Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 9, 2025
In-Person and Zoom Meeting at 5:15 PM

☑ APPROVED
10/14/25

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, Kathy Kerr, Ava Schlottman
   Members Present via Zoom: Cressica Brazier, Trevor Blackford, Peter Rothschild, Ex Officio

3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting: August 12, 2025.

   Motion: To approve the Minutes of August 12, 2025, as written, M. Mullins, seconded by B. Thomas. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 9 yes, 0 no.

   Harriet welcomed new Island Fellow Elizabeth Dyer.

4. Project updates
   a. Fire station

      - Monica reported that she, Harriet, and Bill met with Fred Porter and Murt Durkee, and talked about possibly getting a new generator. They also discussed having the generator outside to reduce exhaust issues. The generator room currently holds the pagers, so that room needs to be maintained. Murt decided he wants to stay with the current diesel generator. It's inspected and serviced annually. We will keep it in the current room. It has proper exhaust piping. We need to find someone to seal it up, as the vents on the exterior wall are allowing cold air to come into the room and the garage. It also needs a new door frame and door.
      - Murt also made it clear that he would prefer a diesel generator for the Up-Island Public Safety Garage (UIPSG), as he's worried about the potential risks with propane tanks.
      - Fred is wondering if the Energy Committee is okay with reallocating the generator funds for servicing the heat pumps. SolarLogix would be the servicer.
      - Harriet stated that we do have funds in the current budget. We budgeted $25,000 for renovations to the fire station. We had envisioned moving the generator and possibly getting a new one. If we don't use those funds, we can think about other options. Long-term, it needs to be part of a town maintenance budget.
      - There was discussion about the basic upkeep of the generator and how the Town needs to find someone to do this.
      - There is another service area that has a fuel tank. Murt does not want that door and storage area fixed, because he's moving it to a different location in the garage.
      - Murt would like a generator to be installed and ready for when the UIPSG is open.
      - Holly asked about the possibility of burying propane tanks to make them more stable. Monica explained that Murt would like to use the existing generator, which would require very large propane tanks. We may be able to talk with him more about this in the future.

- Kathy stated that the fuel price difference is smaller in the winter. It's not as big as it would be quoted right now.
- Harriet stated there is $25,000 in this year's budget. There may be some residual money left from last year's budget, which may be in the ballpark of $10,000. We could probably put about $35,000 toward this project.
- Janis asked if anyone has priced out batteries instead of generators. Discussion about how many systems would rely on the batteries. It's not just that they're more expensive to install. It's also a question of how long they can support the building in an extended power outage.
- Bill added that ETIPP demonstrated for us how much more expensive it would be to cover our needs with just batteries as opposed to a combination.
- Cressica stated that, in the process of doing grants and trying to understand the electrical systems of the UIPSG, we looked at batteries vs. generators. The whole heating system is electric, and not just heat pumps. There are unit heaters, which are 20- or 30-kW or more. It's not viable to have those functioning off batteries at this time.

b. Library – Harriet

- Harriet reported that the solar panel installation is complete.
- Work on the heat pumps started yesterday.
- There has been some discussion around batteries for the library, which does not have a generator. Bill and Holly attended a meeting of the Friends of the Library to offer advice, as the Friends are planning to fund some kind of backup.
- Holly stated that Bill presented on how his home is set up and how he uses battery backup with his generator. Holly added that she talked about the EcoFlow batteries that she and Allen use. They are also looking at another power system that can possibly be used with solar without having panels on the roof.
- Bill stated that the library needs battery backup for the computers. Sensitive information could be lost. We suggested that if they were in the middle of a presentation, they could have battery backup. We talked about the need for battery backup on the furnace, because it requires electricity to circulate the heat. The totality of those could be purchased for less than $1,000.
- Holly added that they wanted to get some background info for the amount of electricity they're using now with the new heat pumps and what they might want to purchase moving forward.
- Harriet stated that the library is on a path to get to net-zero. They put up the largest solar array possible, which more than covers what their energy use was before the heat pumps. We hope it will cover the heat pumps as well.
- Bill stated he suggested that a battery backup for the oil furnace would be in the province for the Town to support, because it's an emergency backup for the building. This would be a Town maintenance issue.

c. Health Center – Harriet

- Harriet reported that the solar panels have just gone up and she turned on the circuit breaker today.

- Harriet, Bill, and Cressica met with Tim Larson from Sundog Solar. The original plan was to install a ground array that would provide a larger amount of the energy needs of the Health Center. That was a much bigger project, part of the grant funding, and it was imperative to use the grant money as quickly as possible. Some of the expenses were moved around in a legitimate way. We want to move ahead with those plans now. We asked the Sundog Solar people who are doing the roof array to give us some options.
- Cressica stated they had identified two sites for a ground-mount array. One of them has now been occupied by the new septic field for the municipal complex, so that one is probably not viable. We are looking at a site behind the Health Center that is not wetland. They are going to price it out. It will require some clearing, but it doesn't need to be a large array, probably about the size of what's on top of the Town Office now. That will probably cover the rest of the Health Center's electricity needs.
- Sundog is also going to give us a proposal for the Fire Station roof as an alternative to compare costs. We need to find out how feasible this would be for Public Safety. The issue with constructing it there is that it's the only remaining viable site for additional arrays for the Town Office, which is currently using twice as much electricity as it produces with the existing array because of the new heat pumps. Prior to the new heat pumps, the Town Office was using about 50% more than was produced by that array. This would be an important additional project to look at.
- Harriet asked Cressica if putting panels on the eastern slope of the IHC roof was discussed as part of the planning and budgeting. Cressica replied that the array is so small that the additional effort of putting panels there wouldn't be worth it. It's likely going to be less expensive to put them on the ground. They would occupy a tiny bit more area.
- Bill thinks it might be a good idea to figure out what the productivity of that roof area would be. Some of it is south facing, and some southeast facing. We could calculate what the additional surface area would cost per kilowatt. It would be tied in behind the meter. Cressica replied that the ground array would also be tied in by the meter. It was an aesthetic decision we made with the architect. We have to have a ground array no matter what, so a few extra panels on the ground array would likely be more cost efficient.

d. EV chargers – Holly

- Holly reported that Tyson Mason at SolarLogix came to look at where we want to install the EV chargers. We are waiting for an estimate.
- There is concern about the size of the conduit. It has a small diameter. He wasn't sure it's large enough for two chargers. He's going to do an estimate with one charger, and if need be, an estimate for changing the conduit for two. The wiring for two heads is significantly larger.
- Bill suggested experimenting with a foot of 2-inch cable. Another electrician could probably advise us.
- Cressica stated that the specification she gave the contractor was for two chargers, but she was not involved in the design.

e. Fellow

- Elizabeth Dyer will be working with the Energy Committee and the Community Center, about 15-17 hours with each group. Janis is her primary advisor on the Energy Committee.
- Elizabeth introduced herself and talked a little about her background. For the Energy Committee, she will be working on high-level assessing of how projects have been going, looking at data, and looking for pathways forward. At the Community Center, she will be working with Candice Provey on youth programs with climate-related curricula.
- Janis added that Elizabeth will be helping us with community outreach and program planning.
- Janis stated that she is the Energy Committee representative to the Maine Island Coalition. Elizabeth might go in her place to the next meeting in Rockland.
- There is also an ETIPP meeting October 22-23 in Rockland. This will be a regional meeting with participants from the Northeast and Great Lakes area. We will be involved as a former site. They will provide funding for two representatives, but others are welcome. There will be a Zoom option.
- There is a local Island Institute meeting on Thursday at 11:00.

f. Window Dressers

- Trevor reported that there have been some signups, but we could do more in terms of soliciting people to get interest. There are a number of people from last year we need to follow up on.
- The next step is measuring windows. We probably need refresher training.
- The core group is Cressica, Janis, Ava, and Harriet. We may need to get another measuring device. Trevor will follow up with Window Dressers.
- Carrie suggested putting the measuring dates and Community Build on the IIN community calendar. Trevor will talk with Dan Tutor.

5. Community event

- Janis stated that we have a location, time, and caterer, and the program is coming together. It will be at the Community Center on Sunday, September 21st, from 4:00 to 6:30.
- At 4:00, there will be tables set up with information. At 4:30, the food will come out. At 5:00, we will have Lightning Round presentations.
- Monica shared a rough draft of a poster. She asked members to send her a summary of work that's been done by the committee. There will be handouts with greater detail as well.
- Janis will ask Brian Bohanon about how to get the funds for the handouts and the caterer.
- Discussion about using the audio-visual equipment at the Community Center.
- Janis asked for volunteers to help set up and break down.
- We need handouts from other organizations. Efficiency Maine is offering a rebate on heat pump water heaters, so we will print some info on that, and on the federal tax credits.
- Bluewater Bakery will do the catering.
- The subgroup needs to meet again to finalize details.

- Trevor will speak about Window Dressers. There will be time to take more orders.
- After the lightning rounds, we want to encourage people to talk and share. We should present our bigger ideas for future projects.
- Cressica stated that there are a couple of opportunities we might be able to pursue in order to get some small amount of funding to work on those goals. She will present them briefly. We can mention that we are searching for every opportunity to get technical assistance for when funding is available.
- Discussion about how to address possible questions about the mission statement, with short-term solutions and long-term goals.

6. Solar Tax Credits
    - Harriet stated that we will be applying for solar tax credits for the municipal buildings. Because the town doesn't pay federal income tax, there's a tax credit equivalent called the Direct Pay Program. Both the library and the Health Center qualified for this. Brian has to do the paperwork for the IRS. Harriet gave him all the information she had.
    - Under the current law, in order for solar projects to qualify for tax credits, they either have to have construction started by July 1st of this year, or be completed by the end of 2026.
    - For residential solar, it needs to be in service by the end of 2025.
    - Bill brought an article about an approach that may help with costs. A community got together and did cooperative buying and administration for the purchase of solar panels throughout the town. The people who bought in had significantly reduced costs. ReVision tried to do this in New Hampshire. SolarLogix or Sundog might be amenable to doing something like this.
    - Janis stated that the Maine legislature made changes to net metering for commercial. She asked Cressica if she knew if they did that for residential as well. Cressica thinks that Level 1 and Level 2 are still allowed net metering, which means smaller arrays, but she's not sure. Sundog said we would still qualify at Level 2 for net metering for the new arrays.

7. Other business
    - Bill stated we need to make a recommendation to the Select Board for the Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) administration. ReVision suggested Knollwood. The Select Board wants us to come up with possible alternatives and an explanation for why.
    - Bill stated he has tried to investigate this, but has not been able to find comparable companies.
    - We need to do this soon, because those RECs are sitting out there in the market. They need to be collected and we need to be credited.
    - Harriet stated that if we don't find more information, going with the recommendation would make sense.
    - Janis suggested contacting someone in Bar Harbor. Maybe we can ask what company they use.

8. Next meeting Tuesday, October 14th, at 5:15pm.

9. Adjourn
    Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:20 pm, B. Thomas, seconded by K. Kerr. No Discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 8 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Reed

Carrie Reed, Secretary