

**SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE, CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** September 25, 2025

**Time:** 6:30 — 8:30 PM

**Location:** Conference Room A City Hall

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Bert Cohen, Effie Malley, Rhianne Tallarico, Fred Calcinari, Jess Blasko, Colleen Spear, Nancy Clayburgh, Torey Brooks, Josh Denton

**Excused Absences:** Bill Lyons

**Staff in Attendance:** Kate Homet

**Guests in Attendance:** Sully Otis, Tyler Garzo, Emmie Wentworth, Stacey Gibson, Kristen Shaw

**Facilitator:** Bert Cohen

**Minutes:** Rhianne Tallarico

**Agenda**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes**
- 3. EV School Buses – Rachel Lane (STA) presentation**
- 4. Community Engagement**
- 5. CAP – Committee Action Spreadsheet**
- 6. Capital budget requests from Committee – building public support**
- 7. Master Plan – report on kickoff meeting, current status and information**
- 8. NH CAP participation opportunities**
- 9. Other Business**
- 10. Adjournment**

Topic	Notes	Votes / Actions
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Acceptance of Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Motion made to accept July 2025 and August 2025 minutes</li> </ul>	<b>Vote:</b> July 2025 and August 2025 minutes accepted
EV School Buses – Rachel Lane (STA) Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● STA enabled the first EV buses in Weare, NH. EV buses are coming to Hanover, NH and Maine.</li> <li>● Benefits of EV Buses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 0 tailpipe emissions (improved air quality is healthier for students, drivers and community)</li> <li>○ Reduces greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>○ Increased operational efficiency</li> <li>○ Comfortable rider experience</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Community Engagement Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education tool for students and community</li> <li>○ Training for drivers</li> <li>○ Demos for first responders</li> <li>○ Information sharing with other districts/community groups</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Batteries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Last for multiple years and can be recycled</li> <li>○ Battery range is reduced in hot and cold climates</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Monetary Cost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ \$300-400k per bus</li> <li>○ Charging infrastructure is \$50k per bus</li> <li>○ 30-40% reduction in preventative and routine maintenance</li> <li>○ There are additional costs such as training, property tax increases, charger networking/service plans/repairs and site upgrades</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Funding Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Federal grants</li> <li>○ Federal tax refund 30C (up to \$100k for EV infrastructure installed by Sept 2026)</li> <li>○ State grants (NH DES VW mitigation Trust, NH DOT CMAQ)</li> <li>○ Utility funding</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tips/Lessons Learned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understand utility rates/options</li> <li>○ Expect surprises in construction</li> <li>○ Have a maintenance plan</li> <li>○ Have a charge scheduling plan</li> <li>○ Your TCO is specific to your location</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Q&amp;A with Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Most drivers are hesitant to change, but become more comfortable after training. Drivers like that the bus and kids are quieter.</li> <li>○ Most grants require a minimum time using the EV bus and that a diesel bus is swapped to receive the EV bus. STA typically owns the diesel bus that is being swapped.</li> <li>○ Other locations have started with 1 or a few EV buses. They get to decide which bus gets swapped based on the route, driver, etc.</li> <li>○ Typical range depends on bus model type, but Type C (large bus) can expect ~100 miles on a full battery</li> <li>○ EV bus chargers are same form/function as Level 2 chargers (not compatible with Tesla chargers)</li> <li>○ EV buses are almost always funded by grants</li> <li>○ Unclear if cost of EV buses will decrease over time</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Rachel can be contacted at <a href="mailto:rlane@ridesta.com">rlane@ridesta.com</a></p>	
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community Climate Conversations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Looking to have future conversation on CAP and CIP</li> <li>○ Committee suggests finding a way to tie individual actions to bigger picture within the community</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Sun Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Organized event on national solar awareness day, seacoast area bike riders rode bikes from the library to the solar jones landfill and one of the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Action:</b> TBD update Sustainability Committee website

	<p>rider's homes to show domestic solar panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ECO Club <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ways to help with student engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Instagram or other social media</li> <li>○ Offering volunteer opportunities to students</li> </ul> </li> <li>● In the future, the committee can reach out to Emmy or Sully to pass along messages to the ECO Club</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Write-Up on Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Looking for volunteer to update Sustainability Committee website, as it is ~1 year old</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
CAP - Committee Action Spreadsheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ask for committee to think about what we would like to accomplish between now and the end of the year</li> </ul>	<b>Action:</b> Committee members reflect about what they would like to accomplish between now and the end of the year.
Capital budget requests from Committee – building public support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● City is looking into handling of future budgets</li> <li>● Citizen request review meeting on October 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Colleen and Torey will attend</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Master Plan – report on kickoff meeting, current status and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Committee feels that climate change and/or decarbonization should be considered a “Foundational Topic”</li> <li>● Recommended to visit Master Plan’s website to take survey and provide individual comment</li> <li>● Ask for group to think about what big picture items they would like to see in master plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None</li> </ul>

NH CAP participation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None</li> </ul>
Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jess working on onboarding documentation for new committee members</li> <li>● Upcoming meeting dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ November <b>20th</b>, 2025</li> <li>○ December <b>18th</b>, 2025</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Next meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilitator: Rhianne</li> <li>○ Minutes: Torey</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None</li> </ul>