



**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH**  
**Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee**

**MINUTES (As amended April 2, 2025)**

**Wednesday, February 5, 2025**

**For the video recording, go to:**

<https://youtu.be/jyJrBTDYeGU>

Present: Chair Councilor John Tabor, Councilor Kate Cook, Kevin Charette, Tom Rooney, Herb Lloyd, Tracey Camerson, Peter Somssich. Excused: Betsy Blaisdell, Ben D'Antonio. Staff: Jillian Harris (Planning & Sustainability Department), Stephanie Seacord (PIO and recording secretary)

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Chairman's remarks
  - Jones Avenue solar project preparations are underway. DPW Director Peter Rice is engaged with the regulators and solar “how to” experts. Fence is being fixed and landfill junk being removed. Conducted site walk with the City Manager. Potential RFP in March.
  - NREL assessment of alternative energy for wastewater treatment facilities progressing. Checkin call on scope of work status on 7 Feb. Herb anticipates their report late Feb/early March. Will be asking about any federal funding impacts as a result of recent actions in DC.
3. Approval of minutes (January 8, 2025) on a motion by Tom, seconded by Herb.
4. CPCNH - rate adjustment to 9.7 cents starting Mar 3, 2025. First time CPCNH rate will be higher than Eversource default. Biomass power supplier was unable to fulfill contract and CPCNH learned late in Jan, meaning purchase was made at market power rates. CPCNH does not yet have sufficient reserves to hedge. Full press release from CPCNH:  
[https://www.cpcnh.org/files/ugd/202f2e\\_b4b8c091f7764aa785559d94e674bab2.pdf](https://www.cpcnh.org/files/ugd/202f2e_b4b8c091f7764aa785559d94e674bab2.pdf)  
Portsmouth will issue PCP press release to supplement Councilor Tabor’s announcement at City Council and on Facebook. Chair asked PEAC for their concerns and questions to discuss with Henry Herndon:
  - How did things fall apart so late in the CPCNH rate-setting process?
  - CPCNH statement says supplier contract was executed. If so, why isn’t the burden on them?
  - Where was the due diligence? Did something change on supplier side (new owner, bankruptcy, etc.)? Ben: Very alarming -- this was CPCNH’s first actively managed power deal. Where were the successor and indemnity clauses?
  - Why aren’t Ascend and Calpine responsible for making us whole?
  - Why doesn’t the CPCNH press release reference default rates?
  - Kate: Is this a signal of new renewables market instability? Concern for the future? Worldwide energy trends that would affect Aug rates. [Ben: renewables market is strong nationally but 15 percent of region’s energy comes from HydroCanada which would be impacted by tariffs on Canada]

5. Legislative alert: HB 760 – Councilor Tabor has alerted the City’s Legislative Subcommittee. Cliff Bulow, former PUC Commissioner is actively opposing the PUC’s allowing Eversource to recoup losses from all customers – including community power.
  - Ben: Would like to see CPCNH language less hyperbolic and conclusory.
  - Kate: Is CPCNH collecting balanced testimony from all the member towns? Sen Watters and Rep. Osborne are engaged. Other members of the Science & Technology Committee? Councilor Tabor will share links to any public comment opportunities.
6. Small municipal solar grant opportunities update – Herb reported the Clean Energy NH is seeing small grants drying up. Tracey recommended looking at the Coalition for Green Capital. Chair Tabor suggested following Lebanon’s leadership example.
7. Green Challenge results – Portsmouth won.

**CONGRATULATIONS, PORTSMOUTH**  
**WE WON THE**  
**SEACOAST ENERGY CHALLENGE!**

Shifting your Portsmouth Community Power rate from Basic to Granite Plus encourages Eversource to get more power from renewable sources and will help cushion CPCNH against future rate increases.

Visit [CommunityPowerNH.gov/Portsmouth](http://CommunityPowerNH.gov/Portsmouth)  
 When you opt-up, let us know! We have a small gift for you.  
 Email [hotline@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:hotline@cityofportsmouth.com)

| Seacoast Energy Challenge      |             |                  |                 |                                |       |                 |        |        |        |        |        |                              |            |               |          |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------------------------|------------|---------------|----------|
| July 2024 through January 2025 |             |                  |                 |                                |       |                 |        |        |        |        |        |                              |            |               |          |
| Community                      | Launch Date | Current Accounts | Default Product | Initial Opt-Ups (as of Jun 30) |       | Monthly Opt-Ups |        |        |        |        |        | Cumulative Results (to Date) |            |               |          |
|                                |             |                  |                 | Opt-Up %                       | Count | Jul-24          | Aug-24 | Sep-24 | Oct-24 | Nov-24 | Dec-24 | Jan-25                       | Net Change | Current Count | Opt-Up % |
| Dover                          | 10/23       | 14,008           | Granite Basic   | 0.8%                           | 95    | 5               | 4      | 2      | 5      | 2      | 5      | 6                            | 33         | 128           | 0.9%     |
| Durham                         | 3/24        | 3,245            | Granite Plus    | 1.9%                           | 51    | -               | 1      | 3      | 1      | 5      | 1      | 3                            | 17         | 68            | 2.1%     |
| Exeter                         | 4/23        | 6,889            | Granite Basic   | 1.8%                           | 124   | 3               | -      | 1      | 3      | -      | 1      | 1                            | 11         | 135           | 2.0%     |
| Newmarket                      | 3/24        | 4,087            | Granite Basic   | 0.6%                           | 22    | 1               | 7      | -      | -      | 2      | 1      | 2                            | 14         | 36            | 0.9%     |
| Portsmouth                     | 4/23        | 11,675           | Granite Basic   | 2.0%                           | 210   | 8               | 6      | 1      | 1      | 1      | 9      | 10                           | 42         | 252           | 2.2%     |

- Stephanie offered an example of a ‘perpetual trophy’ with a wood base and miniature solar array, available from Renewable Energy Awards for \$169. Tom suggested that Portsmouth High School CTE might be able to make one. Stephanie will followup with CTE.
  - PEAC invite representatives from Dover, Durham, Exeter and Newmarket to a photo opp at a City Council meeting.
8. Promoting NH Saves and other residential energy efficiency initiatives (continued discussion)
    - Tracey reported another Button Up NH workshop at Portsmouth Public Library (and zoom) on Apr 21, 6-7:30 pm
    - Add Energy Savings corner to weekly City Newsletter after Energy Challenge messaging: investigate if NH Saves has any marketing graphics to promote their energy audit program.
    - [Energy Audits & Weatherization | NHSaves](#)
  9. City energy efficiency initiatives
    - Building energy audit is continuing.
    - Chair Tabor provided report on gas costs – needs consumption [and units of carbon] data. Impact of LEED design at Library is obvious; other older buildings are more challenging.
    - Where is City in energy contract cycle? Does CPCNH make sense for next contract? Potential to generate own electricity and save money with Jones Ave solar array even more attractive,
    - Energy Manager for Portsmouth – not a good budget environment but should be looking at what Tad Montgomery in Lebanon has accomplished with a 20 Year Energy Efficiency Plan and scorecard.

10. Public comment

11. Oliver Chag, 419 Lincoln Ave. has expertise in developing municipal utility projects and willing to engage in efforts, getting out positive messaging on Jones site.
12. Ben: what can PEAC be doing to create an energy plan starting with the steps and timeline for Jones Ave.: ideas, options, cash flow, funding, timeline, capacity analysis.
13. Suggest inviting Peter Rice to next PEAC for a Jones Ave discussion on Interconnection Study (earmark funding in FY26 CIP – June 2025).
14. Herb: Future PEAC work session: Ask CleanEnergyNH to introduce us to other 7 towns beyond Exeter who have done landfill cap solar projects. NREL has the ability to do the capacity analysis at no charge.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 on a motion from Ben seconded by Tom.

Next meeting: TUESDAY, March 4, 2025 at 6:30 pm Conference Room A.