

Islesboro Energy Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, August 9, 2022
In-Person Meeting at 5:30PM, Town Office

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Interim Chair Myra Sinnott, called the meeting to order at 5:35pm.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 4 members

Members Present: Myra Sinnott (via phone), Bill Thomas, Janis Petzel, Dick DeGrasse, Cressica Brazier, and Toby Martin (5:55pm).

Members Absent: Jordy Watson, Josh Leach, Holly Fields, Anne McKee, Scott Sienkiewicz, and Melissa Burns

Others Present: None

3. Introduce visitors

- None

4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Motion: To approve Minutes of July 12, 2022, B. Thomas, seconded by J. Petzel. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

5. Ongoing Projects/Old Business

a. Status of Evergreen work (Bill)

- Bill reported that the interior of the upstairs apartment is done. Lights are installed.
- Brian and Rick were here yesterday to walk through, and they are set to do insulating in a couple days.
- The plan was to get this done in a month. It took a little over two months, but Eric did the best he could to move things forward.
- Library: we have a quote for the work; it's not final, but it's a good approximation of what it will cost Evergreen to do the work. Brian said it can't be an accurate quote because he doesn't know exactly what he will find when he goes into the attic to work around the elevator shaft. He didn't have a tall enough ladder the last time he was here.
- There is a question about how to deal with weatherizing the windows due to the historical nature of the trim around the windows. This is a topic for future discussion and not part of the Evergreen work.
- Myra reported that Toby got a signed agreement from the Friends of the Library stating that they support the energy work. The Friends are very interested in learning more about what we have planned, and they've invited Myra and others from the Energy Committee to attend their meeting at the end of this

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month to talk about what we're doing. They have some capital funding and may be able to contribute to projects that aren't covered in other ways.

b. ETIPP (Janis)

- Janis reported that they had their monthly check-in last week.
- They are a little behind in their schedule, but we should get a finalized copy of the load analysis material to review in September.
- They're starting to do calculations on all our permutations and alternatives by putting the data into a program called HOMER, which allows them to put in all kinds of variables, and then it spits out the most cost-effective solutions, or whatever we think is important. One of the things we said we wanted was for it to be equitable, meaning everyone can access it, it's cost-effective, and if we do it for the municipal system, it reduces people's taxes. We didn't want just wealthy people who could buy their own stuff to benefit. They will be pricing out putting in underground power lines. The only worrisome thing is the rock and ledge on the island. For the financial analysis, they will determine what it will cost to do business as usual, what it will cost to do something that seems feasible, and what it would cost if we did 100% of everything we want. They're also going to bracket it with looking at the whole island doing everything vs. North Island and/or South Island. They're going to give us the financial assessment in September, we finalize that in October, and then they move into the final concept paper.
- We're trying to have the meeting on the second Tuesday of the month around 2pm. Notices for meetings have been coming late.
- They requested and received Dick's best estimate of what the energy arbitrage rates might be so they can plug those numbers in as variables.

c. Energy Jamboree (Cressica)

- Cressica reported that she is revamping the website: islesboroenergy.org. She invited members to contribute ideas.
- For the Virtual Jamboree page, there is a preview with two videos, one from Brian Robinson, and one from Bill. She is sending out other videos to get permission to post and share them.

d. Islesboro Electric Department (Dick)

- Dick reported that there was a meeting last week where New Brunswick Electric made a presentation to members of the Energy Committee and some other representatives of the Town about their utility, which furnishes 1000 megawatts of power to the State of Maine. This is almost half of the total state. It appears that 60% of their power is provided by nuclear and hydro. The remainder is mostly peaking activity, largely fossil fuel. A largely residential load is about 60 – 70% load factor, meaning what percent of the total energy use is on-peak, off-

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peak, or otherwise. 40% is on-peak on a typical residential application, as it would be on the island. That's usually only able to be fired by fossil energy.

- New Brunswick Electric is in the process of sending us, as Bill suggested, a copy of the presentation that they presented to us last week, plus a list of what they need from us.
- In the meantime, Dick has had conversations with Fox Island and Jim Cohen, who is the principal attorney, to represent us in creating a "Municipal Aggregator," which is not necessarily a municipal utility, but we would be in a formal, legal position to aggregate the loads on the island and offer a reasonable rate based on our negotiations. Jim is going to give Dick a proposal on the legal services to create such an entity.
- At the meeting with New Brunswick Electric, the Select Board was represented by Phil Seymour. This is important because the Select Board will have to vote on this and approve a budget for the attorney.
- Dick and Jim have spoken on several occasions, without the meter running, about how we might approach the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC), because they do want some involvement, but a Municipal Aggregator is a little less than a utility, because a utility would normally own assets, and we're not proposing that our electric department own any assets at all.
- If we build a solar farm with battery storage for the island, that would be under a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), and not be directly owned by the municipality of Islesboro. Islesboro would buy any energy from that, and negotiate the energy purchase from such a setting.
- Dick suggests that we not commit to any heating or air conditioning design for the municipal building right away because there are several energy storage options, including a Tesla Wall, that could be incorporated into the municipal building so that we can qualify for the off-peak rate currently in effect from Central Maine Power, and hopefully the one we will negotiate with VPPSA and/or New Brunswick Electric.
- We need the green light from the MPUC to proceed with negotiations. Dick has not drafted any utility commission orders with Maine, but Jim Cohen has. If he doesn't work out, Dick has a second attorney in mind. We should have a proposal from Jim Cohen's law firm within a few days as to what it would take to create a Municipal Aggregator, with either the Town of Islesboro or the Energy Committee being responsible for the legal services so that we can proceed with the negotiations.
- Janis asked if we are happy with 40% coming from fossil fuel. Dick explained that there's almost no way to beat that, unless we have storage. 40% is a national view, and we can slow that down locally. If we put storage in, we would be moving loads that are "system peak coincident." When something is system peak coincident, it immediately engages fossil fuel generation from the power company because it peaks above the base load power. Base-load power

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is primarily hydro and nuclear. We can move most of our load to off-peak power, which is base-load, if we have storage. Then we can use stored power during peak times. By buying power at different times of day, we can build in selectivity as to which source supplies us.

- Bill added a clarification. New Brunswick Electric has only one coal-fired source and they are required to eliminate that within the next two years, probably before we are able to get electricity from them.
 - Dick added that one of the questions for New Brunswick Electric at the meeting was, do they have available off-peak power. The answer was yes. It will come from either hydro or nuclear. The hydro is more restricted in the summer when the water levels are low, and highest in the spring, with a surplus, from the melt and runoff. They have a pumped storage facility with battery-backup storage. We can do some of that with a Tesla wall or heat storage.
 - Toby asked about our control over the supply grid. Dick explained that we can't change the grid, but we can say we want to buy power at a particular time, and go out and bid on it. We want to shop for power at an off-peak time, which gives us sideways control over how much fossil fuel power we buy. Off-peak mix is base-load power, which is cleaner.
 - We would contract for power for one to three or five years. We can always go back to the CMP standard offer.
 - Myra added if we were producing our own solar and storage on the island, even if it were just powering some of the larger or more critical facilities, we would be using even less of the grid power.
 - Janis stated that for the Municipal Building Project, they haven't started talking about the innards yet. One of our recommendations was batteries. ETIPP is costing out micro-grids for us, which involve batteries. Efficiency Maine also has a program going where they're starting to talk about how to finance this stuff.
 - Bill stated that we're going to have to work on psychological resistance to this on the island. Batteries are expensive, and people don't like forking out money now for savings down the road.
 - Discussion about different kinds of batteries, pricing, and funding.
 - Discussion about underground heat storage: district heating and cooling.
- e. Municipal Building Project (Janis)
- Janis missed the presentation to the Select Board. They haven't yet started getting into the details of who will be building, or when they're going to put it out to bid. They can't do that until the Town votes to approve the project
 - They have changed the design to accommodate a properly pitched roof for solar on the Up-Island Public Safety Garage. The new design for the Health Center still has a good roof for solar.
 - They haven't finalized plans for the heating of the new Health Center, but they hope to minimize fossil fuel burning.

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- Janis gave the committee our Top Ten list, which was passed out at the end of the meeting, and she hasn't heard any feedback on it yet.
- The Select Board voted unanimously to approve the project.
- For the renovation of the Municipal Building, we should enlist the help of Evergreen to close up leaky places that we can get to easily during demo and construction. We can do it incrementally.
- Discussion about how much modification is worth the cost.
- Janis asked Bill if he can send her something in writing that she can share with the architect regarding recommendations for the leaky places. Bill said he can put together something with drawings. He will get a draft done soon.

f) Community Resilience Grants (Janis)

- Gabe at the Community Resilience Partnership has been working with Shey Conover from the Sea Level Rise Committee to complete a first stage grant for Islesboro, which includes some of the data and energy information that we shared with them.
- Next week, Shey, Gabe, Janis, and Myra will meet to make sure they characterize it properly, and then they will submit it. Janis added that she thinks that what the Sea Level Rise Committee is planning for the first round of grants is another engineering study of the Narrows.
- This gives us time to get our act together for what we would like for the next round of grants.

6. Discussion

a. Efficiency Maine grants for energy storage projects supporting critical care facilities (Myra)

- Efficiency Maine is offering funding opportunities for energy storage projects for critical care facilities. It could be a health facility, police, fire, ambulance, a facility that provides shelter, etc. The grant would be for battery deployments at these types of facilities. \$200/kw/year payments, which could be up to \$1million over five years, which is a big savings. The battery has to be at least 400 kw (.4 megawatts), but that also can be flexible.
- Our whole island's load is a little over a megawatt. This funding may not work unless we have a lot of little batteries at our critical care facilities.
- We would have to work with a developer to figure out if we want to do this funding. We need to know the loads for the Town Office, Health Center, Fire Department, Boardman Cottage, Island Market, Library, and how much that adds up to. Bill will work on this.
- Janis asked if an electric ferry would be considered critical care. Myra answered that by the time we get the electric ferry this funding opportunity would be long gone. This is a pilot program.

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- CMP created a time-of-use rate for storage for critical care facilities, and they're working on a broader one to incentivize using battery storage.
 - We should wait until we have the ETIPP study to get a sense of what our opportunities might be.
 - The Island Institute contacted us to see if we'd be interested. Maine is trying to develop programs for storage. Last year, they passed a bill with a target of 300mw of storage by 2025, and 400 by 2030 installed in the state.
 - Discussion about working with the Island Institute to see if we qualify. There is no rush on this.
- b. Schedule for future energy projects compared to budget (Bill/Myra)
- Tabled for next meeting.
7. Coordination/Communication with Other Groups
- No further discussion.
8. Homework for next meeting
- No further discussion.
9. Next meeting, Tuesday, September 13th, at 5:15pm.
10. Adjourn
- Motion to adjourn at 6:52pm, B. Thomas, seconded by J. Petzel. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Reed, Secretary