

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES
June 10, 2024, 7-8:30 PM
Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

PRESENT: in person, CEC members Joanna Sharf, Richard Thompson, Bill Schmidt, Mike Belanger, Everett Cass, and Alternates Bill Cable & Myron Kuhre; Via Zoom: Nancy Wightman, Dick Gendron; PEC member Nick Cohen; Doug Cogan (Sullivan County Energy Circuit Rider).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Two amendments to the May minutes were suggested and accepted. Richard indicated that the Lempster wind farm contact is Virginia Parker, not Virginia Barker, and Mike reminded the Committee that he had reported on the current amount of money in the Committee account. Mike made a motion to accept the May minutes as amended, and Richard seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

COMMUNITY POWER COALITION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE: Joanna reported that the Select Board has not yet decided to enter into the CPCNH Joint Powers Agreement, which is the first step in the process of joining the coalition. In the meantime, Joanna has requested customer data from the three utilities that serve Cornish in order to speed up the process once a JPA has been signed. Joanna informed the Committee that the JPA is non-binding, the NH Attorney General has reviewed and approved it, and 59 other towns have already approved and signed JPAs. In addition, the JPA language is fixed and cannot be amended. It must be the same for all signatories. Doug Cogan mentioned that there are two options for joining CPCNH: through the town, or through Sullivan County, which is currently considering joining the Coalition. If Cornish were to join through the county, only the Select Board would need to sign off, and would not need to include the residents in the decision making process. Joanna and the Committee expressed support for joining as a town because it would require informing town residents, holding public hearings and bringing it to a vote at Town Meeting. If Sullivan County joins, and the Select Board decides not to have Cornish become a member through the County, Cornish residents could opt in individually. It was clarified that, if Cornish joins as a town, residents are automatically opted in as subscribers, but can opt out and in again as frequently as they want on a monthly basis. Everett expressed concern about financial exposure for residents if CPCNH suffered any financial losses in the program, but Joanna explained that CPCNH is building a six month reserve to absorb price fluctuations and other liabilities, and is very pro-active in anticipating problems that other state coalitions have run into. Joanna also reminded the Committee that CPCNH is a non-profit organization that strongly prioritizes transparency and accountability.

TOWN OFFICES WEATHERIZATION: Joanna met with the Selectboard on May 25, 2024 and discussed the revised proposal from Earthshare which includes removal of bat guano from the attic. The cost would be approximately \$14,000 to remove the guano, and \$10,000 to seal and insulate the attic. The Selectboard asked Joanna to find a contractor who could determine if bats are still living in the attic and safely remove them. Joanna

found a contractor named David Kondrup of NH Bat Control who said the best way to check if bats are living in the attic is to put down white sheets under the central peak of the roof. Richard suggested that the bats need to be removed before any cleanup efforts are undertaken, and the Committee agreed. Joanna and Richard offered to examine the attic and make an assessment.

WIND POWER FORUM: Richard spoke with Virginia Parker from the Lempster Wind Farm, and she found a promising primary speaker for the forum. The Committee also discussed the possibility of a second speaker, preferably someone from Lempster who could address the process a town might go through to approve such a project. A third speaker could be someone from Avant Grid Renewables, the operator of the Lempster wind farm, or an Eversource employee who is or was involved in the plan to purchase and distribute the energy generated by the turbines and build the electrical infrastructure to distribute it. Joanna will contact the Town of Lempster to inquire about a speaker and she asked if anyone else from the Committee could inquire about a speaker from Eversource, but no one volunteered. The Committee then discussed possible dates for the virtual forum and suggested September 10, 12, 24, or 26 as options. The event would take place at 6:30 or 7:00 PM via Zoom.

OTHER FUTURE FORUMS OR ENERGY PROJECTS: Joanna urged Committee members to think about new ideas for educational forums and projects. Ideas considered included a booth at the Cornish Fair with educational materials on a range of topics, tools for monitoring energy efficiency in homes and businesses, and a flyer that lists the energy usage of most household appliances (e.g. refrigerators, dehumidifiers, computers, video games, fans, radios, water heaters, etc.). Bill Cable offered to work on the list of appliances & their energy usage. Joanna also mentioned the need to update the Committee website and produce easy to read graphs relating to town building energy consumption trends. Joanna said she would try to find technical support on the government website that operates the Portfolio Manager program.

MUNICIPAL SOLAR GRANT PROGRAM: Applications for federal grants for solar installations on town property are now available in NH. The Municipal Solar program applications are due August 1st. The application has a checklist of 17 stipulations. The installation needs to be on Town property and can only be used for town buildings, so the school and the fairgrounds are not eligible. The size of the solar array cannot be bigger than 60kw and would be limited to 125% of the total energy amount needed. Cornish would likely need to work with a solar installer to provide all of the needed information and plans. In addition, Cornish needs to be registered on the Federal System for Award Management (SAM) website. Mike indicated that he's had experience with SAM and offered to find out if Cornish has one in place. Doug also added that the amount of money available may end up being meager after allocations are made across the state. The Committee discussed the option of installing solar panels on the Town Hall, which has a new roof. It was not clear whether this program would be beneficial to Cornish due to the limitations on how much solar can be installed, but it is worth looking into. The Community

Solar for All program was also briefly discussed. Doug's understanding is that this program is exclusively focused on mobile home communities and low-income residents.

COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION: Everett Cass announced his resignation from the Committee, effective immediately.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, July 8 at 7pm.