

## **2025-2-25 MONTAGUE ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Chris Nolan-Zeller, Tim Van Egmond, Jason Burbank, Sally Pick, Pam Hanold, Ray Sebold, Ariel Elan, David Dempsey, Layla Hazen (non-member)

**Guests:** Alexandra Osterman, Mary Quigley (Ashfield Energy Committee)

**Designate facilitator and scribe:** Tim, David

### **Discussion of Town exploring possibility of becoming a Climate Leader Community**

• Alex Osterman & Mary Quigley of Ashfield discussed the process they used to pass the Climate Leader Community (CLC) status through their town government.

- They worked closely with Chris Mason of FCROG.
- They discussed the process with the Select Board and decided that having the major components of the CLC process go through Town Meeting (TM) votes, not just by Select Board votes. This was important.
- They made sure that both the Select Board and the town Finance Committee were supportive of the proposal before they went to the Town Meeting.
- They held a public forum before the TM vote, which helped them identify points of opposition and research answers to those issues.
- They actively sought out and trained speakers who could defend the CLC proposal and answer specific objections with fact-based arguments at the town meeting.
- The Specialized Opt-In Stretch Code (SOISC) was the most contentious issue. We should look at the new building code adjustments, which make the current Stretch code much closer to the SOISC. Be sure to have good graphics and a sure knowledge of the facts before the TM.
- Because future house plans will have to be rated by a Home Energy Rating System (HERS) rater, they invited a HERS rater to come and address the Select Board and answer their questions.
- Things to research: How many homes are built in Montague per year on average? Will the SOISC impede development in any way? Most renovations are not covered, but we need facts about what percentage or square foot size would trigger SOISC. What about multi-family and affordable housing and how SOISC might impact them.
- We should review the Ashfield “fact sheets” and adapt them to Montague as possible.
- They emphasized that getting the CLC designation passed is just the beginning and that passage will mean that we have to be very active in following through with creating the “Road Map” and other tasks, but there is help from the Department of Energy Resources and FRCOG.

### **Updates from Chris Nolan-Zeller, Town Asst. Administrator:**

Update on Building Decarbonization Roadmap for nine Town facilities, funded by the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) from DOER.

- Power Options is helping to clean up the data from the Mass Energy and Insight computer database and focusing on the Senior Center (funded with other grant monies).

- Chris needs more time to decide whether the opportunity for Montague to get a FREE, part-time fellow dedicated to supporting energy transition projects with UMass Lowell will be a benefit or not. He is considering asking about having the intern take on more of the data transfer from the Mass Energy and Insight computer database.

**Approve minutes from Dec. 17, 2024:** Approved with edits.

**Writing MEC annual report for Town:** Tim is working on the report.

**State & federal level energy-related policies & legislation updates:** Tabled

**Community Planning For Solar with U. Mass. Clean Energy Ext.:** Tabled

**Schools and Energy:** Tabled

**Energy Related Town Facility Updates:** Tabled

**Recruiting more Energy Committee members:** Sally said that Leigh Rae and Judith Lorei are working on ways to bring the public's attention opportunities for volunteering on Town committees, etc. This might include an article in the Montague Reporter. It may be a way to find new members for the committee.

**Helping Town Prioritize Energy-Saving Projects for Upcoming State & Federal Grants:** Sally reports that Janice Kurkoski mentioned during a Franklin Regional Energy Committee, of the Franklin Regional Coalition of Governments (FRCOG) meeting that she's willing to help MEC and the Montague Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness 2.0 Team (MVP) by volunteering for the window insert project, if that's chosen by the Town as an MVP project for a grant received by MVP.

**Energy Saver Home Loan Program (ESHLP) and promotion of program:** Tabled

**Adding missing approved minutes to the Town web site:** Tabled

**Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting:** Tabled

**Announcements (no discussion).**

**Plan agenda for next meeting.**