

Topsham Energy Committee

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Topsham Energy Committee was held on 17 March 2026 at the Topsham Town Hall.

In Attendance: Committee Members Stephanie Gardner, Nick Whatley, Carl Lozon and Jackie Cressy; Mark Waltz (Town Manager), Jeff Emerson (Assistant Town Manager) A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m., after the video recording was started.

Invitation for Public Comment: No response.

Welcome New Member Carl Lozon

We welcomed Carl Lozon as our newest member, who had attended one of our earlier meetings. Carl told us he has been living in Topsham for two years and is an engineer. He saw our ad in the Cryer and saw this as a way to be involved in his town. SG reminded us to be sure to include him on all emails going forward.

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the 2/17/26 meeting were approved as submitted; motion to accept made by SG , seconded by NW. Motion passed.

Staff Update from MW

- The Planning Board (PB) has reported that it is not happy with the ReCode draft and has proposed to the Select Board (SB) that, at its 3/1 meeting, the SB vote to stop the ReCode effort. Instead, the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) should be instructed to simply “clean up” the existing code. MW has written a memo to the SB suggesting that the issue be tabled until a May meeting, to allow time to pulse both committees (PB and CPIC) as to how, or whether, they would move forward if the decision goes against the group.
- The Maine Legislature is working on state-wide BESS regulation, but that legislation has not yet come out of committee.
- Mission Clean Energy is indeed still interested in the Bisson Farm property for a BESS facility.

- A data center company, using a closed-water system for cooling, has expressed interest in locating in Topsham.
- CanAm Rd, a private road that connects Highland Green to the Mt Ararat complex is the subject of redevelopment discussions. MW discussed feasibility issues related to possible problems and barriers to such a project.

Old Business

- Invasive Plants Presentation with Conservation Commission

JC reported that she has had no further communication with the Conservation Commission despite several attempts to contact the chairperson. We agreed that JC would reach out again and explain to the CC that we would like to confirm with the speaker, and are willing to go ahead with that on our own.

- Debrief of BESS Educational Session held on 25 Feb 2026

All agreed that the two presenters provided excellent information and expressed regret that so few attended. The presentations themselves and the video of the session have been or are being posted to the Town website. A brief description of the session will be provided to Mark to go with the link. Links will be included on both the Energy Committee page where minutes are posted and under the Webinars section.

We briefly discussed what more could be done to encourage people to attend, whether greater use of social media or different formats. (Writing article post-event, telling people that material has been posted) SG reported that she had sent out e-mails to the list of names that had been compiled from CAP workshops; many of those bounced back as undeliverable, so she will clean up that list before we use it again.

We reviewed the Webinars section, noted one item that needs to be removed (Inflation Reduction Act Webinar Coming Soon!) and agreed that the others are all still relevant.

- Update on Southern Midcoast Resilience Collaborative

Nick provided minutes from the meeting he had attended in February, and said he would continue to attend the quarterly meetings of this group which, among other things, is looking for ways to extend energy coaching throughout the area.

- Battery Ordinance Working Session

None of us had been able to attend the Municipal Planning webinar on 3/6 that focused on the Maine model ordinance for battery energy storage systems.

We agreed that we would use the Maine model as we move forward with writing an ordinance to cover such a system being installed in Topsham. It was suggested that each of us look over each section of this model before the next meeting, and note whether the text is appropriate for Topsham, or needs revision to fit our circumstances.

New Business - Discussion of other possible education sessions

- JC had offered two ideas for educational sessions: one would bring in Efficiency Maine to discuss current programs, rebates (many of which have changed), green bank and other resources; the second would focus on plug-in (“balcony”) solar as a way for renters or residents who don’t have the money for roof-top solar.
- We also discussed at length bringing in Maine Community Power Cooperative, which had been suggested by NW at an earlier meeting. MCPC is specifically focused on low-income residents. We decided that we would like this to be our next educational presentation, possibly in June. NW, who has worked with this company before, will reach out to them to determine their availability and interest.

Second Invitation for Public Comment: none

Reminders

- Next regular Energy Committee meeting is **21 April at 4:30pm**
- BS + Beer at Flight Deck in Brunswick on 8 April (Social hour at 5pm, Discussion at 6pm) on Electricity & Backup Energy (put on by the folks who wrote the Pretty Good House book)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6.00pm.