

Energy Committee

June 16, 2026

No Quorum

Present: Harriet, Holly, Bill, Cressica, Elizabeth

No one joined on Zoom.

- Harriet: We don't have a quorum, so we can vote on EV chargers by email.
 - Bill: We can approve minutes by email as well. People can read them on their own, and if anyone has issues, we can postpone the vote.
 - Elizabeth: We can send the recording to the committee to update them on what we discussed.
- Harriet: Does anyone have issues with minutes? (Everyone: no)
- Harriet: Elizabeth was going to do the Google Drive demo, but we will postpone the demo until next time.
 - Holly will check in with Elizabeth about Google Drive after the meeting.
- Harriet: Agenda: We have some project reports, and what I wanted to do was look ahead at the next year, to prioritize projects and to ensure we know who has ownership of each project.
- Bill: Fire station: We are scheduled to have the work done on August 15, but he has been in touch with Nate who said we might be able to get an earlier date. Seth (Holman or Hobart) was here yesterday to investigate the project in more detail, and he didn't need Bill to go to the fire station. Instead, he put Seth in contact with Carrie Reed, to put Seth in contact with Murt. Bill told Seth that all work needed to be cleared with both Murt and Fred.
 - Harriet: They know Seth is the one doing the work?
 - Bill: Seth was measuring, but they (Murt and Fred) should know that Evergreen is doing the work. Doors will swing inward, and door on left will go as close to the wall as possible, to minimize obstruction to the electronics in the far corner. It will be an outside door that is well sealed.
- Holly: EV chargers: Harriet sent out the EV charger quotes. NovaCharge includes a 4-year network service plan, but OpConnect only has a 1 year network plan included. Nova (she checked with Ray from Nova) has two different charging units: one has "slave" charger unit that connects to main unit by RFID. Main unit has a modem. That's why there are 2 charger prices. OpConnect quoted us two chargers with modems.

- Harriet: OpConnect's network plan price is lower per unit, though that could change after a year.
- Holly: Even though Nova's service plan is higher cost (\$300/plug/year), Nova came in at a lower price (\$8640 including 4 years), compared with OpConnect's \$9240 for an equivalent length of service plan (\$8160 including one year + 3 more years of service @ \$180/plug/year = \$9240).
- Harriet: These quotes are within 10% of each other, and the Town's ordinances give us leeway to consider reputation, availability, and other considerations that might influence a choice, in addition to price.
- Holly: ICC uses OpConnect. We have no experience with NovaCharge.
- Harriet: What's the ICC's experience?
- Bill: I don't know who's monitoring the charger now.
- Holly: ICC said they were subsidizing the OpConnect system, but she hasn't had a chance to ask Candice to elaborate.
- Bill: I find that surprising.
- Holly: I wonder if the 1-year connectivity charge went up.
- Harriet: May be worth asking OpConnect if we can lock in a price for more than one year. Is Nova also a multi-location network?
- Bill: That's the most important: how reliable and widespread are their networks, and how do they respond to problems?
- Cressica: EVGo, as of last year when I did the research, had 2 charging locations in Maine. Opconnect had 13. OpConnect was basically the second largest public charging network, other than Tesla. Compared with chargepoint, which was the largest at 80. EVGo is now NovaCharge.
- Bill: Is there any consumer evaluation?
- Holly: I've used both systems. I've used OpConnect more, and I find it easy to use. There was one time the ICC charger was not online, but it was back online the next day.
- Bill: People who used it routinely had no difficulty. The only complaint was that people were using the ICC charger for a long time. The 4-hour limit came as a result of people charging for an excessively long time.
- Harriet: How does the charging system work? The Town pays a fee for them to handle the network, the company handles the credit card charges, and then pays the money back to the Town?
- Bill: Yes, there was an account (at ICC) with credits to the account for the sale of electricity.
- Holly: The more often it's used, the less it's expensive it is for the Town

Commented [1]: This is the correct statement. I misspoke in the meeting (I said ChargePoint is now EVGo, but I meant that EVGo is now NovaCharge)

- Bill: I don't know about that, but if you're paying a monthly fee and getting a limited return, it's not as good as if you're getting a lot of return.
- Cressica: The one major cost might be if the EV charging causes a higher demand charge, or puts the health center over the demand threshold.
- Bill: That's the big question I was going to bring up for the look forward (planning for next year). The EV charger is on the health center account. We are far over the demand limit on the health center.
- Harriet: People are already using the chargers.
- Bill: Except that the demand during the day is not high, even in winter, and in summer when there's air conditioning. The highest demand is at night when it's cold out. That's not when people are using the charger, so it wouldn't contribute as much to demand overload. Turn it off in the winter.
- Cressica: We can easily restrict it at night during winter.
- Harriet: Based strictly on the dollars, Nova is a bit less. Both are within budget. OpConnect sounds like it has a wider network and is a larger company. Do you have a sense of local technician availability?
- Holly: She will ask each company about the technicians tomorrow.
- Bill: Go to both and tell them to convince us why we should go with them.
- Harriet: She did approach Islesboro Affordable Property about using the donated chargers, and they were interested. But they asked if they had to put in parking places with attached charging, and she told them the chargers would need to be attached to residences and go on the resident's bill. She hasn't heard back from them since then. It may be they don't have any residents currently that have electric cars.
 - Bill: What about the IIT Nature Center's parking lot?
 - Harriet: They would have to pay for the electricity. (Bill: They have solar panels.)
 - Elizabeth: Are we trying to donate these chargers to affordable homes?
 - Harriet: We couldn't connect them to a payment service. One was going to be donated to the library.
 - Cressica: The Grizzl-e can connect to commercial payment software, so we could install that charger at the library.
 - Bill: It is odd to connect the chargers to houses for people who may be struggling with costs.
 - Cressica: My electric car 'fuel' costs half as much as gas now, and I bought the car used with a discount, which was the equivalent of a gas-powered vehicle.

- Holly: I have a plug-in hybrid, so I never have to buy gas. I bought Janis's EV for an island car, and I'm paying less for that as well.
 - Cressica: Efficiency Maine has significant discounts for low and middle income people.
 - Harriet: But to get the discount, you also have to purchase a charger. So by giving somebody a charger, they don't get the discount. The idea of seeing if IIT wants one, is a good idea.
- Harriet: Ground array for health center requires a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers for some impingement on the wetland, so it's been halted. They were accepting but not processing permits, so we don't know if that's changed since the court ruling that the Department of the Interior's permit blocking is illegal. We asked the permitting consultant at Gartley & Dorsky to send us a proposal for writing the permit application, but we haven't heard back from her. We have to decide whether to wait or continue.
 - Holly: Sounds political. We could wait until things change.
 - Cressica: We might not get the ITC/direct pay credits before the credits expire soon, if we continue waiting.
 - Harriet: They're not paying the ITC/direct pay credits now. I talked to Brian about it, and he called the IRS and couldn't get anyone to give him info.
 - Bill: If you requested the credits on time, they will have to honor that request.
 - Holly: if we've filed the ITC/direct pay credit request with the IRS, they have to provide the credits at some point.
 - Harriet: Will a new administration in 3 years honor credit filings that are 3 years old?
 - Holly: If we don't know, we have to proceed as if it's going to happen (that we will get the credits).
 - Cressica: Not getting the credits is not good for the project economics. There are a lot of issues to discuss, so we do need to talk about this in depth later.
 - Bill: Select Board has to be involved with a decision that might commit Town to pay full cost of array.
 - Harriet: Health center ground array funds are separate from the energy committee budget. Need to look at the choices we have.
- Elizabeth is making a second-year work plan for the Island Fellow role, for her supervisor at the Island Institute. We have talked about starting the process of the community energy resilience plan, which would take up the majority of her work time with IEC. With our engagement with ICC, the summer is a good time to pilot youth engagement, starting with Dillon Allen who will do energy assessments over

the summer. Has anyone heard about any houses or residents who want to have an energy coaching discussion with a volunteer?

- Bill has a couple prospects in mind.
- Elizabeth: Dillon could evaluate his own house first, or friends' houses.
- Harriet: He can also try assessing his extended family's homes.
- Bill: I have a strategy for multiple (family) houses.
- Harriet: Stephen Philips can also share what he's done on the old house he purchased; he's done a lot to fix it up. He built a core that can stay on during the winter, where things shouldn't freeze. Some people shut off homes and don't heat during winter. He is interested in these issues.
- Elizabeth: We want to engage with people who are interested in energy, but also find ways for people who aren't willing to do efficiency work, whether aesthetics or other things holding them back.
- Cressica: We need more granular data about which houses are heated, and to what level, like low or high heat. (Bill: That is low-hanging fruit.)
- Harriet: Was that part of our home energy survey?
- Elizabeth: 72% of respondents were year round, so only a quarter were seasonal homes. So we need to get more granular about how those homes are heated.
- Harriet: what about sending out a limited questionnaire, for the sake of our planning? How many homes are shut off, how many low-level heat? Could do Constant Contact email.
- Cressica: I think it's going to take direct contact with people.
- Bill: Do survey, then fill in the gaps. Set up a table at the farmers market and bring people in to ask them a short survey.
- Elizabeth: ETIPP update: this Thursday, the Lab will be doing a battery energy storage system 101 presentation. Similar to what AI did at the library in February, to get the Labs' perspective on batteries. We can invite people who might be interested.
 - Holly: Melissa at the library is interested (Elizabeth: she gave Melissa the link to the ETIPP Zoom.)
 - Bill: The idea is to inform us, so we can disseminate the information. And to give feedback on the presentation.
 - Elizabeth: We can invite people from the Town Office. She will email Carrie the link. This is not a public event.
 - Bill: Murt and Fred might be interested. Also Chris Bates Withers (?) from the health center who is overseeing the mechanical systems.

- Elizabeth: The NLR comms team approved our public invitation, so we can share the event info with public.
 - Harriet: Elizabeth working on the comprehensive (energy) plan will be helpful.
- Elizabeth: Google Drive demo: she will send everyone the Google Doc with the drive instructions.
- Harriet: Community Action Grant was submitted. The Island Institute's Community Clean Energy grant is next. We had wanted to apply for funding for residents, to help them with energy improvements. I have a concern that we are a town government, and the money comes into the town. So if the plan is to distribute aid to residents in need, it becomes a type of town assistance to residents.
 - Cressica: If we're applying for external grants for the proposed purpose of helping residents, and the money is earmarked for that purpose, then we are allowed to use the grant for that purpose, just like the Rural Energy Prize.
 - Harriet: Was that ever run through the town legal department? You would still be obligated to comply with laws and regulations for providing aid to residents on behalf of the Town. We have to be sure that the process of evaluating applications to have criteria to be transparent, fair, and equitable.
 - Bill: Our original mandate was to reduce the cost of energy to the Town, and that's what we've done. But we have developed a need to reach out to the community and provide more support, and we should go to the Select Board and ask for assistance.
 - Harriet: We still need to develop and administer a process. It would be better to have this money channeled to a nonprofit that already has a process in place, like the Community Fund or Affordable Property.
 - Cressica: I feel like we need to do more due diligence on this issue, so that we're all comfortable with it. Because we have a lot of opportunities coming up, and we have a lot of planning coming up, in order to hopefully develop programs or strategies that further support a wide range of Island residents. This is an existential question that we need to resolve rather than just trying to get somebody else to apply for the grant instead of us.
 - Bill: This is an existential issue about the functioning of the Committee.
 - Harriet: We can take this to the Select Board, and it needs to go through legal. We haven't used the Prize money except for donating to WindowDressers. Was the prize concept of using money for residents vetted by the legal department?

- Cressica: No (I don't know), but the money was unrestricted funds, just like ETIPP's. And we are not doing direct payments to residents. We have always been getting materials to allow us to do a program or initiative that helps multiple people.
- Harriet: Are we talking about doing direct payments to residents to do weatherization?
- Bill: Or we are becoming a localized Efficiency Maine.
- Cressica: Some towns are doing this. We just need to understand what their program structure is.
- Holly: The ferry ticketing program was a large program. The Town staff's capacity is limited for this kind of program. We need to take that into consideration. We spoke to the Town's attorney about the gift that allowed us to start the program earlier than when the fiscal year started. As long as it's a gift and used specifically for what the gift was intended for, there's no problem with using the money. But I don't know if an unrestricted gift or grant would fall into that.
- Cressica: (For the Prize) We keep it in a separate account. It is separate from any Town revenue-generated funds, and we do not make direct payments to people. Nor is this ferry ticket system a direct payment to residents.
- Harriet: Right. Can we ourselves handle the manpower?
- Bill: We need to include an administrator in the grant proposal.
- Harriet: The Island Institute grant would not be large enough for that.
- Elizabeth: This is what the Island Institute grant includes: We're looking to coordinate efforts across our island and coastal towns through community-based programs that provide planning and outreach for services that individuals may not otherwise afford or access. So we're not giving them money.
- Harriet: So it's more about coaching?
- Elizabeth: It's just resource distribution. It can be materials.
- Harriet: Are you talking about buying the actual insulation?
- Elizabeth: I think that is included. I just read the high level summary.
- Harriet: We still have to be very careful about how we distribute something like that. Because we all know there are people that'll stop you on the street and tell you how much money they're spending on their heat and how much of a struggle it is. And there are people who struggle in silence. We don't want to be inadvertently discriminatory or not fair.
- Bill: So the question is, how do we find the people who need and want help?

- Harriet: If we have enough funds for five people, how do we make sure that the choice of those five people is done in a fair and equitable way?
- Cressica: That's a program design issue that we need to do our due diligence on.
- Harriet: It's easy to be inadvertently accused of discrimination.
- Bill: We can come up with a proposal, but we need to go to the community for feedback on this. Before we implement, we can come up with a proposal, but I think we have to lay out the proposal to the community and say, does this make sense, because this is a community venture. We are trying to use community resources of one kind or another to help individuals, and I think we need the community's acceptance.
- Harriet: I don't want to be in a position of looking at people's W2 forms to find out their income.
- Holly: You can't depend on the W2 either.
- Cressica: It's a process. Other towns have done it. Other organizations have done it. We have precedents that we can learn from in order to do it fairly and transparently right now.
- Harriet: But we have a committee of eight volunteers here who have limited capacity.
- Cressica: For the Community Clean Energy grant that would have been a separate initiative in cooperation with IAP, that has a specific audience, so we don't have to worry about a broader program. But if we're able to do a broader program, we probably won't be doing it without the support of, for example, this strategic planner, so I'm hoping that we can wait and figure out what our capacity is based on that (grant application) outcome. But we don't necessarily have to forego the opportunity of the community clean energy grant. We can figure a way to structure that in the meantime, since it's small.
- Harriet: I worry about the ability of this committee to manage. Bigger organizations and towns with more capacity can manage these things, but this is a small committee.
- Bill: That's a bridge to cross, but we're not there yet.
- Harriet: Those are my thoughts. I wanted to have a conversation about the coming year, but we can do that at the next meeting.
- Bill: We now have access to School's CMP and solar account info. He has downloaded and is organizing these files, and adding data to spreadsheets. Elizabeth will look at the spreadsheets tomorrow, and we'll have a report in the near

future. The people at the school were really helpful with this, even though they had never accessed those sites online before.

- Harriet will reach out to the school committee to find out if they are interested in having us be involved in their analysis.
- Harriet: We got the funding for the last Town array. Our plan was to take the surplus budget from this year, which will be near \$40,000 (not including grant money), and put it toward the last solar array, in combination with this year's budget. But that was under the assumption we would get the direct pay credits.
 - Bill: Savings from solar arrays could be 70%, taking into account what we would have paid if counting the solar electricity used within the building.
 - Harriet: We discussed starting energy coaching, but now we're not sure how much capacity we have for that.
 - Harriet: Who wants to work on the solar arrays?
 - Bill: I can be a part of it.
 - Harriet: The first step is to look at possible locations.
 - Bill: I sent out a roof analysis to Elizabeth and the committee. Two options are to install more on the Salt Shed or on the Upisland fire station.
 - Harriet: Do we know if the roof will hold an array on the fire station?
 - Bill: If the building can hold snow in the winter, the solar arrays are not a problem.
 - Harriet: Another option might be ground arrays.
 - Cressica: It depends on the roof orientation.
 - Bill: He can also work on energy coaching and possible assistance to residents.
 - Cressica: My priorities are making the energy assessments to support Elizabeth's work this summer, and the health center array and/or battery storage system.
 - Holly: Will keep plugging away on the EV chargers.
 - Harriet: ETIPP is also ongoing.
 - Bill: We should come up with a strategy to keep the demand as low as possible in the Town Office Fire Station, in the winter, to ensure we don't lose the Small General Service status of the Town Office. Sealing the generator room will help, we don't know how much. We need conversations with Murt and Fred about strategies in winter for maintaining lowest heating demand possible.

- Harriet: We didn't put grant writing on the list yet. And we didn't include events in this priorities list. We decided to put events on hold for the moment. But we can think of things like the farmers market.
- Bill: There's been a venture to organize the calendar, bringing island groups together. Which brings up an issue we've struggled with: to find common paths with island organizations, to work cooperatively.
- Harriet: Scott de Grasse is very interested in working with us, for example for putting in solar panels on their land.
- Bill: Put an article in the newspaper about how these collaborations are progressing.
- Holly: The only downside was they didn't have a shower at the Sporting Club, so they couldn't be an emergency shelter yet.
- Bill: 3-phase electricity doesn't reach the Sporting Club either.
- Holly: If we add a battery, it might work.
- Bill: He became co-chair of the Waldo County Climate Action Coalition (WCCAC) with Emily Rochford. We aren't a paying member yet, and they're trying to collect dues for a resource base for the organization, \$50 a year.
 - Harriet, Cressica, and Holly agreed we should support this.
 - Bill: They also have a plastics pledge they're asking us to sign. We will send it around.
 - (General discussion about plastic packaging)
- Harriet: We still have an opening on the committee. Carrie sent out an announcement, but we didn't get any responses. It would be helpful to have a builder on the committee, because a lot of what we talk about is buildings and insulation, but they're so busy. Encourage people to join.
 - Holly will ask Dave Dyer.
- Harriet: We can't vote on a motion to adjourn, so we can end now.

Cressica Brazier