

Tisbury Climate Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: November 7, 2022

Meeting called to order: by Melinda Loberg, Chair, at 5:30 PM.

Place: Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/81547841917>
Meeting ID: 81547841917, Passcode: 526134

Attendance: Committee Members: Melinda Loberg (Chair), Louise Clough,
Keith McGuire, Rachel Orr, Kate Shands, Bill Straw, Bruce Stuart
Liaisons: Casey Hayward, Planning Board Liaison
Guests: Richard Andre, President, Vineyard Power (VP)
Luke Lefeber, Renewable Development Analyst, VP

Melinda began the meeting by reading the Covid disclaimer and the Zoom information.

Discussion: *[Recorder's Note: Discussions are grouped for clarity and brevity.]*

Melinda asked the members of the TCC and our guests from VP to introduce themselves to each other. Richard said he has been involved in the energy world for 25 years, has been on the island for 17 years, and lives in West Tisbury where he built a passive home with help from Kate Warner. He formed VP Co-op for offshore wind development after Cape Wind failed. In 2015, VP formally partnered with Vineyard Wind. Luke said he was an intern with VP in the summer of 2020; he completed a math degree at Vassar in 2021 and joined VP that July. He lived for 2 ½ years in Aquinnah before moving to Tisbury. He is working on the Resiliency and Affordability Program (RAP) and providing outreach and education to schools. He has also been modeling fossil fuel usage and helping the Town meet its energy goals. Their purpose in attending the TCC meeting was to educate the members about the RAP program.

In 2019, VP established the Resiliency and Affordability Fund (RAF) which will provide discounts for wind developers who cooperate with communities and provide renewable energy money from offshore wind projects to those communities. It has two objectives: the first is to decrease electricity costs to income-eligible citizens, including environmental justice (EJ) communities, and the second is to help towns such as Tisbury make their buildings more resilient and energy-independent and to help them provide solar and battery storage with 6-12 hours backup for essential buildings.

The first phase of the Project will provide \$7.5 million to towns on Martha's Vineyard over 15 years (\$3 million in municipal funds, \$3 million in low-income benefits, \$750,000 to for county and tribal benefits with \$750,000 in administrative costs.) Benefits will be distributed to island towns based on a point system ratio that includes total population, EJ population, and isolation factors. Based on this ratio, Tisbury will receive 23.88% of the RAP funds for a total of \$716,316. The intention is to provide about \$50,000 per year over 15-20 years. The money will

be available in 2023 and VP will pay the Town directly. There are two other tranches of money, including another \$7.5 million that should become available soon.

Rachel asked if the EJ rebate money was available for renters as well as homeowners and if VP needed help getting the word out. Richard said yes to both. He said the rebates are for any ratepayer: owners, renters, landlords. He added that they're trying to get money to organizations like Island Elderly Housing, because their residents in places like Woodside don't pay their own bills. They estimate that there are at least 600 such people and they have identified 375 to date.

VP wants to make Tisbury aware of this funding and wants the Town to develop projects to make use of the funds. They presented several slides to illustrate their ideas. Luke said they want to work with the TCC and Town managers to identify critical facilities that need emergency energy services and then provide a flow chart for those facilities that includes:

- Assessing the critical electrical loads in the existing breaker panels in those buildings
- Providing a guide of which panels to shut off in an emergency and how to isolate critical loads on a separate breaker panel so that batteries only critical loads
- Assessing how much of the critical load is met with existing solar or solar contracts
- Determining permitting and Massachusetts General Law requirements
- Issuing RFP's for projects

The plan would be for the facilities to have the batteries paired with fossil fuel generators so that they can handle longer outages. When the batteries are depleted, the facilities can switch to the generators while the batteries recharge, much like a hybrid car. VP has identified four prioritized projects: the senior center, the school, the water department, and the wastewater facility; they said there may be others. VP has numbered the projects, but it will be up to the towns to modify the list. Richard said VP can tell us how much solar and battery we would need; it could be just batteries but that would be the least desirable option. He said that if developers set a price per kilowatt hour, VP could buy that amount down if the contractor owns the array. As an example, CVEC owns the solar array at the Park and Ride (P&R). Bill pointed out that the Town owns the solar array at the Emergency Services Facility, and that's the best option for the Town. Richard said it still works the same way: VP can help towns pay down the cost of resiliency.

Bill asked Richard if he knew anything about the battery setup at the OB school and wondered if it would be possible to develop a cookie-cutter plan for all the towns. Richard said modules could be developed, but different buildings would need a different number of modules. Bill said Green Communities won't pay for generation, but they will pay for batteries.

There was further discussion about funding. Richard pointed out that West Tisbury had received a CLEAR grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to improve resiliency for the town and said VP could help with the resiliency portion. He added that they are coordinating with CLC (Cape Light Compact), Dion Alley at the Energy Transition Program, the Mass Save Program, and CVEC (Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative). VP has an application in to Mass Save for their Community First Partnership program. He mentioned that CLC collects \$50 million per year and can't get the money out to their audiences; they are not achieving their climate goals; and Martha's Vineyard is under-served. That is a broken system and VP is trying to fix it. He added that VP could come back and fill us in on more of their projects.

Bill brought up the issue of installing energy efficient hot water heaters in Town buildings. Richard said CLC will provide money for municipalities who put them in. He added that VP wants to work closely with the TCC on all these issues and told Keith that VP wanted to help with the Kuehne's Way project.

Melinda asked Richard to provide us with the checklists he had presented, and he said he would. Rachel commented that it's hard to think about the priorities on those checklists; we need to weigh shelters vs. services, and we need to know how much various systems would cost so we can decide what is the highest priority. Luke said the ordering of priorities is not set in stone. Richard said the decrease in the cost of solar panels has stopped, and Luke added that the incentive programs are not as good as they were.

Keith brought up the issue of safety and said the water department is afraid of chemical problems with battery leaks. Richard said they already have oil and propane generators, and leaks are possible with those as well. Containment, fire control and other issues are no different than for any other system. He added that we don't want to replace the fossil fuel generators; we want to keep them for use in emergencies. He said he believed those questions could be answered, and Luke added that battery development is evolving rapidly, and that there are currently a lot of inconsistencies in regulations. Melinda said we got pushback not only from the water department but also from the fire department and wondered if that was true across the island; she suggested that it might be good to have a seminar with them. Richard said he met with fire chief Pachico (West Tisbury) last week. Luke said the current fire code is from 2015, and they are waiting for the 2021 fire code.

Bill outlined the past and future of the solar array at the P&R and noted that there is a possibility that the Town could simply inherit it. He said we could re-populate the panels and get twice the output. Richard said they would have to look at that and suggested that Bill review the contract.

Melinda thanked Richard and Luke and said this discussion had been very useful. She reminded them to send the documents they had presented.

At this point, Richard and Luke left the meeting.

Review and Approval of Minutes: One small correction was made to the minutes of October 24, 2022. Louise moved that the minutes be accepted, Keith seconded, and the motion passed 6-0 with one abstention.

Discussion of Warrant Articles: Melinda announced that Ross Seavey has given notice and will be leaving Tisbury on December 31. He is going to practice law. She noted that it's a real loss for Tisbury, that Tisbury has difficulty filling positions, and that it may be a while before he is replaced. She said she would seek advice from Jay Grande and would stress the importance of having a good Town representative on the TCC. The highest priority warrant articles are rooftop solar for the Senior Center and plans for car charging stations at the P&R. Bill said we need hard numbers and accurate estimates for these projects, and Melinda said we need Ross for those. She said she couldn't find the previous RFP for the Senior Center and found that the stabilization fund is empty. Bill said that contrary to what Alan Strahler told us, there is some underground structure at the Edgartown charging station, and we might need to put our

structure on top of the landfill. The charging stations cost about \$25,000 per pair. Melinda suggested that she and Bill and Ross work on that offline

Melinda returned to the stabilization fund, and Bill said we need about \$100,000 to make up the difference when the full cost of a project is not covered and noted that the heat pump project at the DPW is a good example; we had to turn the money for that project back. Rachel said the Town must approve funding of the stabilization fund as well as to pull money out of it. She suggested that we might want to set up a separate fund for money, perhaps a matching grant fund, to make up the difference when a project doesn't have enough money to fund it. Rachel said we were going to meet with the FinCom and that the FinCom has a meeting with the Select Board on December 7 that some of us could attend. She brought up the Facility Manager position and said we might want to use some money for staff.

Keith said Ross was also going to tell us about the differences between the Stretch Code and the Special Stretch Code, but he didn't want to overwork Ross. Melinda and Rachel agreed. Keith said he could do some research on that; the building inspectors were to have a meeting the following day.

Keith then reported that he had attended the Vineyard Way Steering Committee meeting. Nicola [Blake] from West Tisbury [Energy and Climate Advisory Committees] had suggested that we unify language for warrant articles, and Liz [[Durkee, MVC Climate Change Planner] said the flood plain by-laws were changing and we needed to match the wording with other towns there too. Melinda commented that Ross is the flood plain manager as well, and Keith suggested that if we had an assistant, we might be more efficient.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Bill, seconded by Kate. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Next Meeting: November 21, 2022, at 5:30 PM, when we will discuss more about the RAP and warrant articles.

Minutes Submitted by: Kate Shands