

MONTAGUE ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING Minutes
Tuesday October 21, 2025

Present: Sally Pick, Tim Van Egmond, Ray Sebold, Jason Burbank, David Dempsey, Pam Hanold, Chris Nolan-Zeller

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

Special appreciation and farewell for Ariel Elan: We celebrated Ariel's 11 years of service to MEC and the Montague Community

Approve minutes from August 26 and September 9, 2025 MEC meetings were approved as amended General updates and discussion with Chris Nolan-Zeller, Asst. Town Administrator

- Quorum requirements for Committee: Chris affirmed that with a nine member committee we need a minimum of five members for a quorum. **After a discussion, we voted to have Chris ask the Select Board to reduce the number of seats on the committee to seven.**

- Other updates & discussion The Green Communities Grant to improve the Unity Park Field House weatherization is ready to go out to bid. Chris discussed the scope of the project and a number of add/alternates. The bid opening is scheduled for Nov. 5.

*Power Options continues to work on the EECBG study of possible strategies for decarbonization of nine town buildings. He is pushing them to complete a building every month to increase the pace.

*Chris reports that the town has a DOER technical assistance grant to do decarbonization studies of four other town buildings: the Millers Falls Library, Airport, Public Safety Complex and the Colle building, which he expects will happen in the summer of 2026. We discussed whether there was a plan in place to make sure that any energy savings continued over time.

Discussion with Chris Nolan-Zeller, Asst. Town Administrator exploring possibility of becoming a Climate Leader Community

Possible impacts of Zero Emission First Policy on Police Dept. vehicle purchases. Charging costs, incentives

Chris reports that the various town inspectors who share a BEV vehicle are pleased with its performance. When Chris has examined the electrical usage costs since they began using the charging station at the town hall he has determined that there is almost no discernable increase in power costs. Stand-alone charging stations are a bigger problem because they are charged all of the extra fees, such as delivery charges, which makes the electricity more expensive, which decreases use, so the unit costs are very high (\$0.75 per KWH) compared to nearby towns that subsidize their charging stations (Gill \$0.30, Erving \$0.35).

Cost of charging stations, including DPW

David is trying to track down definitive information on state subsidies for municipal charging stations. He will report back at the next meeting.

We discussed the possibility of putting PV panels on the roof of the DPW and the Public Safety Complex that could charge battery systems to provide backup power for operations and for charging EV vehicles in the event of a general power failure.

New information on developers' concerns about Specialized Stretch Code (if any)

Sally reported that Passive House states that building to their standards only raises that cost of a house by 2.2%, which may be offset by Mass Save incentives. Also, towns that have adopted the Specialized Stretch Code (SSC) have seen increased construction. However, it is difficult to get detailed information because the number of towns with SSC is still fairly small.

The rest of the Agenda Items Below were Tabled

Further Planning and Preparation for putting ZEV First policy in place

State & federal level energy-related policies & legislation updates.

Eversource Smart Meters now being installed. • Article on how consumers can use them to lower electricity costs?

Community Planning For Solar with U. Mass. Clean Energy Extension

Schools and Energy

Energy Related Town Facility Updates

Helping Town Prioritize Energy-Saving Projects for Upcoming State & Federal Grants

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

Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting

Announcements

Next Meeting: November 25, 2025 4:30-6:00