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Minutes of the Peacham Energy Committee – 11 August, 2025

Zoom Meeting hosted in Peacham, VT

Time	August 11, 2025, 7:15 PM - 08:13 PM (EDT)
Committee Members	Charlie Byron (chair), Tom Breyer, Bruce Courtot, Jock Gill
Participants	

Quick recap

The meeting began with administrative matters including board membership changes and discussion of informal voting rules. The group reviewed previous meeting minutes and addressed energy committee matters, including remaining grant funds and plans for a volunteer program to assist residents with energy-related tasks. The conversation ended with discussions about vehicle-to-grid technology, legislative representation, and plans for an upcoming meeting with politicians to address energy futures in Vermont.

Next steps

- Energy Committee: Finalize the weatherization assistance program proposal by the September meeting.
- Energy Committee: Collaboratively develop a list of questions for legislators regarding community solar, vehicle-to-grid, and microgrids.
- Charlie: Go to the select board to get Bevin appointed to the Energy Committee.
- Bruce Courtot: Write up a 1-2 paragraph description of a pilot program for energy assistance for Peacham residents.
- Bruce Courtot: Include health and safety aspects in the pilot program proposal.
- Bruce Courtot: Contact Steve Isham to learn about how St. Johnsbury handles liability issues and their energy assistance program.
- Bruce Courtot: Keep the committee updated on the HVAC pod development.
- Jock: Follow up with Green Mountain Power about the emergency shelter micro-grid project.
- Jock: Contact Green Mountain Power about the Energy Committee's interest in participating in a vehicle-to-grid pilot program when appropriate.
- Jock: Contact Bruce Westcott to check on his progress with reaching out to Representative Bert Morrison.
- Jock: Reach out to Senator Scott Beck about participating in a town meeting discussion on energy futures.
- Jock: Send Charlie contact information for Linda Gray.

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- Charlie: Contact Bevin about joining the committee and confirm her preferred meeting time and day.
- Charlie: Update the meeting minutes to distinguish between Bruce C. and Bruce W.
- Charlie: Add Bevin's potential appointment to the next meeting agenda.
- Charlie: Send Bruce Courtot the contact information for Steve from St. Johnsbury's Energy Committee.
- Tom: Identify potential candidates for weatherization assistance during Window Dressers home visits.

Summary

Board Membership and Voting Rules

The meeting began with a discussion about quorum and attendance, with Charlie apologizing for being late due to a swim. The group discussed adding a new member, Bevin, to the board. Charlie expressed concern about earlier questions about slots for new members and inquired about the rules. Jock confirmed that there was room for up to seven members. The group agreed that Charlie would pursue Bevin's appointment with the Selectboard, if she chooses. They also discussed an informal rule that Charlie would abstain from voting unless needed to break a tie, especially when there is an even number of attendees. Jock clarified that this was an informal rule suggested by the Town Clerk.

Meeting Minutes Follow-Up Discussion

The meeting reviewed and followed up on previous meeting minutes. Charlie requested contact information for Linda Gray and Joanna Miller from Jock, who agreed to provide it. Charlie noted he would add initials to future meeting notes to avoid confusion between Bruce Westcott and Bruce Courtot.

Energy Grant Spending Discussion

The energy committee discussed remaining grant money of approximately \$400.75 that needs to be spent within a year; it's not enough for a mailing unless it's a postcard. Tom noted there's already \$750 allocated in the town budget for window dressers, and Bruce C. mentioned that while federal tax incentives for heat pumps are ending this year, many Vermont incentives remain in place through 2026, including a DIY program offering up to \$100 for simple energy efficiency measures.

Peacham Volunteer Energy Assistance Group

Bruce C. proposed forming a volunteer group to assist Peacham residents with energy-related tasks, including weatherization and firewood stacking. Jock suggested reaching out to the Academy for potential student volunteers and posting a description on "For Love of Peacham" to gauge interest. The group agreed to develop a pilot program, with Bruce C. offering to contact Steve Isham from St. Johnsbury's Energy Committee for insights on liability and implementation. Tom mentioned the possibility of identifying candidates during upcoming home visits and leveraging the Window Dressers build event in October for outreach. The committee aims to finalize plans by September.

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Home Safety and Liability Discussion

The group discussed liability issues related to home visits and safety inspections, with Charlie emphasizing that homeowners should typically be responsible for any incidents. Bruce C. shared his experience conducting virtual home energy assessments, highlighting common safety hazards he encounters, and suggested incorporating health and safety checks into their program, such as carbon monoxide and smoke detector installations. Jock proposed raising funds to provide detectors and other safety equipment, while Bruce C. noted the importance of combining safety checks with energy efficiency improvements to appeal to homeowners. The group agreed to consult with Saint Johnsbury's energy Committee about liability structures and explore collaboration with local fire departments for safety inspections.

Energy Infrastructure and Proactive Planning

Jock discussed his efforts to keep the emergency shelter microgrid proposal operational and his conversations with Green Mountain Power about vehicle-to-grid technology. He expressed concern about the town's lack of a long-term vision for energy infrastructure and emphasized the need to take proactive steps rather than waiting for external solutions. Charlie questioned the town's degrees of freedom in determining its energy future, given the uncertainty around government support and Green Mountain Power's plans. Jock shared his intention to be a guinea pig for Green Mountain Power's vehicle-to-grid program, highlighting potential financial advantages for the town.

Vehicle-to-Grid Technology Pilot Initiatives

The group discussed vehicle-to-grid technology, with Jock noting that Ford and GM are heavily investing in it despite most people being unaware. Bruce C. shared details about a pilot program involving Ford Lightning trucks connected to homes, while also describing an HVAC pod concept for emergency shelters. The discussion concluded with Jock emphasizing the need for pilot projects to demonstrate practical applications, as waiting for federal or utility programs could delay progress by several years.

The group discussed vehicle-to-grid technology and its potential applications, including retrofits for existing vehicles and emergency power solutions. Jock mentioned contacting Green Mountain Power about participating in a file program, while Charlie and Bruce C. explored the idea of using containerized solutions for HVAC and energy storage. The conversation then shifted to legislative representation, with the group clarifying the current state of their legislative delegation and discussing the possibility of organizing a forum to better align with their goals.

Representative Discussion and Outreach Planning

The group discussed the current representatives for their area. They noted that Tom Campbell, who was mentioned earlier, is currently ill and not actively representing them. Jock shared that he had a positive conversation with Sen. Scott Beck, describing him as open to ideas and not an ideologue, which was seen as encouraging. The group considered reaching out to Scott Campbell to gauge his interest in getting involved, though Bruce C. pointed out that Campbell is not their representative and bringing in someone from outside their area could open up the invitation to anyone. Jock agreed to contact Bruce C. the next day to discuss further steps.

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Vermont Energy Futures Planning Meeting

The committee discussed plans for an upcoming meeting with politicians to discuss energy futures in Vermont. They agreed to prepare a structured set of questions or points to address, focusing on key issues like community solar, vehicle grid, and microgrids. Jock offered to draft initial questions, while Charlie suggested a collaborative approach to finalize the list. The group also briefly touched on administrative matters, including reviewing correspondence and approving meeting minutes.