

Montague Energy Committee (MEC) Minutes 5/12/2026

Facilitator and scribe—Sally.

Present: Sally Pick, Ray Sebold, Jason Burbank, Pam Hanold. **Guest:** Jennifer Atlee.

General updates from Chris Nolan-Zeller, Asst. Town Administrator.

- Working on Zero Emission Vehicle First Policy: nothing to report.
 - State subsidies for municipal EVs?
- Other updates, including possible town EV charger installation plans, how far along are municipal decarbonization plans, energy upgrades on Unity Park.
 - Town received technical assistance grant from MA Clean Energy Center & a study was done on recommendations for how Town might expand on-street EV chargers in Town.
 - Gill recently disconnected their Level 2 charger-not financially feasible.
 - Montague breaking even on public Level 2 chargers because charge high price per kilowatt hour.
 - Deerfield has 2 DC fast chargers: expensive to install but financially positive due to charging price.
 - DC fast chargers are an economic development opportunity: financially positive return for charging and could bring EVs to Town to charge and visit businesses, restaurants.
 - Unity Park efficiency upgrades done: air sealed doors & insulated attic.
 - Town will begin exploring municipal electric aggregation for all residents, businesses, and town buildings.
 - Sally will connect Chris with Bob Armstrong in Conway, who has led municipal aggregation among many W. MA towns.
 - EECGB grant wrapping up their decarbonization plans for town buildings covered by grant. Then, DOER will start plans for remaining town buildings.

How pursue new priority of outreach & education with practical energy & cost-saving ideas for residents, commercial entities

- Sally shared ideas learned from 2 webinars on effective climate communications and ways to encourage impactful actions.
- Discuss ways to reach people, such as by:
 - Social media

- Videos: Ray can video winsert build to post on MEC webpage.
 - Press releases, articles, some featuring local residents taking steps
 - Encouraging collective action
 - Select board presentations
 - Inviting guest speakers to MEC Zooms, such as Franklin Tech. and Greenfield Community College energy students and other energy experts to MEC meetings and promoting meetings
 - Partner with town, organizations on programs such as Winsert Community Build.
 - Ray will check with River Culture re opportunities to work together on an art project related to energy savings.
 - Other ideas?
 - How can we challenge perceptions?
 - Expand the Library of Things: add a Kill-a-Watt meter.
- Potential topics to focus on:
 - Mass Save/Community Action program, rebates
 - Simple, low-cost DIY projects like: installing door sweeps, installing weatherstripping in doors & windows, using replaceable cord caulk to seal window air leaks.
 - Others? Composting food & yard waste at home or transfer station.

Discussion on becoming a Climate Leader Community: Tabled.

Discussion regarding Specialized Stretch Code.

- How sort out conflicting perspectives on Specialized Code?
 - Spray foam insulation has high total Global Warming Impact.
 - Report on discussion with building expert. (Ray & Sally)
 - Reach out to local builders about their practices, how they meet Stretch Code, would meet Specialized Stretch Code, concerns, questions they have?
 - Brief report on conversation with local builder. (Sally)
 - Discuss ideas re educating builders about Specialized Code.

Approve March. 17, 2026 Meeting Minutes. Tabled.

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

- Updates on climate legislation, including climate bank and Mass Save funding.
 - Senate climate bank bill has been incorporated into Senate environmental bond bill and is in House Ways & Means Committee.

Energy Related Town Facility Updates, including Schools.

- Briefly discuss planning process for Farren site development and potential MEC input. Tabled.
- Further discussion on the possibility of putting PV panels on the roof of the DPW, the Public Safety Complex, & new ideas re airport solar, backup storage, and EV charging.
 - Jennifer Atlee discussed the draft report she submitted to MEC on potential alternative ways to have solar installed at the Turners Falls airport that work around the Eversource grid limitations.
 - Chris noted that staff open to ideas but adverse to cost risks.
 - Sally pointed out risks of staying dependent on fossil fuels and the costs and volatility of using predominantly natural gas generated electricity.
 - Jennifer, Sally & Chris will try to arrange time to talk with Bryan Camden, TF airport manager, about these alternatives and possibly invite him to MEC's next meeting to discuss ideas further.
- MA Embodied Carbon Intergovernmental Council recommendations: Tabled.
 - Municipalities not required to follow recommendations but can decide to:
 - Require Environmental Product Declarations (EDPs) for building and road project RFPs.
 - Use state model embodied carbon procurement from Mass Dept. of Transportation (DOT) & Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance (DCAMM).
 - Green Communities will lead municipalities on embodied carbon.
 - Harmonize municipal recommendations from Mass Climate Action Network (MCAN) for building RFPs.

Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting.

Announcements.

- FRCOG Technical Assistance Session on Clean Energy Project Siting & Permitting Tuesday, 5/26, at John Olver Center.

Plan agenda for next meeting. Tabled.