

Islesboro Energy Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, September 13, 2022  
In-Person Meeting at 5:15PM, Town Office

MINUTES

1. Call to Order  
Bill Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:15pm.
2. Establishment of a Quorum  
Quorum was established with over 4 members

Members Present: Bill Thomas, Josh Leach, Janis Petzel, Dick DeGrasse, Cressica Brazier, and Toby Martin.

Members Absent: Myra Sinnott, Scott Sienkiewicz, and Melissa Burns

Others Present: Janice Leach

3. Introduce visitors
  - None
4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

**Motion: To approve Minutes of August 9, 2022, J. Petzel, seconded by J. Leach. No discussion. Motion passed, 6 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.**

Bill proposed taking the agenda out of order due to a scheduling conflict for Cressica, who is also on the Safe Roads Committee and needed to leave early to attend that meeting.

5. Ongoing Projects/Old Business
  - a. ETIPP (Janis)
    - Janis reported that there was a Zoom meeting with ETIPP yesterday.
    - They are at the point of analyzing the data they collected from us, using a computer program called HOMER. They can model almost any permutation of data we might want them to do.
    - They showed us four different scenarios yesterday. One was if we do nothing and keep buying electricity from the grid, modeled over 25 years, with carbon footprint and cost over that time. It would come out to close to \$17million.
    - They modeled using a diesel generator, but Janis told them we are not interested in that option.
    - Toby asked if this is based on the current figures. Janis answered that it is, and there is also some allowance for inflation, as well as the future population (growth rate) of the island. The person from the Island Institute said she heard that the future electric ferry would be charged in Lincolnville, not here, so that wasn't calculated in. She is going to try to confirm that.
    - One of the requests we had made was to try to get the island to 100% renewable energy. They found that if you go to 40% renewable, your cost per kw hour drops, then from 40-60% it stays at that level, then from 60-80% it

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starts to come back up to what it was before. It starts to cost more when you get to about 85% renewable, and then it goes through the roof with the last 15%. They call it a hockey stick (on graph).

- They did two other scenarios, one where we get to 95% renewable, 5% grid, and one with 85% renewable, 15% grid. With the latter, our total expenses would be less than if we just bought electricity.
  - They want to know what we would like them to actually model. They need to know by the end of the week.
  - Bill asked if they are able to give us a copy of those projections. Janis answered that they will give us a copy when we give them more of an idea of what we want. Cressica said she screen-grabbed it and will send it to the group.
  - Cressica added that it's over \$30million for initial upfront cost for constructing the PV and batteries, and about \$33million for all the additional electricity and maintenance costs over time, if we go all solar-electric.
  - Janis asked them to give all the information in a table. We will get a draft and can comment on it at that time.
  - Robert from Sandia Labs is willing to talk with the architect for the new Health Center to give him an idea what it will be like to get batteries in the new building.
  - They would like us to have a wish list for what we would need to explain all this to other people. Cressica asked them to include what factors are contributing to what's driving the expenses. Janis thinks a combination of a written report and a power point would be useful.
  - Janis asked them if they could calculate microgrid costs for three areas: the School, the Town complex, and the Transfer Station and/or the new Public Safety substation areas.
  - Janis asked them to look at what the State is proposing to clean up the grid and have them recalculate how much it would cost if we did nothing and waited for the State to clean up the grid. If the State is going to get to 50% by 2030 and 80-100% by 2050, we might be better off.
  - Toby asked if there is an equivalent community elsewhere in the country that we can use as a model. Janis answered that we would be the first.
  - Discussion about financing options. There may be government money with the infrastructure and inflation reduction bills.
  - Members to look at info and get back to Janis by the end of the week.
- b. Energy Jamboree (Cressica)
- Nothing new to report.
- c. Municipal Building Project (Janis/Josh)
- Janis reported that the most recent Public Info meeting was poorly attended.

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- Janis asked the architect about the possibilities for backup batteries in the buildings. He seems to be uncomfortable with the idea because he hasn't done batteries in buildings before. Janis asked Lauren if there might be something the Energy Committee could do to increase his comfort level. Lauren is going to see if he will sit down with us and talk about this. ETIPP is willing to assist.
  - Bill stated he feels that this is not the time to cut corners. We don't want to build another building and cut costs at the inception stage so we end up spending the next 20 years doing the same thing on that building that we are doing with this municipal building. This should be emphasized.
  - Janis stated that it would be helpful for more people to speak up at info meetings. She got the impression that there is a concern from leaders that it will be voted down if it's too expensive upfront.
  - The next Public Info night is this coming Thursday. We can come up with a strategy for what to speak about. Cressica is hoping to advocate for battery systems, energy efficiency, energy modeling, and encouraging the architect to consult with professionals who are experienced and comfortable with these things.
  - We should all speak to people we know and see if we can drum up interest in talking with the committee about all these issues.
  - Josh has spoken with many people who would like to see the project go through because it includes the up island Public Safety garage.
  - Discussion about public support for the project and how to get info out. The vote will be September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Offer to help find financing for things we can't afford.
- d. Community Resilience Grants (Janis)
- Gabe McPhail from Vinalhaven has been doing the heavy lifting to get the Town signed up. The Sea Level Rise Committee is the lead on this.
  - These Community Resilience Grants are from the State, and are up to \$50,000, and any community can apply twice a year.
  - There's a 72-item list the State is interested in, and if your project is on that list, you don't need matching funds.
  - The Sea Level Rise Committee is applying for a grant to hire a project consultant for the Narrows.
  - The paperwork is done to enroll Islesboro, and the grant application is due Monday.
  - Janis would like the Energy Committee to figure out what we will apply for in 6 months.
  - Bill stated that Brian Robinson from Evergreen has discounted some of the work here already because of Efficiency Maine credits. He has called our attention to retrofit grants available. There will be more on the horizon.
  - Janis stated that Gabe McPhail is employed by the State to do grant writing. It would be useful to have her come to a meeting in the next few months.

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Cressica had to leave early (6:00)

e. Status of energy efficiency work (Bill)

- Bill read through outline of energy upgrades that Myra had requested.
- This building is just about done in terms of our previous plans. The upstairs apartment has been completed. The insulation has been done over the building, and it is 98% complete. However, there were mistakes made in the implementation. Bill has been documenting it with Eric Jagger. Brian Robinson has been alerted, as was the foreman of the work crew. There's a zone upstairs that was not insulated, and there were barriers that should have been put in but were not. Brian was apologetic and says he'll fix it.
- We are waiting to see in this next heating season if there will be another decrement in the cost of fuel oil. We also have to set up policies. Bill has noticed that the heating and/or air conditioning have been on when the windows were open on a number of separate occasions.
- There are zones around the periphery of the building that have not been tightened up yet. We will see if there will be a cost-effective opportunity to do that in the coming years. But for the moment, this building is essentially done in regard to insulating and weatherizing.
- There's still LED work to be done in the building. We have an appointment with Justin Electric to walk through this building and the library. Bill would like a copy of the architect's plan for the renovations of this building to help plan.
- Toby asked if we are leaving the middle section of this building undone. Bill answered that we have already insulated over the Health Center, and with luck they will not penetrate any of the vapor barriers that we put up, but the renovations may expose some of the zones that have not been closed off yet. If so, we will try to capitalize on that in a cost-effective way.
- Over the past several years, the oil use in the fire station has been flat while it has gone down in this building. The only practical way to fix that right now is to lower the thermostat in the fire station. That is a conversation that has to happen between interested parties. Josh pointed out that the louvre doors that let air in for the generator are usually wide open. Josh will show Bill.
- The humidifier downstairs has been cleaned and new filters installed. It's not working. Bill will consult with Brian on that.
- Library: we met with the Friends of the Library to explain anything they wanted to know and offer our support. We have a quote from Evergreen. They are scheduled to start work on insulating and weatherizing in January with the hope that they will slot us in earlier. Toby asked who made that decision, as he was supposed to be the Library liaison and was not aware a date had been set. Bill answered that Janet and Myra made the decision. We didn't get to discuss the outline Bill had prepared at the last Energy Committee meeting because we went overtime.

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- Once we see the heating demand in the building, talk with contractors about heat pumps.
- Toby has a detailed report he is putting together that covers specifics. He will present it at a future meeting.
- Janis stated that Efficiency Maine has retrofit grants for small communities.

6. Discussion

- a. Schedule for future energy projects compared to budget (Bill)
  - Included with Bill's report on energy efficiency work (above).
  - Bill will forward outline to group.
- b. Community Solar (Dick)
  - Dick has had deliberations with the Maine Public Utility Commissioner. They sent him a copy of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for next year for all the utilities in Maine. This is a 20-page report that creates the Standard Offer service. Included are bids by New Brunswick Electric.
  - In that proposal, there's what's called an "Alternative." The Alternative allows the utilities to propose something different than the Standard Offer. Dick inquired about that, and the Director of Utilities responded that an Alternative Standard Offer Service proposed could include a Time of Use Rate Structure.
  - Dick called New Brunswick Electric and asked them to give us an Alternative Time of Use Rate Structure for our island. If we get that, it changes the energy design of the buildings we're talking about. Dick is working with NBE.
  - The State is very concerned about the cost of power and how we're going to get to renewables on the utilities' side of the meter: solar, wind, hydro, nuclear.
  - We can adapt this to the storage elements in the new buildings, based on the rate structure of the utilities.
  - It's easier for us to go to major suppliers that are already established in the state for direct Time of Use Rates. We can't do solar and off-peak rates without storage.
  - Dick would like to go to Efficiency Maine and ask for financial support for a project here on the island, but he first wants to get the rate structure right.
  - Faith Huntington, the Director of Utilities for the State, is sympathetic and supportive. It will be a long process, possibly a year.
  - If we can combine the existing CMP A-LM Load Management Rate, 8pm-7am off-peak rate, 1.7 cents, with a Time of Use Rate from New Brunswick Electric, we win.

7. Coordination/Communication with Other Groups

- a. The DOT contacted Holly, who forwarded the request for a letter of support for a grant for an electric ferry. Myra sent letters of support for USDOT's Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program to fund the replacement of the *Margaret Chase Smith*, and the

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Federal Transit Program for operating costs to help support the Maine State Ferry Service.

- b. Collaboration with ICC on insulation of building (Bill)
  - There is a looming issue at the ICC that requires manpower. The concrete slab is not insulated, and Bill is organizing volunteers to help dig around the foundation and install insulation. The project still needs approval from the Board of Directors.
- c. Update on meeting with Friends of Library (Toby)
  - Melissa appointed Toby as liaison between the Friends and the Energy Committee.
  - Melissa asked the Energy Committee to come up with a plan for upgrades and submit it to her for approval.
  - The Friends of the Library adopted a statement of support for energy, the environment, and sustainability as part of its principles. Toby will consult with the Friends board to discuss how they might contribute a portion of their annual budget to help support the Library's upcoming energy efficiency work. Toby is the Friends' treasurer.
  - Funding of other projects might be able to go through Friends, including the Belvedere Program for Historic Preservation that the Maine Community Foundation supports, that could provide up to \$20,000 for work on our building.
  - There's also the Town budget, and State funding to consider.
  - Toby plans to do a more thorough presentation at next meeting.

8. Homework for next meeting

- Bill recommends *How the World Really Works* by Vaclav Smil. He feels the first third of the book should be required reading for the Energy Committee. It explains energetics in a fundamental way, why we can't get off fossil fuels in the foreseeable future, data, costs, etc.

9. Next meeting, Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, at 5:15pm.

10. Adjourn

**Motion to adjourn at 6:42pm, D. DeGrasse, seconded by T. Martin. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Reed, Secretary