

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 5, 2026, 5:30—7:15 PM

Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

ATTENDEES: In person: CEC members Joanna Sharf and Richard Thompson; CEC Alternate Frank Parks; Select Board member Jason Bourne; Andrew Hatch, Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH); and Stuart Foote (Cornish).

Via Zoom: CEC Members Myron Kuhre (health), Bill Schmidt (home delivery) and Mike Belanger (health), Alternate Susanne Haseman (animal care); Doug Cogan, Circuit Rider, Clean Energy New Hampshire; and Tony Newton (Cornish).

In the absence of a quorum physically present, Joanna appointed Frank Parks as full CEC member for the duration of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MINUTES: Richard moved adoption of the December 2025 minutes and Frank seconded. The minutes were approved.

COMMUNITY POWER DISCUSSION WITH ANDREW HATCH, CPCNH: The Committee again devoted most of the meeting to an update from CPCNH and discussion of the current electricity rate setting process. The stated goal of the meeting was to reach a decision on whether to recommend to the Select Board that approval of Cornish Community Power be included as a warrant article at Town Meeting in March. Andrew informed the Committee that CPCNH set their residential rate for the February – August period at 14.637-14.663 cents per kWh, 1 cent higher than Liberty's rates and approximately 3 cents higher than Eversource & NHEC. The CPCNH Board of Directors decided to move quickly to improve the organization's finances after the losses incurred last year. 2 cents of the new rate is a reserves adder sufficient to retire financing obligations in calendar year 2026. A more rapid return to fiscal health will reduce financing costs and build community reserves, which in turn will position CPCNH to achieve competitiveness sooner. The specific goal is to have 120 days of cash on hand after replenishing reserves. Andrew confirmed that the rate increase takes into account any additional attrition of customers due to the higher rate. Andrew also mentioned that, considering the very cold December in NH, some utility rates may need to be reset, and that the PUC has already ordered Eversource to resubmit its rates for other reasons. Accordingly, it's unclear if all the announced rates for the major utilities are final. It was reiterated that even if the town approves Cornish Community Power at Town Meeting, it could not activate the program until CPCNH's rates are lower than at least one of the other major utilities. This requirement only applies to the initial launch, however. For subsequent periods the rates do not have to be lower than the other utilities, although they most likely will be very competitive. One reason for voting this year even though the town may not launch until a later time, is for the town to be ready to go when an appropriate rate is announced. Andrew reviewed steps that have been taken internally at the Coalition to ensure that the problems from last year are not repeated, including rigorous adherence to and training in enhanced risk management

policies and bringing additional expertise to the CPCNH staff through the hiring of a new Executive Director and Director of Power. There will also be a financial audit report performed by an independent company called The Energy Authority which will be coming out in April. The Committee then discussed the two current options regarding community power for Cornish: (a) move ahead as a town with community power; or (b) encourage residents to join Sullivan County Community Power, which Cornish residents could do individually on an opt-in basis. In response to a question from Jason, Andrew explained the county options and program in more detail. Allowing residents to join the County program on an opt-in basis would allow only very slow growth in participating residents and thereby fail to provide a beneficial effect for the town as a whole. The Select Board could decide to move ahead with Sullivan County on an opt-out basis without a Town vote, but Jason and members of the Committee agreed that it is important to give town residents a choice in the matter so this was not a preferred path. Following Andrew's departure from the meeting, Joanna called for discussion and consideration of a motion to recommend to the Select Board that a warrant article supporting Cornish Community Power be included on the agenda for Town Meeting. Frank expressed concerns about moving forward given the problems CPCNH experienced in 2025 and a lack of clarity on when they might be able to offer rates lower than the utilities. He also thought that building large solar installations as a source of power for CPCNH may not be as affordable now given the removal of subsidies, so that would not help CPCNH achieve lower prices. Joanna responded that she believes CPCNH has addressed their problems thoughtfully and transparently. She also believes that they will be able to offer lower rates soon and in the long run, CPCNH will be the best option for price stability, local control and renewable energy options. Joanna felt that prices for solar are so cheap now that solar development should thrive despite the loss of subsidies. Visitor Stuart Foote asked if Cornish could follow Keene's example and sign up with a broker to obtain 100% renewable energy for a flat rate guaranteed for 1 or 2 years. Joanna explained that a broker would not provide the other incentives and programs offered by CPCNH. Joanna stated that in general there is virtually nothing the town can lose in adopting community power and much to gain through the offering of local energy programs. Residents can opt out at any time, and even the town can vote to withdraw from the coalition if things don't look good. Joanna then called for the vote, and the motion was approved by a vote of 4-1, with Committee members voting as follows:

Joanna Sharf, Aye
Richard Thompson, Aye
Bill Schmidt, Aye
Myron Kuhre, Aye
Frank Parks, No

The Select Board will now consider the Committee's recommendation.

CPCNH's rate announcement can be viewed here:

<https://www.communitypowernh.gov/post/february-2026-community-power-rates>

ANNUAL REPORT: Joanna reminded the Committee that she will be emailing everyone a draft of the annual report, and members should make comments.

WEBSITE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING: Joanna mentioned that the Website Subcommittee meets again on January 13th.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM

NEXT MEETING: February 2, 2026, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM.