

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, August 15, 2023
Zoom Meeting at 5:15PM

APPROVED

9/12/23

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Myra Sinnott called the meeting to order at 5:22 pm.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 5 members

Members Present: Myra Sinnott (via phone), Bill Thomas, Dick DeGrasse, Cressica Brazier (via phone), Toby Martin, Josh Leach, Monica Mullins, Harriet Bering and Holly Fields.

Members Absent: Melissa Burns, Ex Officio.

Others Present: Jan Harmen and Janice Leach

3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Motion: To approve Minutes of July 11, 2023, as written, B. Thomas, seconded by T. Martin. No further discussion. Motion passed, 8 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

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

a. Energy efficiency projects update (Bill)

- Bill reported that the EV charger is still stalled. Waiting for Page to install a WiFi booster.
- LED upgrade at the Municipal building: Bill and Cressica sent a reply to Kayla Millet from Efficiency Maine last week with questions regarding the rebate. Waiting to hear back.
- Invoice for the library work: Bill has been in touch with Brian Robinson, who promised an updated Evergreen invoice. Bill got a message from Brian Schortz, president of Evergreen, who sent a PDF file to look over. Bill will ask Brian Schortz to submit the \$14,190 invoice to the Town so we can get this finalized.

b. ETIPP (Myra)

- Myra reported that we have our slides from ETIPP on the report. We can use them for our community outreach efforts. Those came through last week. Bill asked if the report has been finalized yet. Myra answered that she hasn't seen anything about that yet; it's still going through the government approval process.

c. Energy Prize Update (Cressica)

- Cressica reported that we have received the prize money (\$100,000) and we're ready to do spending planning.

d. Municipal Building Project (Cressica)

- Cressica stated that the project architect is preparing a summary, which Cressica will send out to the group when she receives it.

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- Bill requested the Energy Committee get digital copies of the floor plans for the two buildings.
- Bill asked if the orientation of the hip roof on the Health Center building will still be good for solar panels. Cressica answered that there is a SE-facing roof, and a SW-facing roof, and solar panels will need to go on both of those sides, as the roof design has gotten smaller.

5. Discussion

a. Update on 2023-2024 budget exercise (Myra).

- Myra included information on the budget in the email she sent to the group with tonight's agenda. These are items that the group came up with at the budget workshop on July 29th. The range is \$45,000 - \$55,000.
- Toby asked if we have an invoice for the EV charger. Bill explained that we've paid for the installation of the EV charger. What we need is a booster for the WiFi signal. The signal is too weak at the EV charger box, and it refuses to connect to the existing Town office network. Unsure if there will be a charge for Page to install a booster.
- Toby asked about signage for the EV charger. We had originally discussed a budget of about \$250. Myra agreed that we can add this to this year's budget. Bill will get info from Sara Babbidge at the ICC on where she got signs.
- Bill added that the EV charger at the ICC brought in about \$600 from 7/1 – 8/15. Not sure if that is net profit. The Town will decide how to use funds from the new EV charger. Toby suggested that money received from charging go into an Energy Fund that will go toward energy projects. Myra will discuss this with the Town.
- Bill stated the dimmer switch item for the library is no longer relevant. They may become important if they don't turn the lights off; the electric bill seems a little high. Bill will gather data and share with the committee. Regarding motion sensors at the library: access to wiring is now difficult due to the insulation. Justin will look into wireless controls.
- Harriet asked about the range of the budget. Have we ranked the three items that have a range? We'd have to look at the midpoint on each of those, or some combination, to hit \$50,000. We'd have to rank those three things in terms of priority to guide decisions. Bill said he could help with that. Toby added that he put everything down as a grid and averaged the items. He feels we need discipline in our process for learning exactly what these things are going to cost.
- Myra added that two of the three things are for the library. The Friends of the Library have made it clear that they are interested in financially supporting some of the work we are doing, so we need to engage them to find out how much money they want to spend. If they will help fund some of the studies, that would put us below our budget amount. Toby responded that the Library

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knows about the need for things that might come up. At the next meeting at the end of the month, he will present some thinking about the budget. We should not anticipate a large contribution. Myra will help write up a description of what we might like to do.

- Bill suggested that the electrical engineering study for the library is the most critical item. Other work in the library is contingent upon the outcome of that. We should find an electrical engineer and get a ballpark estimate of what it would cost to do a study. Melissa had previously mentioned the students at UMaine might be able to help with a study. Cressica believes that for this project it would probably be better not to use students. Bill asked if anyone knows who the engineer was who evaluated the municipal building several years ago. Was the Town satisfied with that individual, and can we find out about extending that work to the library? Holly replied that she would have to go back and look at notes. Cressica offered to ask Janet about it. Myra asked Josh if he could ask Janet, and also find out about the cost, and he agreed.
 - Myra asked about finding someone who can do a historical structure survey and let us know what it might cost to install equipment. Bill stated that it may be premature to involve that person at this point. The electrical analysis should come first. Myra will take the Historical Structure Survey out of the budget for this year.
 - Cressica suggested asking Justin what he thinks about doing an upgrade before we hire someone to do an engineering study.
 - Toby asked about funds from the prize and if we could use them for something like this to supplement our budget. Myra answered that the prize money is for a specific purpose and not to supplement our budget.
 - Toby reported that for this fiscal year, we've spent \$1000 for the lighting project in the training room, as well as the cost for recording the minutes. \$1152.88 so far.
 - Josh asked our guest, Jan Harmen, if she would like to address the committee with a presentation, or any questions or concerns. Jan replied that she did not.
- b. Pine Tree Power ballot initiative—Islesboro broadband concerns (Dick)
- Myra stated that Dick mentioned last week that there will be a ballot initiative in November: the decision of whether Pine Tree Power shall buy out CMP and Versant and become the utility in Maine, supplying electricity as well as broadband. Dick has concerns that our broadband contract could be at risk. Myra sent information to the group regarding Pine Tree's campaign.
 - Dick provided a handout which describes Pine Tree Power and Central Maine Power, and Dick's rationale behind keeping CMP in place. Dick feels it's important that the committee vote on the issue to take a position.
 - Pine Tree Power is proposing to buy out all of CMP's assets, including the Town's contract and the cables that provides electricity and broadband on the island.

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- Dick believes that CMP provides reasonable service to Islesboro and responds well to problems. The broadband is a \$25,000/year contract between the Town of Islesboro and CMP. Dick does not want to upset that with a new entity we know nothing about, and is proposing that we vote “no” for any new company to buy the assets of CMP. It would recognize on a policy level that the Town of Islesboro does not want to throw out CMP and bring in an unknown entity to run our utility. Holly pointed out that it’s not up to us; it’s up to the voters of Maine.
 - Discussion about the issue and whether or not the committee should take a position to educate islanders about the choice. Dick has not spoken with the Broadband Committee to get their opinion on this issue.
 - Most members of the committee felt that they did not have enough information to make a decision on the issue at this time, and also do not want the committee to become political.
 - Harriet suggested an article illustrating the pros and cons for the Islesboro Island News. Dick stated he will write something for the IIN.
 - Bill suggested waiting a month and educating ourselves before making a decision. Toby raised the question of whether the Select Board would even consider taking a policy position on this.
 - Myra asked Dick if he’s willing to gather neutral information. Perhaps we could present information to the public neutrally. Dick didn’t think he could be neutral.
 - Holly suggested that it would be more helpful to explain to people how to read the bill, what CMP is responsible for, and what each customer can control.
 - Myra volunteered to help gather neutral information if the committee wants to pursue educating the community on this topic.
 - Cressica stated that we should not be making policy positions, and she doesn’t think we should try to share objective information. The committee attempted that in the past with the Clean Energy Corridor issue. The committee decided not to do it, because it’s difficult to be thorough and completely objective.
 - Bill added that our focus should be on the Energy Prize. We have a lot on our plates. Toby added that we don’t have time to get thorough info out on this topic. It’s beyond our capacity. Most members agreed with this perspective.
 - Jan Harmen stated that the Islesboro population is too small to have much of an effect on this vote. She doesn’t believe it’s worth the time and energy.
 - Myra summarized that the committee is not prepared to vote on this or go any further with this issue right now. Dick is welcome to pursue it personally.
- c. Energy Prize next steps (Cressica)
- Cressica reported that she sent out an email today thanking Harriet for representing the Energy Committee at the Summer Info Meeting last week. We’ve had good feedback from various people about that, and we’ve had an opportunity to do some initial community outreach to get people familiar with

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the idea of us and the Town advocating for clean energy and home energy upgrades. This is part of the first step of familiarizing people with these ideas so they can bring us their own personal interests and ideas.

- The next step is listening and learning from other community organizations. Cressica proposes that we have those initial conversations by the next Energy Committee meeting so we can come back and share what we've learned and decide how to move forward. Cressica asked for feedback on the list of organizations she compiled from the discussion at the workshop.
- Harriet suggested it would be useful to have a one-page list of bullet points, so as each of us go out to talk with different groups, we're giving the same basic message.
- Bill related his experience today at the ICC. He found it a difficult task to talk to the committee. He had to give a lot of background information. It was too long of a presentation, and too complex a message to try to insert into the meeting. He would have needed two hours to discuss it to their satisfaction. Before Bill could finish describing the overall intention of the project, they were asking questions about what we're requesting and what's in it for them. They decided to continue the conversation at a future committee meeting, which is a positive step, but it came to no particular resolution today.
- Bill summarized what he presented to the ICC. Myra asked what in particular he asked of them. Bill answered: popularizing information for the public, forums in which to hold events, and to show themselves as an exemplar for the community.
- Monica added that the Sporting Club had their monthly board meeting last Wednesday, and she was able to speak with a few officers and board members. The Sporting Club is happy to join in, work together with the Energy Committee, and be a learning place for this. They would be a positive partner.
- Cressica stated she had prepared a bullet-point introduction to the prize and potential opportunities for interacting with the Sporting Club. Now that we're going forward with this, she's happy to work with Monica on adapting the bullet points, so it can be a better communication tool for going to other groups.
- Harriet asked if there's a budget for the prize. Cressica answered that she sent a workshop outline with the breakdown, and she will send a link to the Google drive documents. The budget falls into four buckets: Community Energy Coordinator, the consulting or technical assistance, and stipends to additional community members who would be able to help with more involved outreach. This prize helps us apply for grants and low interest loans. Cressica sent an outline for the next steps and a list of talking points.
- Discussion about how to approach presenting information to groups.
- Holly pointed out that each group is different. We could focus on those groups who are willing to be partners.

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- Bill reported on the yearly meeting for the Islesboro Community Fund. There was no opportunity to present at that meeting. They have to resolve a few things before we can try to talk with them again.
- Bill stated that he talked with John Kauer and Joshua Kauer from Sustainable Housing and Development Foundation (SHADF), and they are enthusiastic about working with us. They are flexible. They are interested in the opportunity to set the solar array, and how to weatherize and insulate buildings on the island.
- Holly suggested keeping a list of who we can partner with. We need to be kind of selfish in where we spend our time at this point. Discussion about different groups.

Josh Leach had to leave the meeting at 7:06.

- Bill stated that he, Cressica, and Myra will be having a conversation tomorrow morning with the new director of Efficiency Maine; they will be a big partner.
- Harriet reported she had spoken with John King regarding the new ferry. They are moving ahead with plans for a hybrid design of the ferry with an all-electric operation. Bill added that the challenge will be how to structure the electrical supply and storage on both sides. Cressica added that EV charging stations at the ferry terminals and how to work with the ferry service on implementing them are also on the list of concerns. Dick added that he would like CMP to be involved in implementing Time-of-Use rates for charging the ferry.
- Cressica will follow up in an email with other items of that we can be planning for now.
- Tomorrow is a prize partnership introduction meeting with Jesse Remillard, Senior Program Manager at Efficiency Maine Trust, on Zoom. We will be meeting with other prize members.

6. Coordination/Communication with Other Groups

a. Coordination with Islesboro Energy Team on community outreach (Toby)

- Toby stated that what the Energy Team is up to is pretty well summarized in the Islesboro Island News. There are some overlaps with the Energy Team and the Energy Committee goals. We can coordinate, collaborate, and amplify the efforts.
- The Energy Conference is on October 14th.
- Holly asked Toby if the Energy Team would be a good partner for the Energy Prize list, and if he would talk to the other members about it.
- Cressica stated she hopes we can collaborate with the Energy Team and participate in the Energy Conference as an opportunity to organize action groups.
- Cressica added that there are ongoing educational activities at the library, and those will be important for ongoing education for the public, and we would like to support those through the prize. If the goal of those educational groups is to

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form collective purchasing groups who take action to install different home energy upgrades or solar arrays, we want to support those groups as well. That's an important role of the community energy coordinator.

7. Homework for next meeting
 - Dick handed out information on establishing a Municipal entity for power. Members will read and discuss at next meeting.
8. Next meeting, Tuesday, September 12th, at 5:15pm.
9. Adjourn
Motion to adjourn at 7:23pm, H. Fields, seconded by B. Thomas. No discussion. Motion passed, 9 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary

