

St. Johnsbury Town Energy Committee

November 3, 2025

Members Present: Pam Parker (Chair), Susan Parker, Lynn Wurzburg, Robert Michael, Jason Kaiser

1. Review October minutes

Minutes were passed

2. Debrief WindowDressers build

Everyone on the committee participated. Pam said we need to spread out the knowledge base as we have one person who knows the ins and outs of WindowDressers and how to solve particular issues that come up. She suggested we sit down with the core team and write down all the key aspects of the build that we need to know. Jason said as a first time participant he was impressed with the assembly set up and how well it went. We had 150 orders. We expected to do 300.

Several people who went to the Weatherization for All in the fall wanted to order inserts but it was too late. Jason said his church in Lyndonville, which hosts WindowDressers, is on board for getting window inserts next year.

Pam said that we might want to do door to door on streets where we know the houses could use WindowDressers. Jason wondered if we could use the geographic information developed by the state of Vermont on energy burden to identify streets to target.

3. Zoom mtg with Debbie New, coordinator, Vermont Thermal Networks

Joe Kasprzak, assistant town manager, mentioned the pilot geothermal pilot program as the town worked to redevelop the armory and engaged people nearby who were interested. While the armory project has slowed down, St. Johnsbury wants to keep a geothermal network on the front burner including strategic planning for the future. There is a possibility to get funding through a planning grant.

It is an economic community development project as well as an energy project and would welcome the Energy Committee's involvement.

Debbie New said her organization works to make sure that there is an opportunity to get heat from the ground. It is using a local resource to create shared infrastructure like water and sewer systems. It's a solution that means we don't have to go one building at a time-it's a neighborhood solution.

In St. Johnsbury they explored other buildings next to the armory so that still could be viable project as well as other parts of the town that they have surveyed. We could pay for it like water and sewer through regular bills.

Joe said there are still possibilities for developing the armory and would like to see geothermal network be part of it. Committee members asked a number of questions about the technical details of geothermal networks and the possibilities of developing it in St. Johnsbury. Debbie said that these projects need a place to be an anchor that starts the network with neighboring buildings.

Vermont Community Thermal Networks has a lot of information on thermal networks.

Bellows Falls is having a thermal strategic plan done. They are identifying thermal energy resources locally and then opportunities for it to serve different buildings. The plan will identify viable projects as well as ownership models and financing structures. All of this starts with the community—what the community needs, what it is working on, and what is the readiness and capacity for it. The report on the strategic plan will be ready soon and they are happy to share it with St. Johnsbury. South Royalton, Stowe, Williston, Manchester, and other towns are also exploring the potential for geothermal networks.

Debbie said she's learned it's important to get in early on projects so a thermal network could be part of the plan. There is a geothermal network at Champlain College in Burlington and in Framingham, Massachusetts as well as several in New York State. Joe said the town welcomed our involvement including a stakeholder meeting on November 14 at 2pm to speak with NVDA on this topic. Debbie said her role is to help committees like ours to explore thermal networks.

4. New Discussion

Lynn said that through Front Porch Forum we could make practical suggestions on weatherization as gifts as the holidays approach. Pam said that at the VCAN conference Steve Isham learned that we can still use our MERP money through 2026 to do more community events like Weatherization for All.

5. How will school redistricting impact energy usage and resilience for the town of St. Johnsbury and surrounding towns?

Donley Johnson who was unable to make the meeting asked the committee to consider the question. Jason was not sure how much it would be under our purview because it will happen throughout Vermont but he said it's a great question to consider.

The next meeting is December 1 from 5:30 to 7pm at the Welcome Center.