

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PORTSMOUTH ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**



**WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026, 6:30 pm**

**City Hall Conference Room A**

**1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH**

Please register in advance to participate via Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/5OrBfgFgRb-kD775gLTbSg>

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**AGENDA**

1. Call to order and Roll Call
2. Chairman's Remarks
3. Approve draft April 8 meeting minutes
4. FY26-FY27 goals, group exercise
5. Jones Avenue solar and municipal rooftop solar - further discussion
6. Unitil savings program
7. CPCNH Aug-Jan rate period and other local communications plan – Monte Bohanan and Stephanie Seacord
8. CPCNH board update - Tom Rooney
9. Other Business
10. Public Comment
11. Adjourn

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PORTSMOUTH ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**



**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026, 6:30 pm**

**City Hall Conference Room A**

**1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH**

Zoom recording: <https://youtu.be/ivFM9jiGoFw>

**MINUTES**

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1. **Roll call** – Meeting called to order at 6:32 pm. Attending, Councilor Tabor, chair; Peter Somssich, Tom Rooney, Kevin Charette, Ben D’Antonio, Tracey Cameron, Peter Somssich, Sustainability Committee: Fred Calciniari. Via Zoom: Betsy Blaisdell, Mary Claire Rodriguez-Abbott. Staff: Peter Britz, Peter Rice, Christine Sproviero, Stephanie Seacord. Guest: Michael Gordon, APEX.
2. **Chairman’s Remarks** – The two main considerations for discussion at this meeting are:
  - Report back from the consultant the City hired to evaluate building a solar array on the Jones Avenue landfill site;
  - Councilor Bagley’s request for the City Manager to report back on the possibility of withdrawing Portsmouth from the Community Power Coalition of NH. The Councilor’s request was originally that the City Manager report back on how the City could withdraw from CPCNH. Then he accepted Councilor Tabor’s amendment that the Council also have the work session in addition to the report back and the Council voted to approve that amended motion.

3. **Jones Avenue Solar Update**

DPW project manager Christine Sproviero offered a presentation summarizing the APEX analysis with Michael Gordon from APEX in support:

<https://files.portsmouthnh.gov/minutes/2026/PEAC/Jones%20Ave%20Solar%20Presentation%20PEAC%204.8.26%20Final.pdf>

PEAC supported the recommendation from DPW Director Peter Rice to postpone any solar installation at Jones Avenue due to the cost and time constraints that make it virtually impossible to meet the requirements for Eversource review and DES permitting for wetlands and woodlands impacts requirements and build the project by December 2027 to receive offsetting ITC grant funding. Instead, DPW recommends looking at alternative municipal building sites (e.g. DPW addition roof) for solar arrays. The ENE subsidiary has already evaluated municipal building options for consideration.

PEAC would like to study the presentation more closely and consider:

- other Jones Ave. routes such as the condo development for a virtual net-metering public-private partnership. Also to revisit options in the NREL report, e.g. Pease WWTF after upgrade and Madbury Water Facility site
- solar + storage options and costs so City solar could back up municipal grid
- life cycle of the array and those cost considerations

- factoring in the escalating electricity costs
- converting the Indoor Pool heating system from gas to electric for full use of generated power from solar
- best use of allocated CIP funds “to explore solar”

#### 4. CPCNH/Work Session Discussion

The work session is scheduled for Monday, April 20 at 6 pm with City Council and invited guests: from CPCNH Henry Herndon and Jackson Kaspari and NH Consumer Advocate Don Kreis.

Rather than a work session to evaluate participation in CPCNH, Councilor Bagley asked that the work session consider withdrawal. Committee members made the following comments:

CPCNH Board member for Portsmouth Tom Rooney reported that Henry Herndon is confirmed as Executive Director after serving as interim General Manager. The search committee expects to decide on the financial and procurement executives by the end of May.

Charette: CPCNH needs to confirm two assumptions:

- That CPCNH can demonstrate they have stabilized operations and finances to be competitive in the market
- That their marketing will do a better job of communicating to customers the ability to switch between community power and Eversource without penalty. CPCNH, PUC and the Consumer advocate need to communicate full transparency about rates and how easy it is to switch.

If those two assumptions hold then it would be short-sighted to take CPCNH off the table as an option for Portsmouth. Especially if CPCNH rates are lower, sooner, customers could challenge why we took that option away. Out of 7 rate periods, 4 had lower rates. But they still don't have the required reserves – how long will CPCNH include the adder on the rate?

Somssich:

- Before CPCNH electric customers had the option of the default utility or a third party contract that locked in rates for 6 months or a year with no option to switch back and forth. CPCNH offers best of both worlds: choice, including renewables and the ability to switch.
- Portsmouth Community Power aligns with the City's Climate Action Plan goals. It's a small step but allows residents to do something to support more green energy.
- CPCNH is now the second largest player and not obligated to make a profit. If/when the state supports renewable energy projects again, CPCNH will be important.
- Customers don't pay rates, they pay bills. More education needed on supply vs. distribution costs.
- With Iran war potential impact on natural gas cost (electricity generator) there are just too many variables at work for dramatic decisions.

Blaisdell:

- The freedom of choice is important – 100% renewable option for me.
- We've hopefully gotten through the bad part and should encourage CPCNH and give them time.

Abbott: Agree with Charette about the key assumptions about solvency. Consumer Advocate should be providing a full transparent chart of the rates. Believe that Eversource rates will adjust, mitigating the pressure on CPCNH so it's too early for Portsmouth to

withdraw.

Calcinari: CPCNH should commit to a timeline as to when they will be solvent and when they will be able to offer competitive rates.

D'Antonio: Thoughts and comments are my own and not based on any Eversource information.

- 25 years ago, in an under-mature market, there was restructuring intended to break up the utilities and shift all customers to third-party power supply. That didn't happen but CPCNH was able to take advantage of an opportunity from changes in the legal and regulatory environments to challenge the wholesale power purchase protocol the utilities had to follow. Then that changed (PUC requires utilities to purchase 50% in open market) and there are probably other changes afoot in the framework.
- CPCNH has still not demonstrated competency in the management of the portfolio (admittedly the riskiest approach). New hires are encouraging and willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. But CPCNH must explain to the Council the sequence of adverse impacts, eg refresh in a high-rate period, contract with bankrupt company – stumble after stumble. Portsmouth could make a decision about withdrawing once things normalize – but not there yet.
- We could put effort into communications – give residents the ability to take action. (Charette: Consumer Advocate should be using his bully pulpit to do that, especially addressing low income customers).
- I'm concerned, but still on the bus.

Rooney:

- CPCNH Board has lots to answer for, but withdrawing doesn't make sense.
- Having CPCNH in the energy market impacts the bigger environment to the better but we need to watch out for our residents
- Community Power is a good idea – and not just on the basis of rates. Gives us a voice in Concord where we can't argue as a municipality. Also offers potential for community project development using reserves.
- There are things CPCNH got right and having the right management so the Board is advisory not operations is good.
- We just need to keep an eye on things.

Cameron:

- Wiser to not withdraw
- Need more customer education – low income especially don't read their electric bills.
- Consumer Advocate needs to put pressure on PUC to give CPCNH more access to customers to inform and be community advocate
- Not a time to lock people out of choice.

Tabor:

- Is CPCNH well-capitalized enough for the improvement plan? Only have rates as revenue.
- Made a series of mistakes, eg. Policy compliance – show me they're on the right track
- There's a big difference between an individual and a town opting out. Portsmouth is supporting CPCNH's buying power of 200,000 customers.
- The regulatory environment, requiring utilities to face 50% power purchase in spot market is risky and may change back to a fixed schedule.
- If someone performs well in 4 periods out of 7, do you fire them?

- Don't like the idea of pulling out and leaving our residents with just Eversource.

5. **Senate Bill 538** – Sen Watters' bill on 20 year net metering regulation.  
Councilor Tabor spoke in favor at hearing April 6. Bill is likely to pass.

6. **Other Business:** None

7. **Public Comment:** None

8. **Adjourned** at 8:35 pm on a motion by Calciniari, seconded by Somssich.

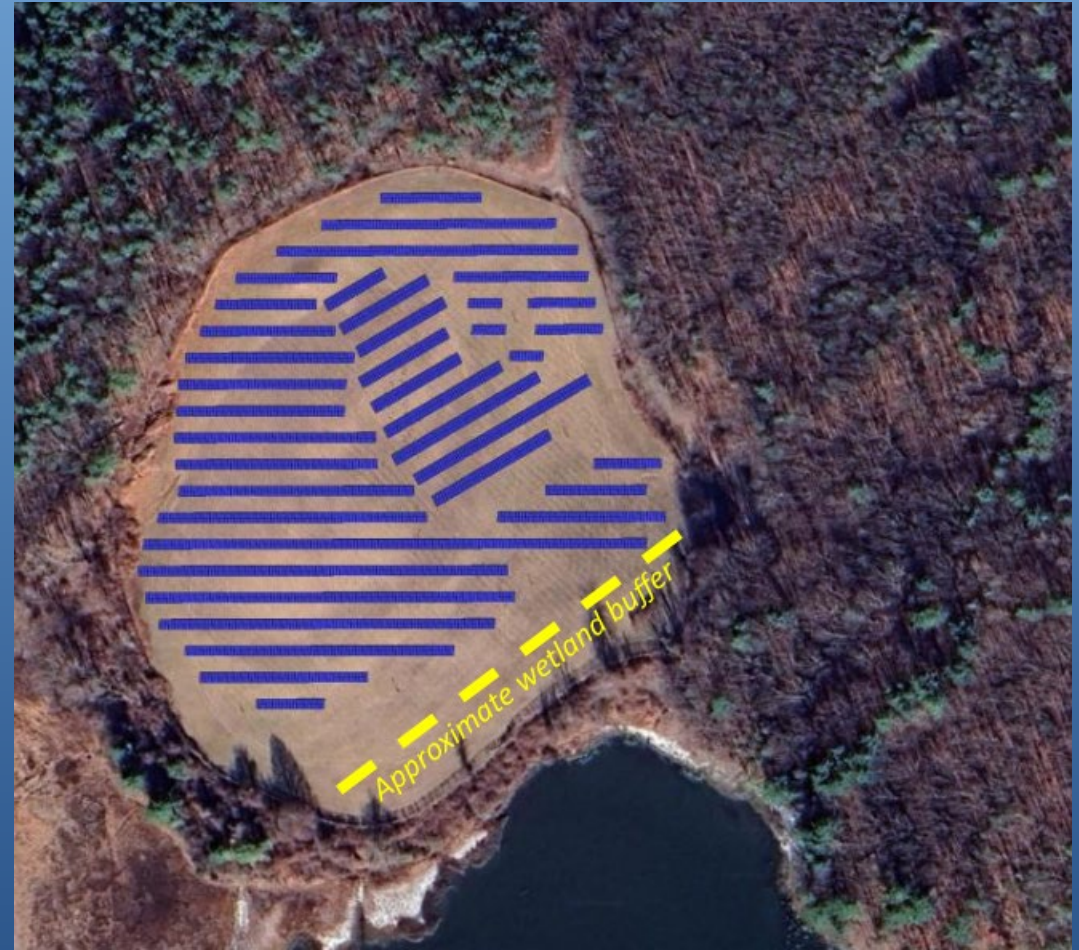
Next regular meeting: Wednesday, May 6 at 6:30 pm.

Work Session with City Council, Monday, April 20 at 6 pm.

DRAFT

# Jones Ave Solar Array - Feasibility Study

Study performed by Apex Analytics  
Presented by The City of Portsmouth



City of Portsmouth, Public Works

Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee Meeting

April 8, 2025





## Utilized the Department of Energy's (DOE) System Advisor Model (SAM)

- Estimated solar production for the Jones Ave landfill site
- The tool estimates photovoltaic system sizing based on space availability and site conditions

## Cost data from DOE and other Northeastern state solar programs

- Validated with the APEX's bottom-up site estimate

## APEX modeled three scenarios

- Option 1 – City-owned single 1.7MW-ac system
- Option 2 – City-owned two systems sized at 950kW-ac and 750kW-ac with one Behind the Meter (BTM) at the High School
- Option 3- Modeled option 2 using a credit purchase agreement with a private developer assuming a 15% discount on market rates



# Options Evaluated



## Option 1: A single 1.7 MW City-owned solar array

Front-of-the-meter (FTM) system connection to the electrical grid at Jones Ave

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowest total cost to construct</li> <li>• Medium Net Benefit (if 2 system qualified for ITC)</li> <li>• No time pressure for Investment Tax Credit (ITC)</li> <li>• No behind-the-meter (BTM) complications at High School</li> <li>• Minimal (if any) disturbance to woodlands and wetlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No ITC refund to the city</li> <li>• Larger new bond issuance by City</li> <li>• Longer and more complicated study by the utility/transmission company (Eversource)</li> </ul>

## Option 2: Two City-owned systems totaling 1.7 MW

One 950 kW FTM system connecting to the electrical grid at Jones Ave and one 750 kW behind-the-meter (BTM) system connecting directly to the high school

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium total cost to construct</li> <li>• Smaller system can be connected BTM at HS to lower demand charges from utility</li> <li>• Highest Net Benefit if qualified for ITC</li> <li>• Both systems should have shorter, less costly study by Eversource</li> <li>• Potential for project phasing and financing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time pressure to approve and start to qualify for ITC</li> <li>• Additional new electric line through woodlands and wetlands to HS (recommend underground conduit)</li> <li>• Consider additional development costs such as ledge removal and time</li> <li>• Disturbance to HS during construction</li> <li>• Higher total cost overall</li> </ul>



# Options Evaluated Cont.



## Option 3: Power Purchase Agreement for Option 2

Credit purchase agreement with a private developer. This option was determined to provide a lower overall benefit to the City compared to City Ownership

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low upfront Cost to the City</li><li>• Developer performs all design and construction activities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lower City benefit (assumed 15% of savings power rate)</li><li>• Private entity operating power generation on City property</li><li>• Risk of not realizing power savings rates</li></ul>



# Timelines of 1-system and 2-system Options



- **By phasing the two-system project, the City can potentially capture 35%-40% of eligible costs**
  - Project must be online by 12/31/2027 to qualify for ITC
  - Analysis by the City, including anticipated DES permitting time-frames, indicate that it's unlikely to meet the schedule identified below for the 2-system option
- **Option 1 timeline considerations:** The requirement for systems >1 MW to undergo a complex transmission level study would add 9-11 months to the schedule, and exceed the 12/31/2027 deadline for systems to be "in service" to qualify for the ITC
- **Scenario 2 timeline considerations:** A two-system approach will *potentially* not trigger transmission study, and would likely be less impactful to each feeder they would connect to, reducing needed upgrades from Eversource
  - If the two-system approach takes too long to start/contract, or ends up requiring the transmission study, the City could decide to change the design back to a one-system 1.7 MW-ac design and reapply to Eversource
    - There are still significant long-term benefits from this 1-system approach

	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27	Feb-27	Mar-27	Apr-27	May-27	Jun-27	Jul-27	Aug-27	Sep-27	Oct-27	Nov-27	Dec-27	Jan-28	Feb-28	Mar-28	Apr-28	May-28	Jun-28	Jul-28	Aug-28	Sep-28				
Two Systems 750 & 950 KW ac	Hire EPC and Design						Appl. Accept.	ASO Determ.	Dist. Impact Study				ISA	Construction			Comm & PTO																	
	Environmental Permitting																																	
One System 1.7 MW ac	Hire EPC and Design						Appl. Accept.	ASO Determ.	ASO/Cluster Study Process										Dist. Impact Study	ISA	Construction			Comm & PTO	Cutoff for ITC									



# ELECTRICAL CONNECTION PATHS OF OPTIONS 1 & 2





# LANDFILL CLOSURE PERMIT WILL REQUIRE MODIFICATION



## Cap Stability Evaluation

- Assessment by a New Hampshire-licensed Professional Engineer
- Minimum analysis includes:
  - Cap bearing capacity (solar foundations and construction equipment)
  - Settlement tolerance and anticipated settlement
  - Impacts to subsurface piping and conduits
  - Global and veneer stability under static and seismic conditions
- Calculations must consider wind and snow loads
- Low-ground-pressure equipment is typically required



## Stormwater & Landfill Gas Controls

- PE evaluation of stormwater changes caused by increased impervious coverage
- Explosion-proof electrical equipment required where feasible
- Non-panel equipment located off the landfill cap



## Operations, Access & Maintenance

- Maintain access to vents, wells, probes, markers, and monitoring features
- Post-closure inspection, monitoring, and maintenance continue during construction and operation
- Construction damage must be repaired promptly and reported to NHDES



## End-of-Life & Financial Assurance

- Solar arrays must be removed and the landfill restored to pre-project conditions
- Closure plans must be updated to reflect the post-closure solar use
- Financial assurance cost estimates must include solar removal and site restoration

Solar array development on a closed solid waste landfill is a post-closure use that would require a Type I-B permit modification from NHDES.



- **Nominal Total Savings & Cash (Gross)**
  - All project cash inflows over a 25-year analysis period.
    - Includes Utility bill savings, net metering credits, REC sales, and any direct cash the systems generate.
    - Excludes Construction/installation costs, borrowing costs, and O&M costs.
  
- **Nominal Total Net Savings**
  - **Nominal Total Savings & Cash (Gross) minus all project costs.**
    - Project costs include financing, construction, installation, interconnection, and all associated system equipment.
  
- **Net Benefit (Net Present Value of Nominal Total Net Savings)**
  - **True value of the project in today's dollars after accounting for costs, financing and when the savings occur.**
    - Includes all construction and financing costs, all project savings and revenues, the timing of cash flows, and the City's cost of borrowing (3.75%).



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF OPTIONS



- With ITC, Option 2: Two System has largest Net Benefit (breakeven 16 years)
- Without ITC, Option 1: Single System has largest Net Benefit (breakeven 20 years)
- If the ITC refund is not received, break even point is significantly extended by 3-4 years for Option 2
- The private option has lower overall benefits.
  - Assumption of 15% savings on electrical costs may not be realized
  - Existing PPA solar array currently ~30% over market rate

Single System - Without ITC		
Nominal Total Savings & Cash	\$	12,734,324
Nominal Total Net Savings	\$	7,057,343
Net Benefit (NPV)	\$	4,146,253
Two Systems - with Tax Equity Refund		
Nominal Total Savings & Cash	\$	13,045,175
Nominal Total Net Savings	\$	8,707,889
Net Benefit (NPV)	\$	5,274,818
Private Owned - Private Tax Equity Flip (5yr)		
Nominal Total Savings & Cash	\$	7,039,575
Nominal Total Net Savings	\$	5,701,410
Net Benefit - All Parties	\$	2,961,840
Net Benefit for City, 15% savings	\$	1,211,380



# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS



- The Single City-owned 1.7 MW system
  - Provides the highest long term cost benefit (without ITC for option 2)
  - Lowest construction cost for City-owned system
  - Simple interconnection infrastructure
  - Greater construction schedule certainty
- The Two City-owned systems totaling 1.7 MW
  - Provides the highest long term cost benefit (with ITC)
  - Higher Construction Cost than single system (without ITC)
  - Complicated interconnected infrastructure (to HS & Jones Ave)
  - Higher value behind the meter electricity generation
- Power Purchase Agreement for Option 2
  - Provides the lowest long-term cost benefit (risk of no financial benefit to City)
  - Low Upfront Costs for the City
- The City should explore alternative BHM options throughout the City that would require less environmental impact and lower construction and O&M costs

# Appendix with Detailed Slides

Jones Ave Solar Array Feasibility Study



# DETAILS ON FINDINGS



- The combination of ISO-NE/transmission company study requirements and the phase out of the Section 48E ITC for solar at 12/31/2027 shifted the analysis to focus on the potential for two <1 MW systems
- By remaining below 1 MW, the ISO-NE rules allow for a proposed DG system to avoid participating in an Affected System Operator Study\* if it is deemed "electrically irrelevant" shortening the interconnection timeframe by about 9-11 months
- Doing so would enable the City to qualify for the ITC using the "direct-pay" or "refund" method, receiving a grant for 30-40% of eligible cost directly from the IRS (30% plus the 10% bonus for domestic content if the equipment qualifies)
- This structure, with or without the ITC, would be more beneficial to Portsmouth than entering a long-term PPA led by a private developer
- All savings and capex estimates are subject to variance in practice, and can be bounded with some sensitivity analyses

\*[ISO-NE Section 1.3.9](#), governs the process and requirements for impact assessment of new generation on the transmission system, which is not required but currently in practice done for all projects >1 MW; [ISO-NE Planning Procedure No. 5-1](#) at section 2.1 explicitly states <1 MW projects are exempt from this review, but two projects in the same area adding up to >1 MW may be reviewed as a single project by the transmission company.



- The consulting team used both a bottoms-up and top-down approach for estimating the Cap Ex costs of the systems, with historical data from other states further validating the estimate
- Bottoms-up included unit-specific component costs based on conversations with active solar developers, and best-estimate additions for project-specific differences, such as the conductor to the H.S.
- Vendor estimates are general, private market assumptions, but could be higher for the City due to public contracting requirements
- Savings are based on current NH Net Metering law, which allows for the Supply rate only for systems > 100 kW, including public systems of > 1 MW, and does NOT currently include demand rate savings for a BTM connection of one of the two smaller systems
- Supply rates are increased 2.5% per year average, system degradation is 0.5% a year, public discount rate is 3.75% and private discount rate is 8%
- Private system PPA is assumed to provide 15% savings to City vs. Eversource supply rate; this could be negotiated higher or lower, or be fixed with an escalator-style contract
- The City's borrowing cost was estimated at 3.75%, a recent (Fall 2025) value for a AAA municipal bond; private borrowing was estimated at 6.75%



# CAP EX COMPARISON



- The separate systems will require more privately owned conductor, more site work, more vendor costs, and slightly higher install costs
- Utility costs are assumed higher for the combined system due to the cost of ASO study, and likelihood of higher system upgrade costs (3V0, voltage management, etc.)

CAPEX	System 1	System 2	1+2	Combined	Differences
Predevelopment Costs	\$ 17,500	\$ 17,500	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ -
Utility Costs (apps, studies, CIAC)	\$ 516,000	\$ 56,000	\$ 572,000	\$ 726,000	\$ (154,000)
Other Costs (Site Etc)	\$ 215,000	\$ 290,000	\$ 505,000	\$ 215,000	\$ 290,000
System and EPC Cost (no profit)	\$ 1,463,000	\$ 1,404,750	\$ 2,867,750	\$ 2,575,500	\$ 292,250
EPC Profit %	\$ 246,300	\$ 240,475	\$ 486,775	\$ 357,550	\$ 129,225
Total System and EPC Cost	\$ 1,709,300	\$ 1,645,225	\$ 3,354,525	\$ 2,933,050	\$ 421,475
Total Project Cost	\$ 2,457,800	\$ 2,008,725	\$ 4,466,525	\$ 3,909,050	\$ 557,475

Thank you!

Questions?

Unitil just announced **increased incentives for municipalities** that complete qualifying energy saving projects between now and August 31, 2026. Examples include:

- Upgrading to LED lighting or lighting controls
- HVAC upgrades
- Purchase of energy-star rated commercial food service equipment
- Weatherization upgrades

Unitil is offering to get projects done this spring/summer with **no out-of-pocket cost for the municipality**. They're doing this by combining incentives up to 90% and 0% interest on-bill financing.

This kind of approach and funding from Unitil is unprecedented and may not come around again. It's worth moving quickly to see how many projects in Portsmouth could take advantage of this.

**I'm available to help**, and I'm already working directly with Unitil to help towns jump on this opportunity. My job is to help you understand the program, identify potentially eligible projects, and connect you with Franklin Energy, a third-party program administrator working for Unitil. Franklin's job is to confirm that you have an eligible project, connect you with qualified contractors/vendors if needed, and help you fill out and submit relevant program applications. Then Unitil will put together an incentive package that gets you to no out-of-pocket cost through a combination of incentives and financing.

**Your first step** is to come up with a **list of municipal buildings on Unitil Gas** along with the energy efficiency upgrades you are interested in pursuing there. I know you have been working on Energy Audits, this will be the best possible option for completing any suggested projects. Let's go through the options together and then I'll connect you with Franklin Energy for next steps. Feel free to loop in anyone else who should be part of this conversation.

**One more thing:**

We arranged a **Lunchtime Q&A via Zoom Tuesday, April 21 at Noon**. Staff from Unitil and Franklin Energy were on hand to share more about this opportunity and answer your questions about project eligibility, rebates, financing, application process, timelines, etc. The session will **also be recorded** for your reference later on.

I look forward to working with you on this,  
- Katrin

**Katrin Kasper** | Seacoast Energy Circuit Rider  
[Clean Energy NH](#)

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[Katrin@cleanenergynh.org](mailto:Katrin@cleanenergynh.org)

## Goals for FY26-FY27 (from discussion)

Educate residents on low cost options to reduce energy and save money  
Partner with relevant programs (Button Up, Window Dressers, Heat Pump full  
State advocacy  
Advise city on energy efficiency in municipal buildings, including EEI updates  
More aggressive posture with CPCNH and engagement, status updates  
Identify more solar opportunities in the city/NREL opportunities at Pease WW  
Transportation support to align with Climate Action Plan  
CPCNH legislative affairs  
Energy efficiency as foundation for PEAC/lower municipal carbon footprint  
Consult with other town energy committees for best practices  
Identify city issues to elevate to Concord/track legislation affecting energy and  
Advise on Jones Ave, other solar  
Be active partner with city and EEI on municipal efficiency



# City of Portsmouth

## MEMORANDUM

To: Councilor John Tabor

Cc: Peter Rice, DPW Director; Peter Britz, Planning & Sustainability Director

From: Monte Bohanan, Communications and Community Engagement Director;  
Stephanie Seacord, Public Information Officer

Date: April 30, 2026

Re: **PEAC Community Education & Outreach Plan**

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## Situational Analysis

At their April 8, 2026 meeting and the subsequent April 20, 2026 City Council Work Session, PEAC discussed the need for wider communications and educational outreach to the community in support of the Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee and Portsmouth Community Power.

PEAC member Kevin Charette at both sessions urged, with the consensus of the full committee, that

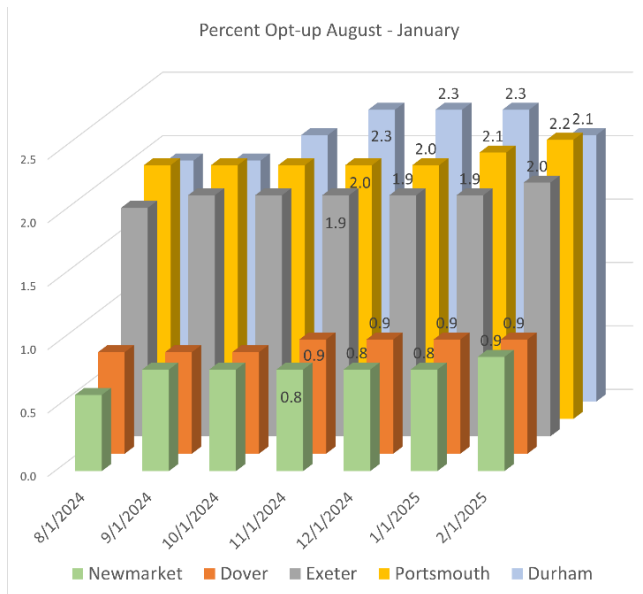
- PEAC provide more information to the community about the choices and benefits Portsmouth Community Power affords – including the ability to switch in and out of the program at will – as well as other energy efficiency actions customers can take;
- Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH)'s marketing team do a better job of communicating to customers the ability to switch between community power and Eversource without penalty. Portsmouth can provide leadership by offering model messaging;
- CPCNH, PUC and the Consumer Advocate should work together to communicate full transparency about rates and how easy it is to switch.

## Facts

- Community Power is enabled by NH RSA 53-E, which allows towns and cities to aggregate their customer demand and purchase electricity in bulk for savings and a more rapid shift to

renewables. The objective of RSA 53-E is to “*encourage voluntary, cost effective and innovative solutions to local needs with careful consideration of local conditions and opportunities.*” CPCNH allows Portsmouth to participate in this opportunity – at no charge to the City.

- Eversource, the default utility for Portsmouth continues to own and operate the distribution grid and be responsible for delivering power to all customers within the City. Customers will continue be charged for utility delivery services at rates set by the Public Utilities Commission.
- However, changes in the regulatory environment have required that Eversource purchase 50% of its residential supply power on the spot market and allowed Eversource to set proxy rates in anticipation of what the spot market will provide. This has led to underfunded power purchase gaps which Eversource may go back to customers – even Community Power customers – to recover. Future rate periods, starting Aug 1, may reflect this fluidity, to PCP’s favor – or not.
- CPCNH encountered start-up difficulties that have affected the rate charged to Portsmouth Community Power customers. Of the seven rate periods since PCP went live in summer 2023, customers have experienced three periods (including the current one) where the PCP rate was higher than the Eversource default, and four periods which provided a PCP rate lower than Eversource. CPCNH is now back on track but still building back its reserves. PEAC and Portsmouth Community Power believe the City should stay the course but be vigilant, communicating through PCP’s representative and PEAC member Tom Rooney.
- The non-rate benefits of Community Power remain: customer choice, including the ability for customers to purchase 25%, 50% and 100% renewable energy; the critical mass of an aggregated electric customer base (30% of all electric customers in NH or 120,000 customers in 68 communities) for CPCNH to argue on members’ behalf in the NH Legislature; the future prospect of using Portsmouth’s community power reserves and CPCNH’s buying power for energy projects that benefit community customers and the municipality.
- Although only 2% of Portsmouth customers have opted-up to greater renewable proportions, Portsmouth won the friendly Seacoast Opt-Up Challenge launched in August 2024 against Dover, Durham, Newmarket and Exeter. Interest in this choice which reinforces the City’s Climate Action Plan remains important. (Note: Only 3% of PCP customers have opted-out in this rate period).



The goal of this communications plan is to coordinate messaging across the available communications channels to raise residents’ understanding of what Portsmouth Community Power is, what its benefits are to residents and how they can take advantage of the program’s flexibility that allows them to opt-out when PCP rates are higher than Eversource and opt back in when PCP rates are lower than the default. Key messaging dates are the rate change announcements in July (for Aug 1) and January (for Feb 1).

## Audience

This PCP Communications Plan focuses on Portsmouth consumers: residents and businesses. It employs multiple communications channels to reach as broad an audience as possible (especially low-income households) through, print, digital, community tv and in-person messaging and by leveraging existing City communications channels and robust platforms (e.g., Library, School, Recreation Departments as well as City Hall and DPW.)

## Key Messages

**Portsmouth Community Power allows customers to switch back and forth between PCP and Eversource to take advantage of lower rates – with no fixed contracts or penalties.**

Recognizing that “Customers don’t pay rates, they pay bills,” the communications campaign must clearly explain to residents that rates fluctuate every six months and their Eversource bill includes both supply (at the PCP rate) and distribution costs. Customers can opt-out of Portsmouth Community Power when that rate is higher than the default – and switch back in when the PCP rate is more favorable. They can do so without a locked in contract and without penalty.

**Portsmouth electric customers can save money by making their homes more energy efficient** – Energy efficiency partners including the City, NH Saves and Eversource offer rebate

programs and energy audits to help homeowners reduce energy bills by reducing their energy consumption.

**Customers having difficulty paying their electricity bills can get help** – Portsmouth customers are billed by Eversource for their electricity supply (power) and delivery (poles and wires). Whether participating in Portsmouth Community Power or the Eversource default supply they can take advantage of Eversource bill-pay assistance and other resources.

**Supporting Climate Action** -- When declaring itself an Eco-Municipality in 2018, the City also adopted a renewable energy policy with the goal of becoming ‘net zero’ in carbon emissions, beginning with municipal consumption and extending to communitywide consumption and transportation. **The Renewable Energy Committee report supporting this policy recommended (#26) a Community Aggregation program. Portsmouth Community Power achieves this objective and is a beneficial next step in the City’s path to Net Zero.** Economic growth and stability have long been City goals, and cost-effective, stable electric rates support this objective.

**More green power/more resilient power** – The PCP program enables consumers to shift away from fossil fuels and is designed to meet residents’ demands for more renewable energy. PCP helps foster local renewable generation projects. The PCP program advocates with CPCNH to buy local (New Hampshire or New England) wind, hydro and solar, to help create these options, and to buy this pure green power from the region in addition to Renewable Energy Credits.

**Advocating for Portsmouth in Concord through regional collaboration** – By building reserves collectively and at each member community level, CPCNH’s goal is to collaborate with regional community power programs, municipalities, utilities and government agencies to jointly develop cost effective renewable energy generation and storage projects, and support electric energy transit fleets and charging corridors, as well as enhancing the reliability of electric supply through development of community microgrids to support critical infrastructure

## Strategies

The Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee with assistance from the City’s Communications Team seeks to educate and inform residents about the benefits and choices afforded by Portsmouth Community Power and PEAC’s advocacy on their behalf.

The strategies recommended by this communications plan include:

- Develop and disseminate key messages in a logical, educational order;
- Leverage existing communications channels (including City platforms, media, CPCNH initiatives and partner channels) and coordinate messaging for clarity and consistency;
- Provide leadership examples for CPCNH and the NH Consumer Advocate to follow;
- Enlist support and advocacy from other City committees/boards/commissions and initiatives, e.g. Sustainability Committee;

- Measure and analyze the effectiveness of this plan's and PEAC's strategies and tactics in achieving the goals;
- Earn measurable citizen support for Portsmouth Community Power and its CPCNH membership; and
- Show measurable impact on low-income customers choice for lower-rate power from the Eversource default.

The following details the communications channels and processes currently in place and additional opportunities for messaging. The appended Action Plan maps out the timetable for implementing this Plan, with preliminary info-graphics.

## Tactics

The City engages residents in person, across City-managed communications platforms and public media, and through surveys and other interactive initiatives.

The appended Action Plan details how City channels for informing residents will be used for a campaign to educate and inform residents about Portsmouth Community Power and energy efficiency measures:

- **City website** provides current information (notably on the Homepage banners, news items and calendar features) and full PEAC details on the PEAC webpage as well as archives of their proceedings. <https://portsnh.co/PEAC>
- **City Newsletter** (distributed electronically Mondays) reaches 6,860 subscribers and alerts residents to key issues, meetings, events, surveys, etc. Also posted to the City website and social media.
- **Social media** – the City maintains a number of accounts on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, all of which can be used to reinforce PCP messages. In particular, the CityHallPortsmouthNH Facebook page (2.7k) posts are shared with the UnOfficial Portsmouth group (23.9k) and PortsmouthNH group (71.3k).
- **Channel 22** is a vital communications channel for Portsmouth residents without Internet access. Bulletins will be posted there regularly. PCP might also create and/or distribute original video content through the City's YouTube channel.
- **Targeted** e-blasts via MailChimp make it possible to email those who sign up on the PEAC webpage to receive information e.g., event notices, information links, CPCNH updates
- **City Department e-newsletters** for the Library, School Department, etc. provide additional ways to distribute information and event invitations

- **Media relations** – the Communications Team maintains the City’s relationship with local/regional media, providing press releases, media/photo opp advisories and op-eds, fielding inquiries and providing follow-up materials.
- **Direct mail** – such as water bill inserts, CPCNH refresh-list postcard mailing, though these are the least cost-effective options

## Direct resident feedback

- Host Portsmouth Community Power Public Information meeting(s), in person and via Zoom prior to each rate change once the new rate is known (i.e. in June for the Aug 1 and in December for the Feb 1 rate changes). Consider the opportunity to reach different neighborhoods by varying locations. Note: Portsmouth Housing Authority residents are not PCP customers.
- General “Public Comment” and specific Public Hearing sessions provide opportunities to build education and awareness. PEAC members could be scheduled to speak prior to rate changes.
- Portsmouth Community Power agenda items for public dialogues at various locations around the city (e.g. quarterly Citywide Neighborhood Committee Ward Forums and monthly CNC meetings) bring the concept to the different neighborhoods – and benefit from the frequency with which residents hear about Portsmouth Community Power.
- City Manager/Departmental presence at Farmers’ Market and Market Square Day afford Portsmouth Community Power opportunities for leafletting, Q&A and dialogue. The City Manager participates monthly.
- Special Topic information meetings e.g., the NHSaves Workshops, provide foundational information and presence. The Portsmouth Public Library is an excellent focus for PCP due to its ongoing and well-promoted schedule (Library newsletter and social media channels) of educational programs
- By promoting public comment at PEAC (and other Board, Commission and Committee meetings if/when PCP is on the agenda), PEAC expands its support base
- Email sign-up and comment forms on the PEAC City website page. Councilor Tabor and other City Council members might also underscore their availability via the email form on the City website (and the opportunity to email questions to [hotline@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:hotline@cityofportsmouth.com) which is monitored/answered by the PIO)

## Polls and Surveys

- FlashVote/Mailchimp Surveys – The City uses both survey platforms to solicit feedback on specific projects and issues

- QR codes – City staff have found these to be an effective and easy way for residents to get more information and participate in surveys when strategically distributed
- Portsmouth Public Library interest groups – Convened on topics such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- PCP also collaborates with the Sustainability Committee (a designated representative attends PEAC meetings) and provide cross-communication between the two committees) and other committees as messaging aligns. PEAC has also partnered with the Portsmouth High School Eco-Club.

## Performance Metrics, Best Practices and Recommendations

Each of these communications channels allows PCP to measure the impact of messaging on its audiences. These measures provide a quantitative assessment of awareness but can also afford qualitative insights for shaping future messages: What topics receive the most feedback? What channels are essential? Should timing of messaging be adjusted?

### Key Components of the Plan

Initiative	Media/Marketing Partner	Resource	Next step
City Newsletter	Energy Corner, weekly with PCP logo	FAQ graphics	Create schedule for info-graphics
Social media	Facebook -- all City pages plus UnOfficial and Portsmouth pages  Instagram  #PortsmouthCommunityPower	Series of FAQ graphics  Repeated on City Hall lobby feed	Determine how newsletter info will be relayed on social
Website copy and program promotion	PEAC webpage	Monitor CPCNH Portsmouth webpage	Ensure both are current.
Media Relations:  Press release and targeted pitches	Rate announcements and op-eds per Action Plan  Per Action Plan	SeacoastOnline  Patch (Portsmouth)	Create, distribute and pitch press release and key messages
Events and Partner collaborations – for energy	CPCNH/Smart Growth  NH Saves	Flyers, social media events, strategic Water	Distribute press release, post and share in social media and supply

efficiency education	Clean Energy NH PHS Eco-Club	bill insert or direct mail	flyers at City Hall, Library and community events
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## ACTION PLAN CITY OF PORTSMOUTH FY26-27

Month	Message	Deliverables
May	FAQs and infographics including, Opting Out Reading Your Eversource Bill Saving Energy: Energy Audit Need Help Paying? Understanding the New Rates AC Turn-in Event August 8 for \$50 Rebate  Chair John Tabor op-ed on “Why PCP?”	FAQ ‘billboard’ graphics for City channels: Website, newsletter, Channel 22, social media  Press release to media list
June	CPCNH rates for Aug 1-Jan 31 and opt-out ‘how-to’ if necessary  CPCNH refresh?	City channels: Website, newsletter, Ch 22, social media  Press release to media list  Library, City Hall, Senior Center and Farmers Market tabling
July-August	Energy efficiencies that save power and money – Aug 8 AC and dehumidifier turn-in event for rebate	City channels: Website, newsletter, Ch 22, social media
September	ButtonUp NH or other winter efficiency workshop	City channels: Website, newsletter, Ch 22, social media
October	PHS Eco-Club briefing	Library, City Hall, Senior Center and Farmers Market

	City Council PCP update – John Tabor agenda item on opt-in/out choices Aug-Sep and op-ed with those details	City channels: Website, newsletter, Ch 22, social media
November		City channels: Website, newsletter, Ch 22, social media
December	CPCNH rates for Feb 1-Jul 31 and opt-out ‘how-to’ if necessary  CPCNH refresh?	PSA, print, digital and Ch 22 notices with QR code link to online survey  Press release City channels: Website, newsletter, Ch 22, social media

For Eversource Residential Customers			
Power Options	Renewable Content <sup>†</sup>	Rate (c/kWh)	Estimated Cost of Supply per Month*
Clean 100	100%	17.663c	~ \$115/month
Clean 50	50%	15.763c	~ \$102/month
Granite Plus	33%	15.063c	~ \$98/month
Granite Basic	25.2% <sup>‡</sup>	14.663c	~ \$95/month

<sup>†</sup> Minimum renewable content is compliant with NEM Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), RSA 302-B. Total renewable content includes the 5% capex for Net-Clean, of Energy administrative reductions to minimum requirements due to shortage of qualifying biomass generation.

<sup>\*</sup> Based on usage of 600 kWh per month.

**Eversource Supply Rates**

Eversource Supply Rates Effective Feb. 1 - July 31, 2026			
Supply Class	Renewable Content <sup>†</sup>	Rate (c/kWh)	Estimated Cost of Supply per Month*
Residential	25.2%	11.303c	- \$73
General Service & Outdoor Lighting	25.2%	11.303c	- \$73

**PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY POWER**

Switch and save between now and Aug 1, 2026

email: [info@communitypowernh.gov](mailto:info@communitypowernh.gov)

or call: 1-866-603-7697

Have your Eversource account # handy.



# PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY POWER ENERGY INFO ITEM

Understanding your electric bill

Interactive examples at:

[https://portsnh.co/Eversource\\_Electric\\_Bill](https://portsnh.co/Eversource_Electric_Bill)



# PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY POWER ENERGY INFO ITEM

Need help paying your electric bill?

Visit [Eversource.com/billhelp](https://portsnh.co/billhelp) or call

844-273-7760. Translation

services are available.

More details at:

[https://portsnh.co/Electric\\_Bill\\_Assistance](https://portsnh.co/Electric_Bill_Assistance)

**PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY POWER  
ENERGY INFO ITEM  
FREE HOME ENERGY AUDIT**  
[https://portsnh.co/NHSaves\\_Energy\\_Audit](https://portsnh.co/NHSaves_Energy_Audit)



The screenshot shows a green-themed web form titled "Get Your No-Cost Massachusetts or New Hampshire Energy Assessment". At the top left is the "mass save PARTNER" logo, and at the top right is the "NHSaves ALLY" logo. The form fields include: First Name, Last Name, Email, Phone, Address, Town/City, State (with a dropdown menu), Zip Code, Do You Rent Or Own?, How Did You Hear About Us, Who Referred You? If Applicable, How Do You Heat Your Home?, Who Is Your Electricity Provider?, Who Is Your Gas Provider? If Applicable, and Whose Name Is The Utility Bill Addressed To. There is also a text box for "Additional Questions & Comments". A pink button at the bottom of the form reads "SCHEDULE MY NO-COST ENERGY ASSESSMENT".



**PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY POWER  
ENERGY INFO ITEM**

**USED AC TURN-IN EVENT AUG 8, 2026  
\$50 Rebate for AC & Dehumidifier Units  
(Limit of 2 of each)**

**Details at:**

**[https://portsnh.co/AC\\_Rebate](https://portsnh.co/AC_Rebate)**



# PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY POWER ENERGY INFO ITEM

[https://portsnh.co/CPCNH\\_Newsletters](https://portsnh.co/CPCNH_Newsletters)

Join CPCNH's Mailing Lists!

Choose the updates you wish to receive below:

- **Quarterly Newsletter:** Get the latest news, events, and insights delivered to your inbox every quarter.
- **Rate Change Notifications:** Receive emails regarding CPCNH rate updates and notifications.
- **Legislative Action Alerts:** Stay informed about important legislative developments and find out how you can get involved.
- **Event Announcements:** Get notified of upcoming events and activities sponsored and/or supported by CPCNH.

And get updates via text message!

First Name \* Indicates Required

Email Address \*

Sign up for Specific CPCNH E-mails:

- Newsletter (published quarterly)
- Rate Change Notifications
- Legislative Action Alerts
- Event Announcements

SMS Phone Number (use int'l format +1-603-888-8888)

us +1 303 300 3000

CPCNH: By providing your phone number, you agree to receive promotional and marketing messages, notifications, and customer service communications from CPCNH. Message and data rates may apply. Consent is not a condition of purchase. Message frequency varies. Text #4347 for help. Text STOP to cancel. See Service and Privacy Policy.

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DRAFT



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

**Wednesday, March 4, 2026**

**MINUTES**

For the video recording of the meeting on Zoom:

<https://youtu.be/R69JmCvT6Hc>

**Roll call** – Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm. Attending, Councilor Tabor, chair; Peter Somssich, Tom Rooney, Kevin Charette, Ben D’Antonio, Mary Claire Rodriguez-Abbott. Excused: Sustainability Committee: Fred Calciniari, Betsy Blaisdell, Tracey Cameron. Absent: Peter Somssich. Staff: Jillian Harris. Stephanie Seacord.

1. **Chairman's remarks** – Chair Tabor reported that Councilor Bagley has asked the City Manager to report on what steps would be needed for Portsmouth to opt out of CPCNH. In the discussion at the March 2 the City Council determined they do not have enough information to make that decision and requested a work session with PEAC and a representative from CPCNH – subsequently suggested for either April 6 or April 20 at 6 pm prior to the scheduled City Council meeting. Chair Tabor also reported that Councilor Cook felt it important to have PEAC at that session for their expertise and knowledge of CPCNH and Portsmouth’s participation over the years. The session is to address questions about CPCNH and how it looks for ratepayers in Portsmouth for the next 1-2 years.

Councilor Bagley had also originally included in the Council agenda a motion not to refresh the Portsmouth Community Power membership unless the rate was within 5% of Eversource. That motion was withdrawn before the meeting.

2. **Approval of minutes.** Note: the quorum was not established until 7 pm so the approval of minutes was taken out of order at that time. On a motion by Charette seconded by D’Antonio the committee voted to approve the February 4, 2026 minutes, with Mary Claire Rodriguez-Abbott abstaining because she did not attend the February meeting.
3. **Goal setting for PEAC in 2026** – Deferred from the March meeting. Group exercise in April to rate the priorities. Committee members:

Tracey Cameron (submitted comments in advance)

- Energy efficiency
  - educate residents on low cost options to reduce energy and save money
  - partner with relevant programs (e.g., Button Up NH, Window Dressers, Heat pump funding)
  - state advocacy opportunities

Kevin Charette:

- Energy efficiency, across the board, programs but other educational aspects, with a communications drumbeat to residents: eg. Energy Efficiency Corner from PEAC in weekly City Newsletter recommending the NHSaves homeowner audit and financing for those who qualify
- Advise the City/DPW on energy efficiency in municipal buildings for 5-year tangible priorities and

funding, including update from EEI on actionable items from their energy audit of municipal buildings; help champion what they're doing

- More aggressive posture with CPCNH to hold them to account because there's exposure there and PEAC is responsible for oversight. Need leadership from CPCNH to meet with PEAC regularly with status updates.
- After Jones Avenue Solar Project – what's the next project? With long lead times for solar we should start to identify other opportunities for the City. NREL suggestions?
- Transportation support to align with Climate Action Plan – PEAC member on that committee? Expanding EV charging
- CPCNH Legislative Affairs – Communications loop. PEAC members should subscribe to updates to inform the public <https://www.communitypowernh.gov/advocacy#signup>

Tom Rooney:

- Start with energy efficiency as the foundation with PEAC in advisory role. Start with efficiency and then renewables, etc.
- Contract review on municipal energy projects, if appropriate?
- Education on specific examples for residents e.g. ice dams

Ben D'Antonio

- Support the same priorities as before.
  - Consult with other town energy committees for best practices
  - Lower the municipal carbon footprint
  - Oversight of CPCNH
  - Energy efficiency as the first tool
- Emergency preparedness – identify critical buildings for resilience/microgrid -- public safety circuit on battery? Briefing from City's Emergency Management Operations lead Fire Chief McQuillen?
- Identifying City issues to elevate to Concord/track legislation affecting energy and advise City's Legislative Subcommittee; stay informed and advocate with CPCNH legislative concerns
- Governor's State of the State suggestion of supplementing nuclear power in NH?
- Follow-up on NREL recommendations on solar at Pease Wastewater Treatment Facility

Chair John Tabor

- Move forward with Jones Avenue Solar and review/advise on recommendations
- Get update on EEI energy audit
- Revisit NREL recommendations
- Follow CPCNH legislative updates and advise City's Legislative Subcommittee as appropriate

#### 4. **2026 meeting dates in packet**

#### 5. **CPCNH** – Council asked PEAC to attend work session on whether to withdraw.

PEAC reviewed the follow-up postcard (reviewed with Jackson Kaspari at CPCNH) being sent to the 2,450 'refresh' list of new Portsmouth residents. Chair Tabor reported that Clr Bagley was concerned

that Portsmouth missed the deadline to reject the refresh but the Mayor was not in favor of pausing the refresh as that would create two classes on ratepayers.

In advance, the City Manager should have specific answers from CPCNH on the impact of withdrawal according to the terms of the City's Cost Sharing Agreement – cost and timeline. The timing for withdrawal depends on making CPCNH whole in terms of the revenues anticipated from Portsmouth which impact the procurement profile. In the original CSA there was the possibility of allocating reserves paid in by Portsmouth ratepayers to offset the gap; but the reserve funds were depleted in correcting the CPCNH shortfall. **Recommend the City Manager get the specific CSA rules, the cost and timeline from Henry Herndon – and have Hency or Clifton Below be the CPCNH representative at the work session.**

PEAC members want the work session with Council to address the hard questions and get answers from CPCNH. Bow and Wilmot are in the process of withdrawing and many other cities such as Nashua are considering that option. Dover took the municipal contract out of CPCNH. CPCNH should be well prepared to answer the questions to regain member confidence. Portsmouth was close to Wave 1; and has concerns.

Chair Tabor commented that there is more to the context than just CPCNH v Eversource: there's a changing regulatory environment such that CPCNH's original procurement model advantage over the utilities set procurement schedule is no longer the case. But CPCNH procurement model by itself has not driven the PUC regulatory changes. Spot market price exposure in NH is likely to affect the regulations.

#### **Key questions the Work Session should address:**

- Remind ratepayers they can switch from Community Power to Eversource and back without penalty, even as the City considers the pros and cons in the cost and timing of any withdrawal. Do ratepayers know? How many have opted in/out over 13 months of higher rates?
- Recognize the in-depth knowledge and energy industry expertise of PEAC members who, as the City's community power stewards need to hear level setting from CPCNH: how did we get here? CPCNH explain what happened over past 12 months and what they're doing about it.
- What is the track record for Portsmouth customers: two years each of \$1+ million savings, then \$800,000 loss, now at break-even? **Have rate chart showing the balance.** Ask: where are the promised monthly City-specific reports?
- CPCNH needs to education Council. This is the third rate period with Community Power higher than Eversource. CPCNH: how long will the recovery take? If the Eversource rate advantage diminishes (due to Eversource reconciliation, and possible better CPCNH rate).
- The high rates are caused not just by cold weather and the regulators. Need to be honest and detail the steps for turning the problem around. What is the recovery plan and where are we? Why weren't the controls and procedures not followed? We want them to be successful and to have an energy coalition representing 40 towns to compete at scale with the utilities.
- What is the plan for staffing critically important roles and when? Need the in-house leadership, especially Director Finance, but also Executive Director and Director of Power Operations (procurement).
- Even if the rates are the same as/competitive with Eversource, what does the City get from CPCNH membership? Sell us again on their active procurement management.
- All members available for a work session on either April 6 or 20. All work sessions are public with a zoom option and public comment.

#### **6. Public comment – None.**

Adjourned on a motion by D'Antonio, seconded by Rooney at 7:55 pm.

**Next meeting, April 8, 2026 at 6:30 pm**

Topics to include:

- Jones Avenue Solar recommendations and next steps from consultant.
- Prioritizing goals.