



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH
Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

MINUTES

For the Zoom recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1EjeonC4uQ>

1. **Roll Call:** Councilor John Tabor, chair; Councilor Kate Cook, Ben D'Antonio, Betsy Blaisdell (zoom), Tracey Cameron, Kevin Charette, Herb Lloyd, Tom Rooney, Peter Somssich. Staff: Jillian Harris (zoom), Stephanie Seacord, recording secretary.
2. **Chairman's remarks –**
 - Had hoped to have the NREL report but it's not yet available. Discussion on last week's call, below.
 - Announced that Tom has agreed to serve as a Director on the CPCNH Board, if approved at Apr 24, 2025 CPCNH Annual Meeting.
3. **Approval of minutes** for March 4, 2025, voted on a motion by Kevin, seconded by Peter.
 - Amendment to minutes for Feb 5, 2025. Ben had submitted proposed amendments but was not able to suggest the changes before the vote at the March 4 meeting to approve. The minutes were amended and adopted as amended on a motion by Kate, seconded by Herb. Previous post replaced by amended minutes on the City website.
4. **NREL update**, Herb reported:
 - NREL will provide an assessment of the potential for wind turbine power generation at the Peirce Island and Pease Wastewater Treatment Facilities and the Madbury Water Treatment Facility.
 - Will provide modelling based on 4 sizes of turbines from 12 feet to 100 ft. All are NREL certified hardware in terms of mechanicals and engineering, but not in the context of the wind conditions. Their recommendations will be site specific accounting for wind and other conditions such as flight line/turbulence at Pease.
 - Recognizing that Madbury offers low viability for wind and public opinion may limit wind turbine at Peirce Island, NREL is revising its assessment to consider wind plus solar: adding more solar plus wind to Madbury, less emphasis on Peirce Island and a smaller turbine plus solar at Pease.
 - Assessment will include the ROI and potential buy-out options. Requested NREL include financing alternatives.
 - Projects will need public feedback via FlashVote or other process.
 - Given the current uncertainty on funding for clean energy projects, City should focus more on energy efficiency, expanding the current initiative with EEI (eg energy audit of Spinnaker Point).
 - NREL expressed that they have capacity for more technical studies, eg solar on more City buildings such as DPW.
5. **CPCNH statements and Action Plan**

- PEAC members expressed concern that the controls and guidelines (enterprise risk committee, risk management policy, Calpine, Ascend) resulted in the failed 2025 PPA coupled with missing the financial realities of an \$8.5 million loss in the Aug 2024-Jan 2025 rate period.
- Noted that ‘lessons learned’ in the Action Plan such as “do not pursue negotiations with facilities that are insolvent” and “avoid suppliers who are on shaking financial footing” should have been self-evident.
- Discussed the opportunity for an inhouse CPCNH finance director/CFO. Currently oversight and reporting is with the CPCNH Treasurer who is a member of the Board and outside accounting firm.
- Was the rapid growth and lobbying effort a distraction?
- Appreciate the transparency on ‘what’ happened but want to know ‘how’ it happened.
 - CPCNH Board minutes with Sam Golding report may have more information. (The latest approved, Feb 21, 2025, CPCNH Board minutes note that most of the meeting was conducted as a non-public session. [2025-02-21 Board of Directors Minutes Approved.pdf](#)) Link to all CPCNH Board and Committee minutes: [Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire - approved-minutes/](#)
 - Tom, as CPCNH Director, will communicate PEAC concerns and report how the extensive controls that were put in place broke down.
 - May ask for non-public (under RSA) with acting CEO Henry Herndon to ask questions to restore CPCNH credibility – as Portsmouth residents expect of PEAC.
 - Are CPCNH open call office hours an opportunity to learn more? Every other Fri 1-2 pm via zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87059367481>
 - Link to all CPCNH Board and Committee minutes: [Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire - approved-minutes/](#)

6. **Jones Avenue solar**

- Clr Tabor discussed project with the City Manager who reported that DPW Director Peter Rice has an engineering firm reviewing the project.
- PEAC would like to hear an update from Peter Rice at the May meeting
- Interconnection Study: is there money in the budget for the est. \$35k study or might it be added to the CIP or capital budget before the FY26 budget is finalized? An Eversource quote for the study requires an engineering contract and deposit, but PEAC asked Ben to inquire if there is a charge to get in the Eversource queue for an interconnection study. Clr Tabor will have an exploratory conversation on advancing the project with DPW Dir Rice and ask that he provide an update at the May 7 meeting.

7. **Button Up Workshop** – Tracey reminded PEAC the workshop is scheduled at Portsmouth Public Library on Mon Apr 21 at 6 pm.

8. **Public comment**

- Fred Calcinari (zoom) said as a member of the Sustainability Committee he thought they’d be encouraged to hear about the potential wind/solar initiatives being explored with NREL.

Meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm.

Next meeting Wed May 7 at 6:30 pm. City Hall Conference Room A.