

Topsham Energy Committee

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Topsham Energy Committee was held on 18 November 2025 at the Topsham Town Hall.

In Attendance in person were Mark Waltz (Town Manager). Stephanie Gardner and Jackie Cressy attended by Zoom. Also attending in person were Skye Siladi, Planning Director, Tom Lister, Codes Enforcement Officer, and Jeff Emerson, Assistant Town Manager. A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m., and the video recording was started.

Invitation for Public Comment: No response

The Minutes of the October 21, 2025 meeting were approved as submitted.

Staff Update: None.

Old Business:

Storage of EC Documents:

Stephanie thanked Skye for setting up the Google Docs folder for the Energy Committee.

Invasive Plants Collaboration with Conservation Commission:

Jackie reported that no action has been taken yet.

New Business:

Overview of BESS Materials compiled:

Stephanie provided an overview of materials that committee members had compiled in the last month, highlighting in particular her conversations with Kirt Mayland of the Vermont Law and Graduate School Energy Law Clinic.

Ordinance working session:

The attendees discussed the issues involved in writing ordinances to cover a BESS.

Stephanie's conversation with Kirt Mayland provided some important points to consider:

- A Mission Clean Energy (MCE) project is speculative as evidenced by their unresponsiveness and no application for interconnection has been applied for.
- If and when MCE (or any company) demonstrates serious intent, the Town/Community needs to be sure that it does as well as the Landowner in deriving financial benefit from the project.
- In regard to zoning, the town should develop a permit process that gives it a great deal of control.

Kirt has expressed his willingness to present information to the Select Board and others, and it was agreed that he should be asked to present a workshop sometime early in 2026. Before he comes, we will have drafted ordinances based on the resources we have gathered. Kirt's role will be to provide background and context so that participants will understand the purpose(s) of

the ordinances. We may request a second meeting with him to address financial issues.

Mark noted that he sees three pieces to the puzzle—three ordinances that will be needed to cover present and future concerns:

- a zoning ordinance that lays out where such a facility may be located
- a specific BESS ordinance covering the facility itself
- fire code

Ordinance Next Steps:

Mark proposed that each of us will review the material we have compiled on ordinances, pick the three issues we see as priorities, and bring those back to the January 20, 2026 meeting. This was agreed to.

Educational Sessions Next Steps:

We agreed to spend the December 16th meeting focused on this topic. Jackie will reach out to the Conservation Commission to suggest partnering with them to develop an educational session on invasive plants. Stephanie will be talking with Kirt Mayland about presenting a public session about BESS, as well as a session just for the Select Board, Planning Board, and Energy Committee.

2nd Invitation for Public Comment: No response.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:18pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacquelyn Cressy, Secretary