

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES
June 1, 2026, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

In person: CEC members Richard Thompson, Bill Schmidt and Stuart Foote; CEC Alternate Frank Parks; Joanna Sharf (Cornish) and Doug Cogan (Clean Energy New Hampshire)

Via Zoom: CEC Member Susanne Haseman (transportation); and Tony Newton (Cornish)

APPROVAL OF APRIL MEETING MINUTES: Bill moved adoption of the minutes and Richard seconded. The minutes were approved.

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY POWER/COMMUNITY POWER COALITION OF NEW

HAMPSHIRE: Bill, who is now serving as Alternate Representative to the CPCNH, provided a report on the CPCNH annual meeting held on April 30th in Concord. At the meeting, a bylaws change was approved that allows member towns to have up to two Alternate Representatives in CPCNH. The focus of the meeting was an independent enterprise risk management audit in response to last year's financial losses stemming from rate setting missteps. The report centered around the 2025 reserves drawdown and a review of internal risk management processes. Several recommendations were made concerning both issues, all of which are in the process of being implemented. Bill reported that CPCNH leadership appeared to be taking the report seriously and is committed to making needed changes. CPCNH finances are improving in 2026, and the organization continues to balance restoration of financial reserves with the acknowledged need to become more competitive with the default utilities on rates. Regarding the competitive landscape, currently there is a lot of attention on losses incurred by Liberty and Eversource and when – and how – those losses will be recouped. Bill agreed to share a recent email from CPCNH relating to the upcoming rate setting period (August 1 – February 28). The email includes information about the rate setting schedule and recent market effects of spot market purchasing by the utilities.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE/CLEAN ENERGY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES: Doug Cogan from CENH provided an update on clean energy-related legislation in the statehouse. SB 538, which provides for 20 year terms for municipal net metering agreements was passed and awaits signing by the Governor. The Cornish Select Board signed a joint letter in support of this bill. HB 1718 allows extension of net metering to battery storage systems supplied by solar power generation. This bill is still pending. SB 540 allows for portable or “balcony” solar and has passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature. HB 1542 would weaken renewable portfolio standards and reduce the renewable energy fund. This bill is still pending. HB 1733 would prohibit utilities from collecting from non-utility customers for rate losses. The original version of the bill would have also prohibited default utilities from making spot market purchases. This bill is still pending. SB 440 allows Select Boards to establish CPACER programs, which relate to commercial investments in clean energy. Previously, these programs had to be approved at town meetings. This bill has been sent to the Governor. The Committee also briefly discussed the federally funded Direct Pay program and its provisions around foreign sourced content in projects.

MERIDEN LIBRARY SOLAR PROJECT UPDATE: Tony Newton reported on the Meriden Library solar project. It is now completed, having recently passed three inspections. The last step is connection to the grid. The third party inspector ended up being Bob Donovan, who has

been involved with the Hillsborough Area Renewable Energy Initiative (HAREI). HAREI provides renewable energy knowledge and skills to design, build, install, and operate renewable solar energy systems for residential homes through a network of volunteer electricians, engineers, carpenters, inspectors and others. The Committee briefly discussed plans for renewable energy projects for the new Cornish Library and Community Center and associated funding needs. The Chairman of the New London Energy Committee, Jamie Hess, is interested in funding solar projects in the Upper Valley and was involved with the Meriden Library project.

HAREI: The Committee discussed the goal of establishing HAREI in Cornish. Tony indicated that, with their involvement in the Meriden Library project, it was starting to happen organically. There are Cornish residents who are already involved with HAREI. The Committee plans to discuss at future meetings how to expand the HAREI presence in Cornish.

CEC WEBSITE UPDATE: Joanna reported that she, Richard and Bill have been working for the past year on new and updated content for the site. The work is completed and has been sent to Heidi, who will make the changes. Joanna was asked to present on the new web content at the next meeting.

UPPER VALLEY ENERGY COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE: Richard and Bill will attend this meeting on June 4th in West Lebanon. This group had been meeting prior to the COVID pandemic and is now re-convening for the first time in several years. It comprises representatives from town energy committees across the Upper Valley, including some from Vermont. The purpose of the roundtable is to share what various towns are doing to initiate and promote renewable energy projects. This meeting has been organized by Vital Communities.

TOWN ENERGY DATA COLLECTION: Stuart is spearheading this effort and has spoken with Mary and will be meeting with her soon about data collection processes.

NEW ENGLAND HEAT PUMP ACCELERATOR: New England has received a grant through the Inflation Reduction Act to promote adoption of electric heat pumps. Each state in New England is developing a plan for its allocation of funds, and the Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) is the lead agency for NH. Reportedly, NH is still working on its plan, so funds are not yet available for projects. Richard will contact Kurt Yuengling at NHDES for more information and to invite him to speak to the CEC at a future meeting. The Committee will discuss how to promote this program to Cornish residents.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Next meeting: July 6th, 7:00 – 8:30 PM