

Topsham Energy Committee

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Topsham Energy Committee was held on 16 December 2025 at the Topsham Town Hall.

In Attendance: Mark Waltz (Town Manager), Stephanie Gardner, Nick Whatley and Jackie Cressy. Also attending was Jeff Emerson, Assistant Town Manager. A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 4:37 p.m., after the video recording was started.

Invitation for Public Comment: No response

The Minutes of the November 18, 2025 meeting were approved as submitted, motion to accept made by SG, seconded by NW.

Staff Update: Mark provided several updates that are relevant to the Energy Committee.

- The Police Department has received its new hybrid cruiser.
- The Head Librarian reported to the Select Board that she had been exploring the cost of a lighting upgrade in the great room because the wiring is old and brittle. The upgrade would include switching to LED lighting. A quote for \$35,000 has been received from the firm that usually does such work for the town. The Select Board has asked the librarian to reach out to Efficiency Maine to see if there are any sources of funding for this potential project. Once that answer is provided, the librarian will come back to the Select Board to propose the project. The recent Library audit has confirmed that the Library will be able to return \$35,000 to the Town from unspent monies, so the Board is likely to approve the project, probably in late January.
- Recently, Mark and Jeff met with Siemens to discuss ways to cut maintenance expenses, because the rates charged by Titan Mechanical, the firm that does this work for the Town, have gone up substantially this year. One of the services that Siemens provides to schools and towns is evaluating the various systems and equipment and then suggesting ways to increase efficiency, thus lowering costs. They would help us devise a plan that could be implemented over time and could also help prepare the RFP that the town would be publishing. Siemens could bid on the project with the understanding that, if selected, the fees for drafting RFPs would be deducted from the project cost. Money will probably put into the capital budget next year to be used to develop such a plan.
- The Community Center Committee is aware of the energy plan (Climate Action Plan). When the project actually gets to the design phase, architects will be instructed to consider the best options for heating, etc., thinking about operational costs over time.

Old Business:

- Collaboration with the Conservation Commission on Invasive Plants
 - JC reported that she has contacted the Chair of the TCC, Shana Deeds, and proposed collaborating on a program about invasive plants. The next TCC meeting will be 1/5/26 and Shana will put this topic on the agenda for discussion.
 - Shana also suggested that the two groups could collaborate on a program about the Natural Areas Plan which they are in the process of updating.

New Business:

- Educational Sessions
 - BESS presentations
 - In February, tentatively the 24th or 25th, from 6:30 -8pm, the Energy Committee would like to host a community education session for the general public at the Town Office meeting room. It will be offered both in person and live stream. The topic would be an overview to introduce people to battery energy storage at the residential, small business, and grid scale. Stephanie will reach out to Kirt Mayland, of the Vermont Law and Graduate School Energy Law Clinic and Nick will reach out to Andrew Kahrl from Revision Energy to see if they are willing and available to present. Publicity for the Town Crier will need to be in to the Town Office by January 15th. The Crier would be delivered on February 1st. Jackie volunteered to draft the announcement and will send it around for revisions because the deadline for submission occurs before our next meeting. Notification can also be posted on the sign outside the Town Office.
 - In March, Kirt Mayland will be asked to review our draft ordinances with us.
 - In April, we would bring our proposed ordinances to the Select Board and Planning Board. Kirt Mayland will be asked to attend that Session to be available to answer any questions. That meeting will require advanced planning of three to four weeks to schedule with the two Boards.
 - Invasive Plants presentation
 - We will be collaborating with the Conservation Commission on this presentation. Jackie will be the contact between the two groups. We know of several possible presenters. Either a date in May or in the fall would be good.
- Updating Energy Committee information on the Town website
 - Stephanie noted that EC information on the Town website is out of date and that we are missing some meeting minutes. The text needing to be updated was identified and Mark will give that information to Rose Woodd. Jackie will find the missing minutes and send them in to be posted.
- Recruiting new members-
 - Mark suggested that we put an ad in the Town Crier, along with the announcement of the upcoming BESS presentation.
 - Jackie volunteered to draft the announcement and will send it around for revisions because the deadline for submission is before our next meeting.

2nd Invitation for Public Comment: No response.

Reminders:

- Our next meeting is January 20th at 4:30pm.
- For that meeting, each of us needs to review the BESS ordinances information that has been collected and come to the meeting with our top three issues that should be covered in the ordinance regulating BESS. Mark will invite Skye, Josh and Tom to that meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacquelyn Cressy, Secretary