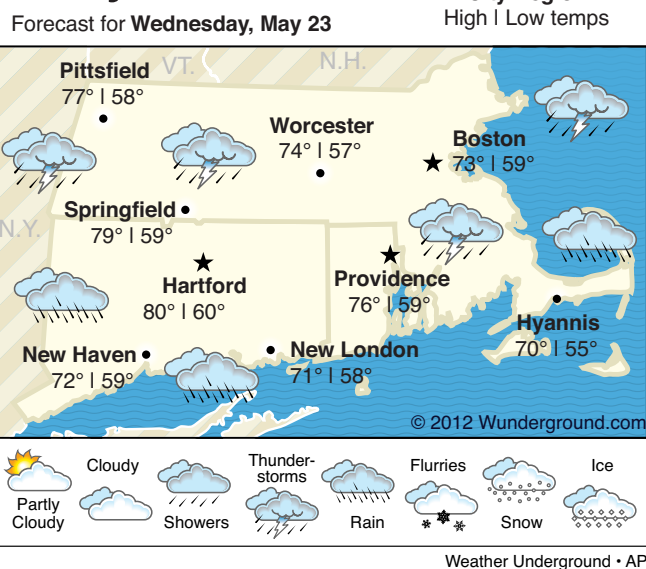


Today's Forecast



The Forecast
Today: Scattered thunderstorms; highs in the upper 70s.
Thursday: Isolated thunderstorms; highs in the upper 70s.
Friday: Few showers; highs in the upper 70s.

Townsend board signs off on green-energy document

TOWNSEND — The fifth and final requirement for Townsend's designation as a Green Community got unanimous approval from selectmen Tuesday.

Using Mass Energy Insight, an energy-use tracking program that monitors town buildings, the town Energy Committee established an energy-reduction plan that would reduce use by 20 percent within five years.

After committee members Sue Dejniak, Sandra Brown and Chris Campion were thanked for their work, selectmen unanimously approved the document and signed a letter requesting it be sent to the state for approval.

Among the highlights of the plan:

- A stretch-energy code was adopted by Town Meeting in mid-November, along with zoning designations for solar development at the former landfill and municipal facilities.
- Expedited application and permitting processes were also approved for renewable-energy systems.
- A fuel-efficient vehicle-purchasing plan was approved by selectmen earlier this year.

The town is hoping to join 86 other green communities in the state as eligible recipients of grant funding.

Vehicles, according to Campion, is where the most room lies for energy-efficiency improvement in the plan. Those with the most energy-saving ability, he said, are hybrid vehicles and those that utilize technology that can quickly turn off an engine during idling.

— LUKE STEERE

Open Meeting complaint in Ashby

Resident charges Board of Selectmen violated quorum rule during executive session

By Katina Caraganis
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ASHBY — Resident Lillian Whitney has filed an Open Meeting Law complaint with the Attorney General's Office, alleging that a selectmen's meeting was not held properly.

Whitney said this week that the Board of Selectmen posted a meeting for the week before the May 5 Town Meeting where they would immediately go into executive session to discuss with an employee his mental and physical capabilities to do his job.

Whitney alleges that only Chairman Peter McMurray showed up for the meeting, posted for the afternoon, and took Highway Superintendent Bill Davis, his attorney and Town Administrator Doug Briggs behind closed doors for a meeting. Two members of the Board of Selectmen must be present for

a quorum.

The complaint was filed at the beginning of May, she said.

Briggs said Tuesday that he has reviewed the complaint but has not responded yet.

"I don't respond. I will wait for the AG to respond to me. They contact me, and I answer and we go from there," he said. "I believe they are unfounded. I hope I never hear from the AG, but I don't know. It depends on how busy they are and what they're doing. If it comes I will answer their questions, but I don't see a need to go any further than that."

According to the Attorney General's Office website, the public body must respond to the complaint within 14 business days of when the complaint was filed.

Whitney said that it is her belief that only the law number needs to be referenced in the meeting posting for why a

board or committee is going into executive session, not all of the language.

"They actually quoted the law for going into executive session. You don't have to do that," Whitney said.

The meeting in question was reopened at 6:30 p.m., Whitney said, even though it was not posted that way.

"Peter (McMurray) opened the meeting that night at 6:30. The agenda was just about signing bonds. There was going to be a talk on regionalization and an update. They opened the meeting because (then-Selectman) Joe (Casey) showed up," she said. "Peter said that they had to finish the agenda items from before. It should be posted like that. There was no continuance or anything like that, to let the public know. It's just all wrong. You shouldn't do anything like that."

McMurray did not return telephone messages seeking comment.

Lunenburg board OKs 'remote clause'

By Katina Caraganis
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LUNENBURG — Selectmen tentatively approved adopting a new clause to the Open Meeting Law that would allow for members to remotely participate in meetings, provided the practice doesn't become an excuse to never attend in person.

Selectmen have deliberated whether they would allow remote participation since the beginning of the year, but some members have said they fear it will be used improperly.

The remote-access participation clause to the Open Meeting Law is fairly new. It allows members of town boards to take part in meetings without actually being in the room. To participate, committee members must meet certain circumstances, such as personal illness, disability, emergency, military service or geographic distance.

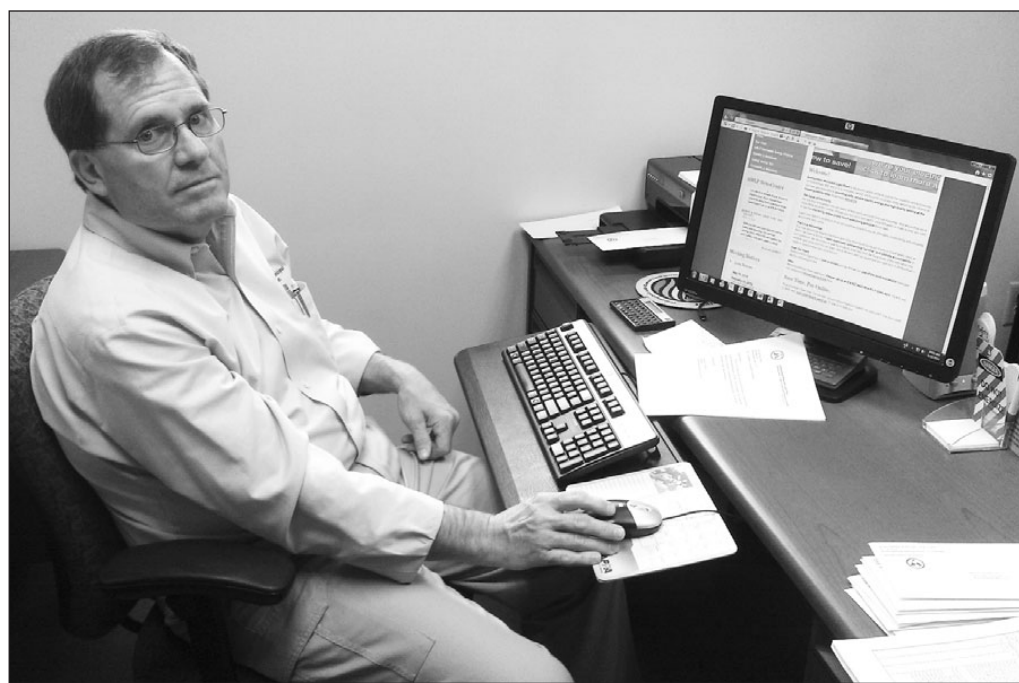
Selectman Ernie Sund requested that in one provision that states "all meeting rooms shall have the equipment to do video-conferencing" be changed to "may be equipped to do video-conferencing" because he was afraid it could be expensive to the town.

Town Manager Kerry Spidel said that she would check with town counsel to make sure that change could be legally made. The motion that was approved was contingent on town counsel saying the change could be made.

Selectmen Paula Bertram expressed support for the clause, saying it was a "a thorough policy."

"I don't think it should be used as a reason to not come to meetings but if some unforeseen circumstances come up, it would be nice to have it in place," Bertram said.

The motion passed, 3-2, with Sund and Steve deBettencourt voting against remote participation.



Stan Herriott, manager of the Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant, works on the town-owned utility's new website.

Ashburnham Municipal Light launches site to centralize data

By Michael Hartwell
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 @shartwell on Twitter

ASHBURNHAM — The Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant launched a new website this month to centralize information on electrical services in the town.

Stan Herriott, manager of the municipally owned utility, said he decided to have the website www.amlp.org built because residents were repeatedly sending utility questions to his personal Facebook account.

"I thought, if people are taking the time to search me out there, they must want to have the information online," said Herriott.

The utility started accepting online payments two years ago and the meeting minutes of its board were already posted on the town website. But Herriott wanted to have that information centralized on one easy-to-search page.

Besides meeting notices and a catalogue of meeting minutes for the board going back to 2008, the website also contains a scrolling feed for announcements, such as town events and status updates for power outages.

Herriott said during an outage, many residents will still be able to check the website using a smartphone or laptop computer.

The website was created by Scott Bingham, president of Ashburnham-based ComfortZones Communications Inc. Bingham's great-grandfather, Amedee Roy, was manager of the Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant for more than 50 years.

"Previously, everything was referred to off of the town website," said Bingham. "What we wanted was to give customers an easy-to-follow menu so within a click or two they can get the information they are after."

He said it will help during the twice-annual controlled test outage. Residents will be able to visit the website to find out what's happening.

"We're just getting started," Herriott added. He said his department is considering a text-message alert system. Customers would need to opt-in to participate, and Herriott said he doesn't want to overwhelm people with too many messages.

The website also contains a link to a live feed at the Brigg Elementary School construction project. At the request of the school district, his department placed a camera on a temporary utility pole installed for the project so viewers can see the work unfold in real time.

The Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant was established in 1908 and provides electricity to the residents of Ashburnham, as well as a smaller customer base in several surrounding towns and cities.

Follow Michael Hartwell at facebook.com/michaelhartwell.

LOTTERY via AP

Massachusetts

Tuesday's Daily Number: **6-8-9-3**

Exact order: All four: \$5,387; First/last three: \$754; Any two: \$65; Any one: \$6

Any order: All four: \$224; First three: \$126; Last three: \$126

Payoffs based on a \$1 bet:

Tuesday's Daily Number: **2-5-5-2**

Exact order: All four: \$4,002; First/last three: \$560; Any two: \$48; Any one: \$5

Any order: All four: \$667; First three: \$187; Last three: \$187

Payoffs based on a \$1 bet:

Monday's Mass Cash: **5-6-10-14-27**

Northern New England

Pick 3 Day: **4-5-5**Pick 4 Day: **9-1-3-7**

Pick 3 Evening: **0-2-5**Pick 4 Evening: **5-0-7-6**

* Confirmation suggested at local lottery outlet.

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