

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 7, 2024, 5:30-7:00 PM

Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

PRESENT: in person, CEC members Joanna Sharf, Richard Thompson, Bill Schmidt, Mike Belanger, Myron Kuhre, Bill Cable and Susanne Haseman; Cornish Select Board member Jason Bourne; PEC member Evan Oxenham, Enfield Energy Committee member Jo-Ellen Courtney; Frank Parks; via Zoom: Dick Gendron and Nick Cohen.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MINUTES: Richard made a motion to accept the September minutes and Mike seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

COMMUNITY POWER: The Committee discussed the need to plan public hearings to present the community power concept and the Electric Aggregation Plan (EAP) for Cornish. Susanne suggested that we focus messaging on how the program will affect Cornish residents on a daily basis. She suggested the need to identify concrete examples of the benefits of the program. Evan highlighted the fact that very little would change, except for lower electricity rates. Residents will receive the same bill from their current electricity provider, with a note on the bill about community power. The Committee discussed other benefits such as pricing stability, more options for renewable sources, and greater ease in working with other communities on energy projects. Joanna reviewed the timeline for the hearings: the deadline for completing them is January 14th so Cornish can submit the draft EAP to the NH Public Utilities Commission at that time (the PUC review timeline is 60 days). It was also agreed that a third date should be identified in case of adverse weather. The Committee will also hold an informational meeting in February, before the Town Meeting in March. After discussion, the following dates were agreed to, pending availability of CPCNH staff to assist in the presentations and no conflicts with other town events: November 12, 13 or 14, 6:30 – 8:00 PM and December 3, 4, 10, 11 or 12, 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Both hearings will be held at the Town Offices. CPCNH has a slide deck that will be utilized for both hearings. The Committee also discussed streaming the hearings for those who cannot attend in person and will explore options for this and agreed that the hearings would be recorded. Joanna opened discussion about publicity for the public hearings and raised the possibility of a town-wide bulk mailing to ensure that everyone is fully informed. She mentioned this had been done in 2018 when Cornish voted on energy goals for 2030 and 2050. After extensive consideration, the Committee decided not to proceed with a bulk mailing now but would re-visit the issue for the February information meeting. Other publicity ideas included: materials at the library, posters around town, Connect Cornish, the Cornish website, an information table at the Cornish Recycling Center, and an FAQ document. Additionally, the need to draft text for publicizing the hearings for Connect Cornish was identified, and Bill and Susanne volunteered to serve on a subcommittee with Joanna to work on this and any additional publicity needs that might arise. The Committee then discussed the latest draft EAP. The group reviewed the energy goals contained in the draft and no changes were made. Joanna raised the question of whether the decision to choose a third party broker vs. CPCNH as Cornish's community power partner should be made by residents at Town Meeting, or by the Select

Board. After extensive discussion, the Committee decided to leave this decision to the Select Board. A few towns have decided to adopt the broker model (e.g., Keene) so it will be presented during the public hearings. Jo-Ellen suggested replacing the word “nominate” in the Approval Process paragraph on p. 6 of the EAP to “authorize.” It was also suggested that we add the full name of the committee on p. 4, namely “Cornish Energy and Electric Aggregation Committee.” Joanna said she would make those changes.

NEW MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE: The Committee discussed Frank Park’s possible nomination as a committee member with Frank present. He shared with the Committee that he has resided in Cornish since 1968 and is a former member of the Select Board and other town committees. Frank also mentioned his experience on the staff at the NH Electric Coop, which could help inform the work of the Committee. He expressed interest in bringing what he could to the work of the Committee, and to assist in identifying clean energy initiatives that offer the biggest return on investment for residents. While busy with some other projects, he feels he can contribute meaningfully to the Committee. Frank left the meeting, and the Committee voted 4 in favor and 1 abstaining to recommend him to the Select Board as an Alternate committee member.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, November 4th at 5:30 PM.