

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 9, 2024, 7-8:30 PM
Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

PRESENT: In person, CEC members Joanna Sharf, Bill Schmidt, Richard Thompson, Myron Kuhre, and Bill Cable; PEC member Evan Oxenham; Others: Susanne Haseman and Frank Parks; Via Zoom: PEC member Bob Jordan; CEC member Dan Poor; others: Dick Gendron & Tony Newton. Also in person was Andrew Hatch, Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH).

APPROVAL OF JUNE MINUTES: Bill S. made a motion to accept the August minutes and Myron seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

NEW MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE: The Committee briefly discussed Susanne Haseman's nomination as an Alternate member, and then voted unanimously to recommend her to the Select Board for their approval. Joanna indicated to Frank Parks she would follow up with him about his possible nomination as Alternate to the Committee at the next meeting.

COMMUNITY POWER: Joanna reminded the group that this meeting would be dedicated entirely to review and discussion of the draft Electric Aggregation Plan (the "Plan"). Andrew Hatch from CPCNH and Evan Oxenham were in attendance to answer questions. Before reviewing the draft plan, Joanna asked for advice about the best dates to hold the public hearings on Community Power and the Plan. Andrew explained that we need to seek input from town residents about the plan before the Select Board approves it. He also said we should submit the Plan (after approval by the Select Board) to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) before Town Meeting because the PUC review process takes up to 60 days, so waiting until Town Meeting approval for submission could cause significant delays. Andrew told the group that unless there were material changes made at Town Meeting, there would be no need to go back to the PUC. Based on this information, the consensus was that it would be best to hold public hearings sooner rather than later, possibly in the range of October-December. We could hold an additional informational hearing closer to Town Meeting.

The Committee clarified that Select Board member Jason Bourne will serve as the member representative to CPCNH, and the Committee unanimously supported Joanna as the alternate, although recommended that we seek Select Board agreement on that. Andrew clarified that the representative and alternate do not need to be elected officials.

The Committee then discussed specific items in the document relating to:

- The vote at Town Meeting, which essentially will be to adopt the Plan and authorize the Select Board to implement the Plan.

- The Select Board’s authority to make decisions and designate authority to the Energy Committee and other individuals regarding Community Power (including the appointment of an Authorized Officer and Principal Executive Officer (town official) after the program launches). The consensus was that although it is not necessary to list specific future appointments in the Plan, but it’s important to be open about the Select Board’s authority to designate tasks.
- Cornish energy goals.
- The fact that the Plan leaves it up to the Select Board to choose to hire a commercial for-profit broker to manage Community Power or to partner with the nonprofit CPCNH.
- The program will launch only if the initial electricity supply rates are lower than the rates offered by the Utilities. This applies only to the launch, and leaves open the option to not always be lower than the utility rates. However, the stated objective is to provide rates equal to or less than the utility rates.
- Net metering – not yet available under Community Power because the utilities have not complied with the necessary data sharing; but the hope is that it will be available in the near future.
- Residents are free to opt-out or opt-in to Community Power at the beginning of any billing period as often as they like.

The Committee discussed the option of making Granite Plus the default enrollment level. Granite Plus provides for 33% renewable energy content at a slightly higher cost vs. Granite Basic which provides the NH mandated 24.3% renewable content at the cheapest rate. But this might make it difficult to meet the goal of providing the lowest launch rate, so the consensus was to keep Granite Basic as the default enrollment level for now. Similarly, the Committee felt it was not advisable at this point to create an “adder” to the electricity rates that would be used to fund a discretionary reserve for renewable energy projects.

Discussion about making sure all Select Board members are comfortable with moving forward with Community Power, and answering any concerns they might have.

The Committee adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Next meeting: Monday October 14 (Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day) at 7pm at the Cornish Town Offices.

Suggested language change at the bottom of p. 6 in the draft plan:

Approval Process for Cornish Community Power

The Community Power Committee was nominated as an official town committee by the Select Board on [INSERT DATE]. This Community Power Plan was developed with due input from the public, as required under RSA 53-E, during public hearings held on [INSERT DATE] and [INSERT DATE].