating based on high and low temperature parameters.

b. Municipal Building Project Update

- Dick asked about heat loss data of the new Health Center building. From that, we can determine what kind of heating system is proposed. Cressica replied that we haven't yet received any mechanical system design information. She has requested it from the

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engineers, but hasn't received it yet. They have already designed it and contracted it out. It will be a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) Heat Pump system. The Energy Committee is not involved in that. It's part of the Construction Manager's project.

- Dick would like to talk with the manager of the project. Cressica stressed that we can talk with Lauren Bruce, but we're not allowed to talk with the design team directly.
- Myra added that Janis and then Cressica have been liaisons to the Municipal Building Project Committee (MBPC), and have advocated for the most energy efficient building, including the HVAC systems. The MBPC has taken our insights seriously. We should be confident that they're taking our suggestions into consideration.

c. EV Charger update (Monica/Holly)

- Cressica reported that the area that was designated for the EV Charger is being used as a staging area for construction. They won't be able to install the charger until the building is further along.

d. Maine utility policy/rates update (Dick)

- Dick stated he has spoken with the Maine Public Utilities Commission on several occasions. There are rate designs and other considerations that might be applied to both the library and the new Health Center building. That's why it's important to know what the heat losses are. We can then look at whether any rate design alternatives might be of help.
- Dick provided a handout with information on a 10-year history of distribution, transmission, and Standard Offer service rates from Central Maine Power (CMP). The 2023 bar includes a solar subsidy, nearly identical to this year.
- The municipality is currently under contract with the Maine Public Options group and Constellation Energy, and they are considerably less.
- Cressica pointed out that these are last year's numbers. The supply component is still the same price as the last time we talked about this, and the Town's contract is .005 cents higher than the Standard Offer. It's 10.6 cents per kWh for the Standard Offer right now, and the Town's contract with MPO is about 10.7 or 10.8 cents. They are nearly the same. Dick believes that the rate for municipalities is lower, around 6 or 7 cents. He believes the 10 cents is for the average retail customer.
- Myra and Cressica believe the contract is for about 10 cents per kWh.
- Cressica pulled up the MPO contract. It states 11.04 cents/kWh. The Standard Offer 10.6 cents/kWh. It just went down by .2 cents on July 1.
- Dick will provide the contract. Bill requested he send it in advance via email.

5. Prize update and info on current application

- Cressica reported that since the last meeting, we've submitted the Clean Energy to Communities (C2C) Technical Assistance Grant application, with Central Maine Power as a partner, in addition to support letters from 12 Islesboro community organizations, plus the Island Institute.

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- For the Rural Energy Prize, we've now successfully made at least 10 non-binding Solar Hosting Agreements with Islesboro residents. These are people who've been willing to sign memoranda of understanding that we will be able to submit with our Prize application. Our goal for this Prize year was to identify sites with people who were interested in exploring building arrays.
- If all of those arrays were built, we would exceed the island's grid hosting capacity for solar. It's a significant number of kW that we could put up. This also means that we have a very low grid-hosting capacity. We were surprised to learn this.
- Harriet asked about the original ETIPP plan. Are we looking at a capacity that's lower than what they projected? Cressica answered that they didn't take into account the actual capacity that we had for connecting to our circuit. They only determined what we needed on the island in order to provide for all of our electricity needs. That number is about 4.7 megawatts, and the hosting capacity is 2.6 megawatts. That's through the standard procedure for CMP for large arrays. However, we're hoping to be able to design a system that can accommodate more solar. One of the ways is through storage. There are other strategies for doing engineering analysis of the system in order to see what it could actually accommodate.
- Myra added that CMP's determination of capacity is the final say, but there are ways to expand the duration of solar. Cressica stated that there's a dynamic capacity as opposed to CMP's conservative capacity. Myra explained that we can design any project we want; CMP will say we can do it if we spend a lot of money to upgrade the system.
- Harriet stated that network upgrades could be a statewide thing if there are a lot of communities doing similar projects. Cressica replied that we could do it with our substation cluster.
- Cressica stated that with the Islesboro Economic Sustainability Corporation (IESC), we've been able to discuss potential public ownership, or ways of having a quasi-municipal owner of the community solar arrays, which will make us eligible for federal funding, allowing larger arrays.
- Kizzi and the Energy Hub have been working hard to collect Home Energy Surveys. We have 120 of our goal of 200, and we're going to keep working on that.
- Last year we started the Rural Energy Prize with five potential partners, including the Community Center, the IESC, the Sustainable Housing and Development Foundation (SHADF), and Revision Energy. This week, we will be submitting letters of support and commitment from nine current and potential partners to confirm the actions we've been taking toward developing the community solar arrays, microgrids, and community engagement. Bill got us a statement from Efficiency Maine attesting to our Town's energy efficiency activities. We will include this in our Prize application.
- The Select Board approved the key Letter of Support for us to confirm a lot of these activities.
- Nearly ready to submit these documents for the \$200,000 Prize at end of this week.
- Myra asked to clarify that only communities that got the first round are able to apply for the second round of the Prize, so it's a smaller pool. Is there a sense of how many are applying? Cressica replied that we've heard from several groups who have accomplished varying degrees of their goals compared to what they imagined. We don't have an island-wide, town-approved solar plan with a financing strategy. Although we didn't put the financing strategy in our initial proposal, we don't have a town-approved plan. There are certain goals we're getting close to,

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but didn't meet, so we'll be reporting on that. Hopefully they'll think we're able to follow through on at least one of these projects so we can be eligible for this Prize. There are 65 groups that are in our track, and about 20 of them might get the second Prize, but there's also another track that has fewer teams in it, and they might shift some of the funding to our track. We don't know what our probability is right now. It's between 33% and 40%.

- Harriet added that it's likely most groups didn't achieve all the goals they set. The things we have just applied for would give us funding that would enable hiring professional management and getting the engineering studies. It would allow us to move forward.

6. Discussion of this year's budget and project plans

- Harriet stated that we did not receive the June summary from Toby.
- At Town Meeting, an ordinance passed that allows us to pay some of our June bills in July of the new fiscal year, and still count it toward the previous fiscal year. That makes it easier since we had some items, such as the municipal building VRF system and the library lighting, that are just finishing up now. Hopefully by the next meeting we'll be able to report on the final numbers.
- The only thing Harriet doesn't know about is the equipment for the Fire Department. Monica stated that it was purchased, and she will send receipts to the group email. Cressica added that it was submitted, but was done on a credit card, so was delayed. The invoice was dated in June.
- We asked for and received \$65,000 for this current year.
  - \$40,000 toward the library heat pump installation and possible electrical upgrade. We are in the process of getting estimates for this. Cressica stated she doesn't think the electrical system needs to be upgraded for the heat pump, but she will confirm.
  - \$2,000 toward secretarial costs for producing the meeting minutes.
  - \$5,000 for a community event.
  - \$5,000 for the purchase of a blower-door test unit. Cressica stated that this was removed. Janet felt it wasn't directly related to Town activities, though it could be.
  - \$13,000 for door sensors, insulation, and dehumidification for the Fire station.
  - Bill stated there should be a line for tightening up the generator room. Myra replied that the insulation for the fire station included the generator room.
  - Myra thought that the possible electrical upgrade for the library was for an EV charger. Cressica replied that this is part of the long-term plan, but we're holding off for now.
  - Melissa asked if the relocation of the municipal building EV charger is in the budget. Cressica stated she encouraged the inclusion of that, but is unsure if it was actually included. The \$5,000 that was earmarked for the blower-door test unit could be shifted for this. Harriet asked how much it will cost to move the charger. Cressica replied that it depends on whether it needs a new entry, how we're going to connect it to the existing electrical system, etc.
  - Myra asked if the relocation of the charger could be done as part of the renovation of the municipal building. Melissa replied that the renovation is for the inside of the building and not outside. Bill stated that he thought it was part of the construction of the new Health Center building. Cressica stated they value-engineered that part out, but in September we might find out if we've gotten approval for the CDS budget, which

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includes EV charging, so we can roll the charger into that project. Melissa recommends putting it in this budget under the \$5,000 anyway, so it can roll into this if needed.

- Discussion about the location of the charger. At one point, it was on the plans abutting the new parking area, away from all the buildings. It's not on the plans now. Bill stated it would be a wise idea to put it on the plans so they can put the wires in before other work is done. Cressica has requested this multiple times. She has faith it will be done.

a. Identify point person for each project.

- Cressica: Library/heat pump
- Josh: Fire Station
- Cressica and Monica: EV Charger
- Community Event? After the Prize submission, we can regroup and decide.

7. Other Business

- Myra reported that Janis Petzel has received an apricot tree from the Energy Committee as a Thank-you, and also as a commemoration for Dave. Janis sent her thanks to the Committee. It was a very sweet gesture and she very much appreciates it, and sends her love.

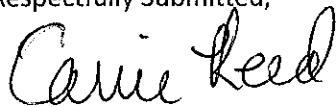
8. Homework for next meeting

9. Next meeting, Tuesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, at 5:15pm.

10. Adjourn

**Motion to adjourn meeting at 5:58 pm, M. Mullins, seconded by B. Thomas. Roll Call. Motion passed, 6 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary

