

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES
August 3, 2026, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

In person: CEC members Susanne Haseman, Bill Schmidt, Mike Belanger and Stuart Foote; Alternate member Frank Parks; Andrew Hatch (Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire), Doug Cogan (Clean Energy New Hampshire) and Deb Dworak (Cornish).

Via Zoom: CEC Member Richard Thompson (scheduling conflict); and Tony Newton (Cornish).

APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES: Susanne identified a transposed number in the minutes, which Bill will correct and resubmit. Bill moved adoption of the minutes as amended and Stuart seconded. The minutes were approved.

LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES UPDATE: Doug Cogan provided an update on state legislative activity, various funding opportunities and upcoming events. HB 1738 reauthorizes the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in New Hampshire for four years (2027–2030) and extends it indefinitely after 2030 unless modified by future legislation. RGGI augments the NH Saves program by providing rebates for various clean energy initiatives and also allows for power purchase agreements with the Seabrooke Station Nuclear Power Plant. HB 1775 allows the investor-owned electric utilities to make investments in modular nuclear and natural gas power plants. Both HB 1738 and HB 1775 have been signed into law by the Governor. With regard to funding opportunities, Doug mentioned the US Department of Agriculture Renewable Energy Program (REEP) that provides free energy audits for farmers and small businesses. The deadline for applications is August 14th.

CORNISH LIBRARY/COMMUNITY CENTER SOLAR PROJECT: Regarding upcoming events, Doug mentioned there may be an open house hosted by the Cornish Community Initiative in the near future, though details are not yet available. The Committee discussed the status of the solar panel installation at the new library and community center. Rails for rooftop solar panels are currently being installed, as are other components of the overall system. When completed, there will be 100 panels that will generate 40-50 MWh annually. The project should qualify for a federal tax credit through the Internal Revenue Service direct pay program. Doug mentioned two upcoming Clean Energy New Hampshire events: an educational webinar about the newly enacted law relating to plug-in solar on August 5th, and an online open forum for CENH members on August 19th.

COMMUNITY POWER COALITION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE UPDATE: Andrew Hatch from CPCNH provided an update on the new electricity rates that went into effect on August 1st. Of note is the fact that CPCNH is offering a lower rate than Liberty for its customers. The CPCNH rate is 7.5% lower, so Cornish residents who are Liberty customers can save money by signing up for Sullivan County Community Power (on an opt-in basis). Andrew reported that Liberty had submitted a substantially higher rate, but the NH Public Utilities Commission ordered a lower rate, thus allowing Liberty to delay recoupment of losses incurred during recent rate cycles. Andrew also briefly reviewed the CPCNH renewable energy certificates purchasing program (\$35 per MWh) and its time of use partnership with Unitil.

PLUG-IN SOLAR UPDATE: Stuart and Tony updated the Committee on the status of safety proposals being developed through the UL (formerly United Laboratories, UL 3700). NH

recently enacted legislation allowing for plug-in solar, but subject to establishment of safety requirements for equipment manufacturers. Of concern, various companies are already marketing turn-key products as UL 3700 compliant, which is not the case. Stuart indicated that he's working on an educational piece for Connect Cornish that will caution people to hold off purchasing this equipment.

REPORT ON UPPER VALLEY ENERGY COMMITTEES MEETING: Richard and Bill attended this meeting hosted by Vital Communities on June 4th and indicated that it was the first meeting of this group since before the COVID pandemic. It was an opportunity to hear about the activities of other town energy committees in the area, and attendees heard a presentation on heat pumps. The Committee will continue to participate in these meetings in the future.

HILLSBOROUGH AREA RENEWABLE ENERGY INITIATIVE (HAREI) UPDATE: Richard and Tony led a continued discussion of the potential for Cornish to become a formal part of HAREI, which provides residential homeowners with the knowledge and skills to design, build, install, and operate renewable solar energy systems for their homes. They accomplish this through a nonprofit organization composed of volunteers with relevant skill sets to assist with the projects. Membership costs \$40 per person, which secures access to all the HAREI benefits. Tony and Richard are members. Projects take place nearly every weekend. One possible local project was discussed: the Plainfield highway garage.

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE WEBSITE: Bill reported that he and Joanna met with the Select Board to get an update on their review of the new web content. They were not able to commit to a timetable and also indicated that they're in the process of establishing guidelines for the entire town website. The new guidelines could affect their review.

MERIDEN LIBRARY SOLAR PROJECT UPDATE: Tony reported that the new 16 kWh system is working well, with strong solar production of about 2 MWh per month. The system has produced about \$500 per month of electricity bill savings.

NEW COMMITTEE ALTERNATE: With Myron Kuhre's recent resignation for health reasons, the Committee discussed the nomination of Tony Newton as Myron's replacement. Stuart made a motion, Bill seconded, and the nomination was approved unanimously and will be forwarded to the Select Board for final approval. Richard will follow up with the Select Board.

Remaining agenda items were deferred to the September meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Next meeting: September 7th, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

