

Energy Committee

Carlton Hunt – Chair
Kristen Zarrelli – Secretary



Academy Building - 66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Meeting Minutes for the Meeting Convening on 07/07/2025 Prepared by Kristen Zarrelli.

A. Call to Order at 2:00 PM

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. November 1, 2023 - TBD

C. Members in Attendance – Carlton Hunt, Kristen Zarrelli Guests in attendance – None

D. Public Comment - None

E. Old Business

a. Energy Aggregation Program Update

- i. The program is currently on hold and the progress is pending the appointment of a new Town Manager.
- ii. The town has completed the required steps for municipal aggregation and hired Colonial Power Group for review.
- iii. In February, the Acting Town Manager issued a RFP for independent energy supplier to secure savings for the town. The bids did not come back with sufficient savings to award a contract.
- iv. Multiple attempts have been made to secure lower energy rates, but prices remain competitive.
- v. Carlton noted that the Acting Town Manager (ATM) had requested a recommendation on the bid submission from the Energy Committee, but a vote on rates was never held as the rates were deemed uncompetitive by the ATM so the an Energy Committee vote was not held.
- vi. The next opportunity to go out to bid will likely be in winter 2025. Options will include standard retail pricing with terms ranging from 6 months to 5 years. Generally, shorter contract terms yield better rates.
- vii. The 18-month option encompassing one summer and two winters may be an ideal choice.
- viii. Colonial Power Group is anticipated to assist with implementation once this project resumes.

b. Green Communities Update

i. Municipal Energy Tracking – MEI Update

1. All town energy accounts have been entered into the MassEnergyInsight (MEI) system and are tracked.
2. Carlton audited the accounts and found three that are still active but not in use; this has been verified.
3. All natural gas accounts are current and up to date.
4. While most data are current, fossil fuel data (gasoline, propane, diesel, and fuel oil) must be uploaded manually by the town.
5. Carlton has not received any fossil fuel usage data for FY25, making the state-level file inaccurate.
6. Carlton has requested this data from the town, but they have been unable to provide it at this time.
7. As a result, the town's MEI report is currently missing a significant amount of data for this time period.

ii. Specialized Stretch Codes

1. The updated Stretch Code went into effect in July 2024.
 - a. Projects submitted prior to July 2024 will follow the previous code; all new projects must comply with the updated version.
2. There has been no further progress on the recommendations submitted to the Planning Board in September 2024
 - a. The committee emphasized that the long-term savings from energy efficiency upgrades justify implementation of these recommendations.

iii. Building Assessments

1. Public Library — A full engineering assessment of energy repairs and upgrades is underway, with a tentative report expected this summer.
2. Police station was identified as the most energy-inefficient building.

iv. Streetlight Conversion

1. From 2007–2021, streetlight energy use was high at 1,800 MMBtu.
2. With the Green Communities grant, streetlights were converted to LED, resulting in dramatic savings—now averaging 800 MMBtu.
3. Annual energy costs dropped from \$200,000 to \$48,000, an ~82% savings.
 - a. Though not a Green Communities initiative, Carlton noted that in 2010, the Highway Department began converting traffic lights to LED, which also led to significant cost savings.

b.

c. Solar Facilities on Public Lands Update

- i.** Carlton has tracked solar field data since 2016, but has not received updated information or invoices for nearly two years.
- ii.** The Community and Economic Development department assigned Shawn O'Brien to work on the Green Communities Annual Report. Carlton has supported him on request.
- iii.** Hosting Capacity
 - 1.** Carlton has analyzed the town's available solar hosting capacity, mapping all three-phase power lines.
 - a.** Real data was extracted to help estimate lease values and potential income stream.
 - 2.** Areas with high capacity include Mt. Prospect Street, the police station (2 acres), the high school (6 acres), and the middle school.
 - 3.** Moderate capacity zones include the west side of town: e.g., the Chaffee Farm area used by the Highway Department to dump street rubble, and the golf course.
 - 4.** Lines on the east side of town have low capacity to receive PV energy.
 - 5.** Leasing these sites for solar development could generate revenue.
- d.** New Fire Station Update - FEIS #1655 Section 8 Energy Analysis and Findings
 - i.** The station is slated to be operational within this year.
 - ii.** Carlton met with the architect of the new fire station, who said station is designed to be solar-ready, its unclear if solar panels will be installed.
 - iii.** Committee Comment: Concerns were raised about the potential loss of solar incentives over the next four years.

F. New Business

a. The Nip Development Project

- i.** The Nip is a known Area of Critical Environmental concern.
- ii.** The property owner is undergoing a development process involving five proposed new buildings.
- iii.** A Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been released and is open to public comment through July 11th.
- iv.** Several residents have expressed concerns about the environmental and energy implications.
- v.** Carlton noted that the FEIR included revisions for greater reductions I greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning from fossil fuels to all-electric buildings.
 - 1.** A hotel originally not fully electric is now designed to be fully electric.
 - 2.** Some buildings will not follow the updated 2024 Stretch Code, but rooftop solar readiness has been included.

vi. Potential Avenues for Efficiency

- 1.** While some efficiency improvements were made, additional opportunities remain for advancing clean energy efforts, such as solarized parking, confirmed solar readiness, small wind systems, battery systems, and geothermal adoption.
 - a.** Carlton commented that while there was no mention of solarizing the parking lots, the ample space may warrant future consideration.
 - b.** Battery systems could be used for nighttime energy storage.
 - c.** The facilities do not currently include geothermal heating; Carlton recommended considering this option.

G. Additional Items for Discussion

- a.** No comments

H. Next Meeting Date – TBD

- I. Adjourn** – Carlton Hunt motioned to adjourn the meeting of the Energy Committee at 3:00 p.m. which was duly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

DRAFT