



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH
Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee

Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 6:30 pm

MINUTES

For the video recording of the meeting on Zoom:

<https://youtu.be/xHNuAYfnwgA>

1. Roll call

Meeting called to order at 6:36 pm. Attending, Councilor Tabor, chair; Peter Somssich, Tom Rooney, Councilor Kate Cook, Tracy Cameron, Betsy Blaisdell. Via Zoom: Jillian Harris. Excused: Kevin Charette, Ben D'Antonio, Sustainability Committee: Fred Calcinari. Staff: DPW Director Peter Rice, DPW project manager Christine Sproviero, Stephanie Seacord.

2. **Chairman's remarks** – Chair Tabor reported that the City Council will hold Second reading (and possibly Third) at their December 8, 2025 meeting of the ordinance to make PEAC a permanent committee. He thanked the committee members for their work and expressed the hope that they will all continue to serve (or to let him know). Later, Councilor Cook expressed her thanks for the committee's work and level of expertise which the City otherwise could not afford – and reported that this would be her last PEAC meeting.
3. **Approval of minutes.** On a motion by Peter Somssich seconded by Betsy Blaisdell, the committee voted to approve both the October 1 and November 5, 2025 minutes.

4. Update on Jones Avenue Solar Project

DPW Director Peter Rice introduced the DPW project manager Christine Sproviero. She reported that the City received quotes from five vendors to produce a feasibility study for a Jones Avenue solar array project and hired APEX based on their qualifications and price. Their preliminary review suggests a system of up to 2.45 megawatts generating 3 gigawatts of electricity per year. This system would cost approximately \$4 million, with a payback of 10 years under a bond/own scenario. This system would connect to the Jones Avenue three-phase power line which currently appears to have a hosting capacity of 3-5 megawatts. The alternative 'behind the meter' option connecting to the solar array at Portsmouth High School would require 2,000 feet of conductor (twice what's needed to connect to Jones Ave.). This option would be credited by Eversource at a lower rate than direct-connection to the grid through Jones Avenue and APEX continues to assess whether the high school option makes sense. The City of Portsmouth would receive a net metering discount on the municipal utility bill on either but at different rates.

APEX is also evaluating and will report on a comparison of bond-to-own, power purchase agreement, land lease, net metering and hybrid or community solar approaches.

Federal tax incentives that are derived from the Inflation Reduction Act are unlikely to apply to this project as to qualify the system must be in service by December 31, 2027 or construction must have started within 12 months of the Big Beautiful Tax Bill signing on July 4, 2025. The interconnection review from Eversource is anticipated to take 16-24 months (included in APEX scope).

Further action as APEX works to finalize report by March 2026 (Councilor Cook noted that the Council has til May to adjust the CIP for the FY27 budget if adjustment is needed to the current CIP 'bond-to-own' expense).

- Assessment of the Jones Ave. landfill weight bearing capacity (geotech analysis), permit review
- Battery storage including costs
- Adding additional capacity at Portsmouth High School in addition to direct-connection to Jones Avenue line
- Consider a microgrid for City facilities (Tom Rooney has expertise) although a base power plant would be needed.
- Include in the proforma: bond service, comparison of “behind the meter” vs. direct-feed costs and discounts applied to the municipal electric bill, sale of the related RECs

5. Update from CPCNH

Chair Tabor reported at the November 5 meeting that he had received a follow-up email from Jackson Kaspari and Andrew Hatch at CPCNH to answer PEAC questions raised at the October 2 meeting. He invited them to attend the December 3 meeting. Jackson Kaspari thanked the committee for hosting them again and provided follow-up on the following questions:

- a. Kevin Charette had asked for better accessibility to CPCNH reports and Board materials. Kaspari reported that both are included and regularly updated in the CPCNH website documents library [[Document Library | CPCNH – Community Power NH](#)] and in the meeting materials attached to Board meetings in the calendar [[Meetings | CPCNH – Community Power NH](#)]. Kaspari also reported that CPCNH has moved the hiring of a Finance Director up to April 2026.
- b. PEAC had questioned whether low-income community power customers are fully informed, especially when, depending on the rate period, they have the option of lower rates from the default utility. Kaspari suggested reaching out to service agencies and the library who might have the best access to this population. From the written communication in the packet: Under the NHPUC 2200 rules, utilities may provide EAP indicators for customers within their date files but are not required to do so. As a result, we have conducted outreach to Eversource, Unitil and Liberty to ask if they would consider providing EAP information in future data file transfers. In addition to this, I checked to see if the Portsmouth Housing Authority was enrolled with Portsmouth Community Power. The Housing Authority is not with Community Power and appears to be enrolled with another competitive supplier
- c. Andrew Hatch also recommended that customers look at the Portsmouth Community Power page [[Portsmouth | CPCNH – Community Power NH](#)] and sign up for direct notices from CPCNH.
- d. Peter Somssich asked for an update on the proportion of renewables in the PCP Basic option – since Eversource has reduced theirs from 23% to 13%. CPCNH Basic is 18% renewables; but the focus is on their commitment to sustain the Granite Basic (33%), Granite50 (50%) and Granite100 (100%) renewables choices and to be a REC aggregator, purchasing RECs that support projects in New England, ideally NH.

- e. Peter Somssich asked whether Solar 2.0 owners are yet permitted to join community power as Solar 1.0 are – CPCNH is still negotiating with Eversource, who want to give a bulk credit to CPCNH rather than to the customers. Kaspari suggested that all community Solar 2.0 customers join CPCNH in pushing Eversource for this and to end the practice of REC sweeping (claiming RECs from unregistered solar customers without their knowledge or permission). He also noted that as a REC aggregator CPCNH would be interested in purchasing Jones Avenue project RECs. Kaspari noted the upcoming CPCNH Legislative Briefing for 2026 on Fri Dec 5, 10-11:30 am [[Meetings | CPCNH – Community Power NH](#)].

6. Year End Report

Committee approved the draft report prepared by Chair Tabor, with the suggestion that the names of the PEAC members be included. Report will be submitted for inclusion in the packet for the December 22, 2025 City Council meeting.

7. NREL Report

Chair Tabor noted the inclusion of the final, official, peer-reviewed report in the meeting packet for the public record. The Committee discussed the diminished opportunities for tax credits that might fund further exploration of their recommendations. The NREL name is now National Lab of the Rockies.

8. New Business – None.

- a. Peter asked for an update on the proportion of renewables in the PCP Basic option – since Eversource has reduced theirs from 23% to 13%. Chair Tabor said this is one of the questions Kaspari will be prepared to answer at the December 3 meeting.

9. Public comment – None.

Adjourned on a motion by Tom Rooney seconded by Peter Somssich at 7:46 pm.

Next meeting, tentatively January 7, 2026 at 6:30 pm.