

**Town of Sudbury
Energy and Sustainability Committee (ESC)
Minutes – January 13, 2026**

Present in person: None

Present remotely: Rami Alwan, Member and Chair; Olga Faktorovich Allen, Member and Vice Chair; Jennifer Dudgeon, Member; Mary K. Farris, Member; Nate Garazzo, Member; Venk Gopal, Member; Elsa Iovanella, Member; John Keklak, Member; and Joe Martino, Member.

Absent: None

Also Present remotely: Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director; and Eric Simms, Sustainability Coordinator; and Sudbury TV staff

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Chair Rami Alwan.

1. Discussion and Vote on Continued Funding of the Sustainability Coordinator Position

Chair Rami Alwan reviewed the funding history of the Sustainability Coordinator position, noting that the position was originally established through state funding with a phased cost-sharing arrangement. Initially the state paid 100% of the salary. The second year, the ESC committee paid 75% while the Town paid 25%. Presently the Town now pays 75% and ESC pays 25%. In the next fiscal year, the Town would pay 100%. He explained that the Town Manager had requested that ESC continue contributing approximately \$35,000 annually toward the position (slightly less than 25%) due to ongoing budget constraints and potential override considerations.

Committee members expressed strong support for continuing funding of the position, citing its value to the Town and the importance of sustainability efforts. Discussion focused primarily on whether the Committee's commitment should be indefinite or for a defined period. Members generally agreed that sustainability should become a permanent municipal function funded through the Town's operating budget rather than relying indefinitely on ESC support. Several members suggested establishing a finite commitment period while preserving flexibility to revisit the issue if circumstances change.

During discussion, ESC Member Joe Martino cautioned against an indefinite commitment, noting that it could create an expectation of perpetual funding. ESC Vice Chair Olga Faktorovich Allen agreed, emphasizing that sustainability should be treated as a core Town function and eventually be incorporated into the municipal budget. ESC Member Venk Gopal suggested language that would allow flexibility if Town funding became available sooner than expected. ESC Member Jennifer Dudgeon supported establishing a defined funding period while retaining the option to revisit the matter in the future. ESC Member John Keklak observed that requests for continued funding might recur at the end of any fixed term but stated that the position remained worthwhile and deserving of support.

Motion:

Following discussion, Rami moved that the Committee continue funding the Sustainability Coordinator position at \$35,000 annually for the next four years.

Wording of motion: "That [ESC] continue to fund the sustainability coordinator at \$35,000 annually for the next four years."

Vote:

9-0

2. Combined Facilities Director Update

Combined Facilities Director Sandra Duran is working with Solect (the solar canopy provider) to prepare for the annual Town Meeting and upcoming budget meetings, in particular to create renderings of the canopies being considered for Haskell, Curtis and the Fire/Police Station. Sandra noted that the Fire/Police Station project will require Historic District Commission approval.

Sandra reported that a structural analysis shows Fire Station 2 is not capable of supporting the currently-proposed solar system, and will need to be redesigned. Fire Station 3 can support its currently proposed solar system design. Sandra will be working with Bob Mulvey of Energy Resources to revise designs if he is interested in continuing with these small systems.

Sandra reported that the Fairbank solar installation is on hold pending the resolution of the roof leak. She did not have an estimate for when the issue would be resolved.

Sandra reported that the Curtis solar array is going forward. She indicated that renderings will be helpful for socializing the project, in particular with bus drivers who had concerns about turning radii.

Sandra reported that the original PPA did not include water management, and Sandra has asked Solect to add this consideration to the current designs. This addition may impact the financial aspect of the projects.

Sandra reported that DPW is starting an HVAC study at Sudbury schools. The goal is to select more energy-efficient systems for those buildings. This work will require funding, and Sandra requested that ESC provide a criteria framework for prioritizing projects in the interest of providing a basis for justifying the cost of these projects. Olga asked if this work is considering low global warming refrigerants. Sandra replied that this was not a direct consideration at this time, but could be added, with the understanding that this would add to the cost of the study. Olga and Sandra agreed to meet offline to better understand how the scope of the project could be expanded.

Action Item:

Olga and Sandra to meet to discuss expanding HVAC study to include consideration of refrigerants.

John asked if the geotec evaluation is going forward at Haskell. Sandra replied that the geotec will be performed by Solect after the town signs the lease for the project. The decisions to sign the leases for the three solar canopy projects will be the subject of Town Meeting articles.

Rami asked about the production from the DPW solar system. Sandra responded that the system is working well, but there is an issue with receiving reports about the generated credits. Solect is looking into resolving the issue with Eversource. Sandra pointed out that the costs and credits are locked in by the PPA governing the DPW system. She added that the credits earned by the DPW system can be applied to the cost of electricity across town buildings.

Olga asked Sandra for a messaging document with factual points to consider when meeting with stakeholders during the process of socializing the solar canopy projects. Sandra indicated that the renderings will be central to these interactions with CIAC and Parks and Rec. Eric voiced his support for the information Olga requested.

Action Item:

Eric to create an initial version of this document.

Sandra requested an agenda item to discuss recycling at a future meeting.

Action Item:

Rami to add recycling as an item on a future agenda.

3. Discussion of Electricity Usage Sudbury Public Schools

John reported that the Eversource portal for real time electricity usage monitoring costs \$50/month or \$300/year in addition to a meter upgrade. John pointed out that the meter upgrades and the subscription would need to be approved by SPS governance.

John also mentioned that the DPW building may already have access to its solar generation data. Sandra indicated that she received monthly reports of generation and usage, but real time monitoring was not part of the DPW arrangement with Solect.

John pointed out that having this information for the schools would be very beneficial, as it would provide the ability to discover why the Haynes school has such high peak usage rates that result in a kwh rate that is twice that of the other schools.

Venk mentioned that Eversource is replacing meters with smart meters, and therefore the school meters would be upgraded without cost.

Action Item:

John will contact Eversource to learn when the school meters will be replaced by smart meters.

4. Discussion of Air Quality Monitoring

John voiced his opinion that the air quality monitoring devices being offered would be somewhat redundant, as the National Weather Service and Wunderground both already provide air quality data online, and therefore did not recommend ESC to be involved in installing and maintaining the devices. However, he felt the devices could be used by schools for science projects, or by Eagle Scout candidates for their community service projects.

Olga suggested that the devices could be installed in locations where parents drop off children for school and activities to monitor air quality issues due to idling. Sandra inquired whether the town has an anti-idling ordinance.

Eric mentioned that the Health Department had been interested in obtaining the sensors. He supports using the sensors for targeted applications such as the idling issues brought up by Olga.

Members discussed how to move forward by holding joint discussions with SPS, the Health Department and ESC.

Action Item:

Eric will start the process of communicating with the Health Department and SPS about this initiative.

5. Sustainability Coordinator Update

Regarding MVP 2.0, Eric reported that a vendor (MAPC) is lined up to develop the resilience coaches program. Eric will work with MAPC to recruit coaches and develop survey materials.

A Farmers' Market is scheduled for this spring. Eric is reaching out to health and social workers to connect with lower-income and disadvantaged residents. Part of this work is directed at educating residents to grow some of their own produce in backyard patio containers.

Regarding the Climate Leaders program, Eric is working to advance the EV First program with schools.

Regarding the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Hazard Mitigation Plan: Weston-Sampson continues work on these projects. W-S is exploring flood maps from BSC, whose maps are more current than those provided by FEMA. The cost of access to the BSC data would be approximately \$6000. Eric raised the question of whether ESC would be willing to cover the cost of this access, with the possibility of sharing the cost with the Conservation Commission, as the Conservation Commission may be able to use this data for some of their projects. Members discussed whether ESC should take a vote at this meeting to commit the \$6000, or whether the vote should be put off to the next meeting.

Action Item:

Eric will forward the BSC proposal to ESC members so they can be better informed before voting on this issue at the February meeting.

Eric mentioned a discussion with Renewables Worldwide regarding community solar to partner with municipalities. Eric will look into this further.

Action Item:

Eric will investigate the opportunity with Renewables Worldwide, and report his findings to ESC.

Eric mentioned that his other items -- namely the solar and air quality monitoring projects -- have already been discussed.

6. Discussion of ESC Mission

Olga summarized the work thus far on defining ESC purpose and vision.

Collateral to be produced in the interest of a focused strategy: web site content, a two-page summary defining ESC, criteria for prioritization, criteria for funding requests, and metrics/KPI's.

Rami and Olga will meet with the Select Board to provide an update to ESC vision.

Members discussed the proposed ESC vision and purpose. Among the issues is how much ESC should be involved in protecting the natural resources of Sudbury, as this is the purview of the Conservation Commission. Members also weighed in on wording, such as "Fight Climate Change" vs "Curb climate pollution" vs "Adapt to adverse climate change".

Venk provided a detailed definition of energy independence based on the "4 D's" -- decarbonization, decentralization, democratization and digitalization.

Olga concluded by outlining the next steps of the ESC Mission definition process. Further work will produce a more granular view leading to specific collateral items.

7. Next Meeting

ESC members agreed to hold the next monthly meeting on February 10, 2026.

Conclusion of Meeting

With no further business before ESC, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:01pm.

Submitted by: John Keklak