

UNAPPROVED

Minutes of the Peacham Energy Committee – June 17, 2026

Zoom Meeting hosted in Peacham, VT

Time	June 17, 2026, 7:05 PM - 8:27 PM (EST)
Committee Members	Charlie Byron (chair), Bevin Barber-Campbell, Tom Bryer, Dick Browne, Jock Gill

Quick recap

The Peacham Energy Committee (PEC) held a meeting to discuss their recent engagement with Lewis Porter from Washington Electric Cooperative (WEC) and plan future actions regarding energy resilience and community outreach. The committee reviewed and approved minutes from their previous meeting with Lewis Porter, where they discussed WEC's financial challenges, net metering issues, and potential collaboration on energy resilience projects. Key discussion points included WEC's limited ability to help with local distribution issues, the need for a community-wide meeting about winter energy preparedness, and the use of remaining MERP grant funds for educational materials about winterizing homes. The committee also discussed their recent participation in the NEK Energy Network meeting and potential collaboration with the Vermont Council on Rural Development on resilience initiatives. They agreed to schedule their next meeting for July 21st at 7 PM, either at the library or the new town hall conference room depending on availability.

Next steps

BEVIN

- Start a Google Doc for planning an effective community-wide meeting about energy resilience and share with the group.
- Email Laura (VCRD contact) for thoughts on using remaining MERP grant funds for communications (e.g., posters, postcards) about energy resources and upcoming meetings.
- Work with Jock for input on poster/postcard content and coordinate on communications projects.
- Share the Efficiency Vermont community partner email with the group for further review.

DICK

- Contact Dave Edwards to learn about the status and process for the town's emergency financial assistance fund, and report back to the group.
- Check with Rebecca (and Rusty) about the status of the new town hall meeting room and its availability for upcoming meetings.
- Check with Rebecca about the status of the new town hall meeting room before the next scheduled meeting.

JOCK

- Reach out to AWIP and the Fire Department (Chief) to discuss implications of rising energy costs and potential town collaboration, and to help plan a community meeting on energy resilience.

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- Work with Heat Squad to develop a Peacham-specific poster on minimizing heat costs this winter, including local resources (e.g., free wood, upcoming meetings), and coordinate with Bevin on content and distribution.

CHARLIE

- Add all group members' email addresses to the NEK Energy Network mailing list for meeting invitations, unless anyone objects.
- Reserve the library for the next meeting (July 21) and confirm with Dick if the town hall conference room becomes available.
- Carry forward the Efficiency Vermont partnership question as an agenda item for the next meeting.

TOM

- Update and refine the Gemini-based spreadsheet comparing GMP and WEC rates, especially accounting for WEC's discounted rate for first 100 kWh, and share with Lewis Porter for feedback.

COLLABORATION

- All: Bring back to the next meeting any thoughts on optimal timing and participants for the planned community-wide energy resilience meeting.

Detailed Notes

(Generated automatically by Zoom)

Vermont Community Solar Updates

Tom shared information about community solar in Vermont, explaining how SunCommon sold their solar division to Common Energy, which now allows him to purchase additional shares despite previous restrictions. Charlie clarified that the legislature had removed authorization for new community solar installations due to concerns by utilities about abuse by companies taking advantage of cheap land costs with high connection costs.

WEC Meeting Discussion Review

The group discussed their recent meeting with Porter from WEC. Jock expressed skepticism about Porter's knowledge of battery technology and suggested WEC has an agenda they don't want challenged. The discussion revealed that electricity generated at Coventry goes directly to New York through ISO rather than serving Vermont customers, and that WEC is struggling with cash flow issues while maintaining expensive infrastructure. Tom noted that WEC's response to hardening the distribution network for their customers was underwhelming, suggesting the cooperative wants the community to handle their own backup power rather than providing support.

Charlie noted WEC's financial constraints and limited ability to implement new projects beyond their recent ~\$5 million battery investment. He observed that while the representatives appeared sincere, they seemed constrained by their situation and may have underlying agendas not fully revealed. Charlie also mentioned ongoing challenges with net metering analysis and the Public Utilities Commission's recent decision on rate changes, which represented only modest adjustments rather than the more significant changes desired by the governor.

Comparing WEC and GMP Rates

Jock shared that while he is participating in a Green Mountain Power vehicle-to-grid pilot program, the company has been tight-lipped about details and timelines, though General Motors has recently shown strong support for vehicle-to-grid technology. The group discussed creating a spreadsheet comparison of Green Mountain Power and Washington Electric rates to address concerns about pricing, with Jock suggesting this could be a task for Gemini to reduce labor costs.

Energy Cost Affordability Discussion

The group discussed concerns about rising energy costs, particularly heating oil prices increasing from \$3.30 to \$4.40 per gallon, which could significantly impact low-income residents this winter. They explored existing emergency financial assistance funds from previous flood recovery efforts and discussed reaching out to Dave Edwards for information about accessing these funds. The group also considered connecting with the AWIP organization and the town's emergency planning committee to develop strategies for addressing energy affordability issues and potential heating emergencies.

Town Emergency Preparedness Planning Meeting

The group discussed organizing a town-wide meeting in early September to address emergency preparedness and winter planning, with representatives from the fire department, AWIP, emergency management team, select board, and town clerk invited to participate. Jock agreed to reach out to the fire department and AWIP about scheduling the meeting, while Dick will discuss with town officials including Dave Edwards. The group noted that September timing would be appropriate as people begin thinking about fall and winter, and they plan to gather input from different stakeholders about the optimal meeting date.

Window Orders and Energy Updates

The group discussed window dresser orders, with Tom explaining that orders should be complete by mid-September for a build in October. Dick confirmed he had ordered some inserts and would connect with Tom next week. The team also analyzed electricity rate comparisons using Gemini software, discovering that Washington Electric Co-op (WEC) doesn't appear cheaper for usage between 100-1000 kilowatts per month, though they identified the need to adjust the starting point to 50 kilowatts to properly see WEC's discounted program impact. Charlie reported on a NEK Energy Network meeting where they discussed engaging with WEC, and noted positive reactions from attendees including Allie and Laura Kavin Bailey from the Vermont Council on Rural Development, who expressed interest in helping with resiliency initiatives.

Energy Initiatives and Planning Discussion

The group discussed several energy-related initiatives and action items. The team reviewed a facilitation planning outline for a community-wide meeting that Bevin will share via Google Doc. They also discussed Efficiency Vermont's community partner program, with Tom noting that current rebates are the main benefit. The group discovered they have approximately \$459 remaining from a MERP grant that needs to be spent before it expires, with suggestions made to potentially use the funds for food at future community meetings or posters about heat cost reduction.

Winter Preparation Poster Project

The group decided to create a winter preparation poster with Heat Squad's help, which would include information about resources like free wood for wood stoves and energy assistance programs. They agreed to use \$450 from the court fund for this communication project and discussed potential distribution locations including the post office, library, and transfer station.

The next meeting was scheduled for July 21 at 7 PM, with Dick checking if the town hall conference room would be available, otherwise the library would be reserved as a backup location.