Greenfield Energy and Technology (GCET)

Minutes Date: August 11, 2026 Time: 6:00 PM
Attendance: Commissioners Farrell, Stromsten, Goodwin
Also in attendance. J. Lunt, W. St. Denis
Location: Hybrid (GCET Offices and Virtual)

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM.

Board Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order and noted that the meeting was being recorded. Any person objecting to the recording was asked to notify the Chair.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Goodwin to accept the minutes from the June meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stromsten and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present to comment. The meeting moved on to business.

Business

1. Greenfield Housing Association (GHA) – Digital Equity Grant

The digital equity grant project is complete and now live. Free basic internet service is being provided, with sign-ups underway at the following locations:

- Winslow
- Elm Terrace
- Oak Courts
- Morgan Allen House

This covers approximately 300 units (an estimated 400+ residents), who will receive two years of free internet service through the grant. The population served is mixed, including elderly and

non-elderly residents. Once all units are signed up, GCET will coordinate with GHA on optional add-on services such as TV.

2. Residential Retrofit – The Weldon

During on-site work, it was discovered that three of the nine ceilings do not match the original plans — they are solid concrete. The concrete sections will require "racetrack" conduit routed up through the corners, adding an estimated few extra weeks to the timeline.

- The building representative was present for the discovery, and outreach to residents is planned to update them on the revised timeline.
- Staff have already briefed the grant manager (Athena) and the building contact (Jason), and plan to follow up with Giovanni (part-time property manager, on-site Wednesdays). A new full-time, local property manager has also been hired; his contact information will be shared with the board.
- It was noted that this time of year also brings seasonal ceiling issues from condensation ("sweating pipes") near the building's aquarium on the ground floor, which may surface additional repair needs beyond the concrete issue.
- Public Wi-Fi installation in the dining room and first-floor meeting room was confirmed as on track.
- Aside from the ceiling-related delay, the project has what it needs to proceed. The team anticipates the building will open soon, adding 109 units (low/moderate-income and elderly housing), bringing the year's total to over 400 low/moderate-income units connected.

3. Outside Plant Equipment Update

Ongoing vehicle and equipment issues continue to affect fieldwork:

- The construction truck (16 years old) is currently out of service with an electrical issue, halting work on the north build (strand work and prep for splicing/bringing lines into the Severance Street location).
- The install van was repaired locally with good results.
- GCET has decided to stop using the DPW for vehicle repairs going forward and will instead partner with local specialists for maintaining older fleet vehicles, given the age and condition of current equipment.
- This equipment situation will factor into upcoming capital requests. It was noted that GCET has gone six consecutive years without capital approval for bonds and that GCET pays for the bonds, not the City.
- A board member noted positive feedback from a City Councilor regarding a recent one-on-one meeting with the General Manager, who indicated he will continue outreach to councilors to help them understand the complexity of GCET's operations.

4. GAP Networks Grant

This large grant primarily targets underserved areas on the outskirts of Greenfield, including areas off Leyden Road (northwest), Adams Road (east), and Shelburne Road (south), as well as the transfer station.

- Extensive "make-ready" pole work is required before construction can begin. GCET participates in a statewide working group that includes the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, the Executive Office of Economic Development, the Department of Public Utilities (DPU), the Department of Telecommunications and Cable (DTC), and a representative from the Governor's office, along with major pole owners Eversource, Verizon, and National Grid.
- GCET has already obtained all necessary licenses.
- The state requested and received a federal deadline extension for make-ready work, moving the completion deadline for the whole grant from December 31, 2026 to June 30, 2027 (the end of GCET's fiscal year), in recognition that the original timeline was unworkable industry-wide.
- As a result, GCET now expects to begin its portion of the GAP build in early spring rather than fall, which was described as a relief given how the make-ready timeline had been repeatedly delayed.
- Supply chain issues: lead times for telecom equipment have roughly quadrupled due to tariffs and supply chain disruptions, with some equipment that used to take two weeks now taking two to four months. Prices have also risen substantially (roughly 25–30%), with no tariff exemption currently in place for telecom equipment, since much of it is not manufactured domestically. This does not directly affect GAP (grant-funded), but will affect other purchases, including customer premises equipment (CPE). The extended GAP timeline is expected to help absorb these delays.

5. Financial / Revenue Update

- Revenue goals were met for the first month of the fiscal year.
- Final revenue figures for the prior fiscal year are still being finalized (expected within another month or two); earnings are known to have improved year-over-year, though an exact figure isn't yet available.
- All bond payments and operating expenses continue to be paid on time; the organization remains self-sufficient.
- Fall promotions are being planned, with details to come.
- Cross-training continues between outside plant and inside plant staff, with a continued emphasis on staffing efficiency and automation. This approach is reported to be working well.
- A separate matter requiring discussion of a trade secret/confidential issue was flagged for Executive Session (Reason 10).

6. TV Service Question (Board Member Inquiry)

A board member asked whether residents in the digital equity grant buildings can get GCET information about TV channel packages now, or whether they must wait until service is fully up and running.

- GCET resells TV service through a nationwide purchasing cooperative of small telecom companies that negotiates collectively with major networks (individual negotiation with major networks would not be feasible for a company of GCET's size).
- Three tiered packages are offered, each with a different channel lineup; per licensing/DMCA-related requirements from content providers, service must be delivered over the GCET network.
- Once residents are connected, TV packages can be added on top of internet service at set price tiers. Customers cannot pick and choose individual channels — this is standard across the industry, since a small number of large media companies bundle channel access (e.g., Walt Disney owns a large share of available content).
- Staff agreed this would be a good topic for a resident outreach/education session at the Weldon, to explain package options and provide a construction timeline update, without directing a high volume of calls to the office before the timeline is confirmed.

Other Business

No further questions were raised on general business items.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Stromsten to enter Executive Session under Reason 10, to discuss trade secret, confidential, and proprietary information. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goodwin.

A roll call vote was taken; all members voted in favor. Recording ceased at the start of Executive Session, per standard practice, as no further public business would be conducted after entry into Executive Session.