

SPECIAL MEETING
CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 19, 2026, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

ATTENDEES: In person: CEC members Joanna Sharf, Richard Thompson, Bill Schmidt and Mike Belanger; CEC Alternates Susanne Haseman and Frank Parks; and Stuart Foote (Cornish).

Via Zoom: CEC Members Myron Kuhre (health).

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 5TH MINUTES: Frank Parks pointed out that Susanne Haseman had been omitted from the list of attendees via Zoom. Mike moved approval of the minutes with Susanne Haseman added to the list of attendees. Richard seconded, and the minutes as amended were approved.

COMMUNITY POWER: This special meeting was called to decide whether to support submission of a warrant article in support of Cornish Community Power (CCP) by petition. This issue arose because the Select Board will not decide whether to support a CCP warrant article until the end of January, and the petition deadline is February 3rd. Based on informal discussions Joanna had with individual Select Board members, it is not clear whether they will ultimately support it. Several committee members indicated that it would be difficult to pass a warrant article at Town Meeting without Select Board support. There was also concern a loss at Town Meeting could have long-term negative effects on passage of CCP. In addition, it remains unclear when and if the Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH) will be able to offer electricity rates lower than at least one of the utilities operating in Cornish. Myron made the case for proceeding with the petition and the warrant article, and having the town decide. Joanna called for a vote on whether to submit a warrant article in support of CCP by petition. The Committee voted 4-1 against proceeding with a petition. The Committee briefly discussed hosting a public education forum on community power in the event the Select Board decides to support the warrant article. It was agreed that such a meeting would likely not draw a significant audience if there will not be a vote on the matter at Town Meeting. Instead, for now the Committee will distribute a statement/update on community power via Connect Cornish (shorter version) and the CEC website (longer version). After discussion of the draft statements, several changes were recommended, which Joanna made on the spot. Only one sentence in the shorter version (about community power not launching unless prices were initially lower than a major utility) needed more refinement and Joanna said she would work on it and send the Committee the revised version. Joanna then asked the Committee to vote on revised warrant article language for the Select Board to use if they submitted a warrant article. Bill moved to approve the revised text, and Richard seconded. The motion was approved.

The revised warrant article wording is as follows, with the recommended additions to the original language from last year provided in bold & underlined:

Revised warrant article wording:

*To see if the Town will vote to adopt the Cornish Community Power plan, to authorize the Select Board to implement the plan, and to take all action in furtherance thereof, pursuant to RSA 53-E. **Community Power allows local governments to procure electric power on behalf of their residents, businesses, and municipal accounts while still receiving transmission, distribution and billing services from their existing utility provider.** The Cornish Community Power plan **establishes** an opt-out electric supply program that offers more flexible electricity procurement. The plan will initially provide lower electricity rates for residents, or it will not launch. Initial participation in the plan can be declined, after which enrollment becomes voluntary. **The Program objective is to create value for Cornish by providing more stable electricity rates, expanding choices and developing local energy programs and energy efficiency incentives. Tax Impact: none; the program is self-funded.***

CEC ANNUAL REPORT: Joanna had distributed a draft 2025 annual report prior to the meeting. After brief discussion, the Committee had no suggested changes and agreed the report was good to submit.

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP: Joanna announced her intention to step down as CEC Chair and a member of the committee in March. She would like to continue as the alternate member representative to CPCNH (Select Board member Jason Bourne is the main member representative) and will be available to help with specific projects.

WEBSITE SUBCOMMITTEE: Joanna reported that the Subcommittee is close to finalizing new content and will be meeting again on February 10th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM.

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