

Energy and Climate Action Committee Meeting

Minutes – 7/28/2026

[Approved 9/08/2026]

Virtual Meeting

Meeting Start: 7:01pm

Committee Members Present: Michael DeChiara, Greg Day, Gail Fleischaker, Dean Gendron, Nate Heard

Committee Members Absent: None

Public: Frank McGinn

Updates

-- School lighting (Frank)

Frank confirmed activating the timer for lights in the parking lot, set to go on at 5pm and off at 10pm. The school's front door light and two side lights, now set for 24/7, could be set on timers — or if wanted for security monitoring, they could be changed to motion-sending so triggered by someone's approaching the building. Lights changed to lower lumen and/or down-facing wouldn't be invasive of neighboring properties, the subject of the [Lighting Bylaw](#).

-- Stormwater Committee (Greg)

On 6/25/26, members of the new stormwater committee and interested others met with GZA engineers, who presented their assessment of Lake Wyola drainage areas and methodology (ArcGIS and HydroCAD) in building a model of outflow areas. GZA findings focused on the most critical areas and set preliminary priorities for further study. In the subsequent meeting to discuss GZA's recommendations of the week before, the committee reorganized priorities somewhat, setting the priority higher than GZA's for at least one site, namely, the Randall Road access to the main boat dock. The next meeting, scheduled for August 12th, will be the first formal meeting of the Stormwater Mitigation & Implementation Committee (SMIC). As our ECAC representative, Greg will take that opportunity to talk about his project of cataloging and documenting all of Shutesbury's culverts.

-- Solar project with Colonial (Michael)

* Work with MassDOT is very slow. They probably won't have an inventory of infrastructure until first quarter of 2027 at the earliest. Michael and Mark Cappadona had suggested that while MassDOT is figuring out their full inventory, they try out a small pilot project, using Colonial's capacity to bundle Shutesbury with other municipalities to get power.

* Michael reported his exploring non-lithium batteries for citing at the Shutesbury Library where's already a pad and wiring. One alternative is sodium-ion batteries, which

are similar to lithium-ion batteries in footprint and packaging but are fire-safe. Michael and Mark are in conversation with Paul Notti (Energy Storage Systems, Inc.) who says ESS can design a battery that discharges for a set number of hours and could thus be set up to peak shave, e.g., discharge from 5pm to 9pm, New England's peak hours of electricity usage. Since energy costs are orders of magnitude greater for use in peak hours, drawing from the battery rather than from the grid during those peak hours means a direct reduction in the user's supply costs. If one sodium-ion unit at the Library could demonstrate successful peak shaving benefit, four or five units could be stacked at the Library to enable Colonial to provide off-peak energy for other communities wanting to participate, basically saving money for everyone in the CCA by using energy at lower rates during off peak hours. If that model works, it could be marketed more broadly. Colonial would have a more affordable product to offer CCA municipalities and ESS would be able to demonstrate sodium-ion batteries as a safe alternative to lithium-ion batteries and their potential danger.

-- Microgrids (Greg)

Greg is following up with Rich Nathhorst regarding his MLP project in Leverett and with Bruce in Orange regarding the off-grid system he built for Orange municipal buildings. Greg will be joining Darcy Dumont's Aug 13th meeting of people in the region who are interested in microgrids. [Michael: Darcy started the Amherst ECAC and is the person who started the Amherst-Pelham-Northampton CCA.]

-- Climate Leader Grant and planning (Michael & Nate)

Michael: In response to our submitting the application for a Technical Assistance grant, Zach Jenkins (Green Communities Coordinator for Western MA) reached out to ask if Shutesbury had done a Comprehensive Building Assessment (CBA). Zach acknowledged that it wasn't part of eligibility but thought it'd be good to do a CBA before doing the Technical Assistance grant. In a telephone conversation with Michael, Hayley, Zach, and Mark Rubinsky (Green Communities Ass't Director), it was explained that CBA was an assessment made by National Grid engineers and paid for by National Grid. Michael and Hayley agreed to do the CBA, raising two points: 1) since Shutesbury had done everything they were supposed to do, it would be fine if DOER approved its TA grant application conditioned with doing the CBA, but Shutesbury shouldn't have to reapply for the TA grant; 2) since CBA had not been required, Shutesbury should get an expedited process for same. DOER was agreeable and got us hooked up to RISE, National Grid's engineering firm. The third walk-through (7/27/26) was with Michael and Nate (ECAC), Frank McGinn and Stephen Dalmus (Buildings Committee), Nate Longcope (School Committee), Matt Foster (SES janitor), and Katherine from RISE. Katherine expects to have the CBA to Shutesbury by late August.

Nate: Michael and Nate had a conversation with Ben Weil, Director of Northampton's Climate Action & Project Administration about potential solutions to getting off fossil fuel at the elementary school. From a technical perspective, air-source technology may be better suited than ground-source technology to achieve that end. Apart from advantage from a technical analysis, an air-source system would be faster to implement

and an order of magnitude less expensive than ground-source. Ben has background both in financial arrangements necessary for such electrification projects and in choice of paths for vendor procurement. Ben suggested that a Request For Qualifications would serve our project well.

Michael: An RFQ is a statement of qualifications in terms of a technical solution and asks vendors to state their qualifications to achieve that solution, that is, determination of the project vendor is based on the match of vendor qualifications and project need. Shutesbury's plan would be to use the CBA data to write a thorough RFQ.

Website updates (Gail)

Postponed to next meeting

Minutes

Gail moved to approve the minutes of June 16, 2026, Greg seconded:

Vote: Michael, aye; Greg, aye; Gail, aye; Dean, aye; Nate, aye

Next meeting date

The next ECAC meeting will be on September 1 at 7pm.

Adjourn

Greg moved the meeting be adjourned, Dean seconded:

Vote: Michael, aye; Greg, aye; Gail, aye; Dean, aye; Nate, aye

Meeting Adjourned 8:04pm

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Fleischaker