

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, August 12, 2025
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:15 PM

 **APPROVED**
9/9/25

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 4 members

Members Present: Chair Harriet Bering, Vice Chair Bill Thomas, Janis Petzel, Holly Fields, Monica Mullins, Cressica Brazier, Kathy Kerr, Ava Schlottman (5:20)

Members Present via Zoom: Trevor Blackford, Peter Rothschild, Ex Officio

3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting: July 8, 2025.

Motion: To approve the Minutes of July 8, 2025, as written, M. Mullins, seconded by K. Kerr. No further discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 7 yes, 0 no. B. Thomas abstained.

4. Project updates

a. Fire station – Bill

- Bill reported that the heat pump installation at the Fire Station is complete. Bill will try to track down the additional documents. Fred seems happy with the installation. No word from Murt.
- We need to come to some conclusion about the drafty generator room prior to the heating season. There had been some discussion about a new generator vs. moving the old one. We need to sit down with Fred and Murt to find out about their preferences. We were thinking about increasing the size of the generator, but it turns out we can't do that, because the wiring in the building does not support a higher wattage transfer throughout the building. A 40K would be the highest if we choose to buy a new one.

b. Library – Harriet

- Harriet reported that the solar panels are installed. They are not active yet; SolarLogix is supposed to let us know why. We have to fill out the application, to be signed by Janet Anderson, for credits, then the credits are paid to the Town. The credits will be in effect through January 1st, so we should be able to get that.
- Installation of the heat pumps will start soon. Harriet met with Mark Ogden last week to go over the plan.
- Friends of the Library, who are paying for the solar panels, have asked about storage batteries. Some of the members have commented about not wanting to deal with CMP, and going off the grid.
- Bill stated that CMP has already set up the account so they can record what is generated.
- Harriet added that she explained to the Friends that it's set up so that any surplus energy generated by the library solar panels would be applied to other Town accounts.
- They are also hoping to have energy stored in batteries in the event of an outage.

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- Janis stated that you can island a battery, but it doesn't guarantee that you'll have enough to run your whole building.
- Holly stated that the backup batteries at her house run two computer systems, the WiFi, and the refrigerator. She's thinking about adding a battery to back up the furnace or water heater.
- Bill suggested asking the library and/or the Friends what they hope to achieve. We would be storing electricity in the least used of all the municipal buildings.
- Janis stated that the library offers WiFi 24/7, so a battery for that might not be a bad idea. Discussion about the ICC being a warming center with WiFi. It doesn't seem crucial for the library to be open during an outage.
- Bill stated that we could buy a small battery, like an APC power supply, that would run WiFi for a few hours. It would be a few hundred dollars.
- Cressica stated the library still has a boiler for backup heat.
- Bill stated that if the library were off the grid, CMP could not route the output from the solar array to the rest of the Town, so that's not doable.
- Harriet stated she will meet with the Friends to learn more about their interests.
- Bill stated that the Town has put a fair amount of effort into the library. The Friends have resources. What if we could hold their willingness to buy batteries until there is a better time when it would benefit more of the Town? Kathy stated that they are bound to specifically fundraise for the library.
- Bill asked about the possibility of the Town buying solar credits from private owners. He knows of someone who is shuttling surplus electricity to someone else. There is nothing that keeps CMP from shunting electricity to any account specified by the person with excess, as long as they have a CMP account. It's worth mentioning to the Select Board.
- Discussion about how the ETIPP plan is about making our own electricity.
- Cressica stated that the legal structure is that you have to have a financial relationship. We were investigating whether or not the Town could put an array between here and the preschool and have an agreement to share credits. They would have to have some kind of payment for those credits.
- Kathy asked about net metering being removed from commercial accounts. Bill replied that it's hard to know what's coming next.
- Harriet suggested holding off until we hear from ETIPP.
- Bill offered to reach out to CMP to find out what the constraints are.

c. Health Center – Harriet

- Harriet reported that Sundog Solar preparing to put up the rooftop solar array.
- With the CDS grant money, the plan was for a ground array, but there were issues with where it would be best sited. While we still have the money, we need to move ahead. Harriet is thinking about asking Sundog what they think. We're not at the point of putting out an RFP yet, because we don't have a clear idea of where it would be sited. Prices are going up, and tax credits will probably go away by the end of the year.
- Cressica added that there's been an additional constraint placed on the last area that was non-wetland, because there's a new septic system going in. That whole area has significant shading, so we need to explore other options.

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- Bill asked how big of an array we can afford. Cressica replied that we could originally afford up to 100 kilowatts, but we need to reevaluate based on what the power consumption of the building really is, as well as what the Sundog array covers.
- Harriet asked if it's possible to put a solar array over a septic system. Bill replied that as long as the weight is not supported on the septic system it is doable. Cressica added that it is a narrow footprint, so it might be possible to bridge it, but it would require cutting out a lot of trees, which is not especially desirable.
- Bill stated that haste is an issue because of the limited time to get tax credits and rebates. What is the practicality of siting an array somewhere where space is available, and then moving it later? Cressica replied that the piles and interconnection are significant labor and material components.
- Janis asked why we'd have to move it? Can we put it anywhere and have the account go to the Health Center? Cressica replied that the main consideration was wanting to reduce the demand coming out of the Health Center to avoid higher demand charges. We don't know if that's possible, engineering wise. We'd have to look at the demand profile of the building, and all the options.

d. EV chargers – Holly

- Holly reported that she spoke with the SolarLogix project manager. He is sending an estimate. Holly also spoke with the architect. The conduit is in and the connection for the 240 is available. It just needs to be wired and set up. SolarLogix does not have a preference for which EV charger we use.
- Cressica asked if they had any recommendations on the kilowatt output. That would dictate brands we look at. FLO is a low-level. We could possibly go higher.
- This will affect the demand going through the building.
- Two towns recommended FLO and said they've had good experiences, especially with a third-party installer. We need to do a little research on chargers.
- Trevor asked about the existing charger. Cressica explained that the commercial account was never properly set up, and they were not responsive. Our subscription has expired by now. We'd have to start anew anyway. We could use the Grizzly with a different service, but the goal was to have an integrated service and charger.
- Harriet added that we have space for two connections. Our thought was to donate the old one to a nonprofit, or to the Town for vehicles that don't require billing.

e. Fellow – Janis

- Janis reported that Elizabeth is moving in at the beginning of September and will be here permanently starting on September 5th.
- Janis and Candice will have diversity and harassment training, and Elizabeth will probably start working the week of the 8th. We will spend time introducing her to the community the first couple of weeks.
- Harriet suggested an informal welcome with members of the committee.
- Elizabeth will have space at the IIC. Candice and Janis will be advisors and will meet with her once a week.

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- Janis requested members submit any kind of paperwork and data on projects they've done. Elizabeth's goal will be to follow up on projects.

5. "Islesboro Looking Ahead"

- Harriet reported that she mentioned to the Select Board that the Energy Committee would like to include some of our activities in the "Islesboro Looking Ahead" document.
- Janis presented a rough draft. She invited members to share ideas, and she will try to collate them. At the next meeting, we can decide whether it's close to being done. When it's ready, she would like to show it to Peter Rothschild and Steve Pendleton, and then put it together to present to the Select Board.

6. ETIPP Application

- Harriet reported that the ETIPP application was submitted on July 27th. It included 6-7 letters of support from various stakeholders.

7. Community event

- Janis stated that the Event Subcommittee tossed around some ideas. It would be helpful to know how much of a budget we have for an event. The biggest expense will be food.
- Harriet stated we have about \$10,000 allocated to community events, plus there's additional money in the Prize, if it seems appropriate.
- Monica stated she reached out to Jordy about possibly providing catering for an event. He said he's stepping down from his position at the Sporting Club in October.
- Janis stated that she's meeting with Candice on Friday to go over dates and ideas. The subcommittee decided that an early evening, potentially on a Saturday, would work.
- The goals of this event are to welcome the new Fellow, update the community about what the Energy Committee has been doing, and to get people talking again about their energy experiences on the island. We discussed October 4th and September 21st.
- Trevor suggested going with the earlier date, so that there's time to incorporate Window Dressers measuring and advertising the community build.
- Members agreed that Sunday, Sept 21 works.
- Janis stated that the plan is for information tables, a buffet table, and dining tables, with a big visual poster highlighting our committee activities and mission statement. Maybe a poster showing ways that our past actions have saved money for the Town. Monica has volunteered to make the posters. Around 4:30, the catered food will be available. Lightning-round talks would take around 10 minutes each, and we will have an introduction to the Fellow.
- Trevor volunteered to lead the presentation on Window Dressers.
- Bill stated that we need to be careful about how we say that we are saving money for the Town. Most of our savings are prospective, not immediate. We've put out a lot of money on heat pumps and solar arrays. We've diminished how much we have to pay for fuel oil, but translating that into savings is complicated. We don't want to make a blanket statement.
- Harriet added that we need to be prepared with data. It's important to recognize the validity of concerns that people have, and how we are addressing them.

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- Janis proposed a budget of \$3,500 for this event.
- Janis asked if Islesboro Affordable Properties (IAP) is doing anything with clean energy at their new houses. Harriet stated that they are limited, but they do have heat pumps. We could invite them to be speakers. Trevor will talk with Cate Blackford, who is on the Board.
- Janis stated that the group also talked about a summer event for next year. In our first round of ETIPP, one part of the technical assessment was to figure out how to get to net zero energy on the island. The report stated that we need to get the summer community to participate in reducing energy use.
- Harriet stated that it's important to not think about the summer community as an entity. The Tarratine Club has a lot of summer people as members, but it's less than half of the summer residents.
- Janis clarified that we've been focusing on the year-round residents in our activities. How do we get the message to the summer residents?
- Harriet stated that a summer event is a great idea. How do we get repeated exposure? Maybe a table at the farmers' market.
- Kathy stated that they discussed at the meeting the question of how to get to people who have large, uninsulated summer houses that are running heat all winter to protect their belongings.
- Bill proposed that if you find the right people who have friends who meet this description, you enlist those people to draw in their friends, and it spreads that way slowly.
- Janis stated she's been going to the Sunday forums, which have been attended by a wide cross-section of the community, including a lot of summer people. Janis is hoping we can help identify a speaker who could present a great idea. Perhaps the Tarratine Club would be willing to let us give a presentation or have handouts.
- Harriet stated the Club wouldn't allow us to give a presentation, as she has talked to them in the past. But last year, they allowed something in one of the newsletters. Harriet could talk to them once we have something put together.
- Bill suggested gathering the data of how many people heat their homes in the winter and how many shut them down completely.
- Caretakers may be a good resource. Monica suggested an article in the newspaper. We could offer to discuss ways of conserving energy while helping to preserve the structural history and integrity of the house.
- Harriet suggested engaging some people who have renovated their homes to be more efficient.
- Monica's husband is working for a family who is doing a lot to improve efficiency in their historic house. They installed Indo window inserts, which made a big difference.
- Harriet stated that it might be worthwhile to get people like this to speak at an event or write about their experience for the Island News.
- Bill stated he will ask a couple people that he knows if they are willing to be spokespeople.
- Janis stated that another of her ideas is to spur a good-natured competition, giving an award to the house that reduces its carbon footprint the most, or awards to local builders.
- If we can identify people who have done this work, would they let us have energy tours? This should include houses big and small.

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- Janis stated that we need to hone the message, figure out who we want to receive the message, and then identify champions and move from there.
- Discussion about the challenges of geothermal heating on the island.
- Kathy recommended contacting Patrick O'Bannon, who would have ideas on finding someone who is energy conscious to speak at the forum in terms of historic preservation.
- Peter Rothschild is on the Forum board. He stated that this is timely, because the board is soliciting suggestions for next year's speakers. Bruce Claflin is the new chair. Last Sunday, Dr. Mann, who is one of the world's experts on climate change, spoke at the forum. Peter stated that the presentation was great, but left him wondering how we apply the ideas locally. Alix Thorne suggested doing something within the forum, as that is a way to attract seasonal residents.
- Peter stated that his introduction to the Select Board was based on his concern to find ways to make Islesboro sustainable for our children and grandchildren. This is definitely part of it.
- Peter will try to think of a candidate for a speaker. Kathy will contact Patrick O'Bannon to see if he has any ideas. Someone at ReVision might know a potential candidate.
- Peter stated the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Maine Community Foundation have invested in a venture capital effort to support local solar energy. The Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) has also been promoting energy related development.
- Cressica will ask around at the University of Maine. She likes the idea of thinking through the Maine Coast Heritage Trust or GMRI.
- Janis will reach out to the Maine Historical Society.
- Peter stated that a lot of people on Islesboro would like to hear about the costs and benefits, and how to do this work to be more energy efficient, the nuts and bolts of it. He spoke about his experience with his large, uninsulated house. It was a daunting task.

8. Other business

- None.

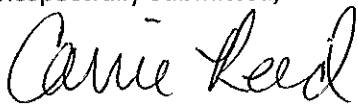
9. Next meeting Tuesday, September 9th, at 5:15pm.

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:30 pm, M. Mullins, seconded by B. Thomas. No Discussion. Roll Call.

Motion passed, 8 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary