

Hillsborough Energy Commission Approved Minutes
June 8th, 2023; **Bolded items are things to-do**

Meeting called to order at 6:04 PM. Attendance: Brett Cherrington, Chairman; Adam Charrette, Vice-Chairman; Jon Daley, Secretary; Sue Durling; Henry Herndon of Herndon Enterprises, a startup consultant for Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH); James Bailey, Selectboard; Rich Pelletier, Selectboard; Iris Campbell, Selectboard; Laura Buono, Town Administrator

Visitor Business / Community Power

Henry Herndon of the CPCNH came to give a presentation and answer questions regarding Community Power (CP) under the CPCNH, and more specifically elucidating the differences in CP implementations between CPCNH and a Broker Model using a for-profit broker such as Standard Power. The Hillsborough Select Board attended as well.

Henry stated that the two main differences between CPCNH and a for-profit company would be that CPCNH is non-profit with the associated transparency and CPCNH changes rates “periodically” and for-profit vendors set the rates for two or three year contracts.

He said that the current CPCNH rate is \$.15/kWh.

He said it is “not likely” that the reserve funds would be used to fund an “early” project, but more likely that a private developer would build a project, such as a methane gas generator over a landfill, and then that developer would contract with particular members of CPCNH, but towns aren’t required to buy-in (and the electricity from a given project wouldn’t have enough electricity for all towns to participate). We had some unanswered questions about how the reserve fund works and whether there are any benefits to Hillsborough to putting money into the CPCNH reserve fund instead of having our own reserve fund through a Broker Model. Henry said that probably could happen, but in other states that they researched, that has not occurred in a Broker Model.

He said that a town might contract with the project for electric supply with a locked in price for 10 years at a minimum. “It is a good question” about whether signing up for a 10 year rate would be a good idea, and deciding what percentage of the town’s portfolio would you be willing to commit to that rate.

The next steps for joining CPCNH is for the Selectboard to sign the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), which is a non-binding agreement giving us access to resources, etc. and then the Electric Aggregation Committee to prepare the Electric Aggregation Plan, have public hearings and then vote at the Town Meeting. At that point, the town could decide to go with a Broker or sign a Cost Sharing Agreement, et al. with CPCNH.

Henry stated that one main benefit of the Joint Powers Agreement and the Coalition that liability from finance issues, power purchasing, etc. and keeping that liability off of the town and its resources.

CPCNH meetings are posted on <https://www.cpcnh.org/calendar> and the public is welcome to join and ask questions of members, etc.

Community Power

After Henry left, we discussed the different options and the Energy Commission recommended that the Selectboard sign the JPA with CPCNH. They will discuss it at their next meeting.

We still have questions about how the reserve fund works and the potential projects and how they get funded and what it means to have a project funded by the reserve fund and then whether a town participates in the energy generated from the project, etc.

LED Street Lighting Project

Selectmen Jim Bailey and Police Chief Parsons looked at our recommendations and drove around to look at different locations. Laura printed a letter for us with their recommendations. They agreed with some of our changes. Some of the changes they recommend (re-locating and installing longer arms) are Eversource requests and not Affinity requests, and we aren’t sure what the process is for that.

The Affinity changes need to be decided on soon, as we are coming up on the July/1 year warranty period. Jon will write an email to Laura with our response to their comments.

Weatherization Project

Jon reached out to various Eversource contacts that he has gotten over the years, and most of them have bounced because the employees are no longer with the company. He was able to contact Abdelmounaim Hamim (Mounaim) and was referred to Margaret Dillon of Sustainable Energy Education & Demonstration Services (SEEDS) and Jeremy Blanchard of GDS Associates. Jon was able to talk to both of them and get some good information. Margaret works with Rich Burns and Shakes to Shingles and has been working with Eversource on our project, but it has been slow going. Both GDS and SEEDS said they've never heard of anyone doing 9-10 audits at one time, and both said we should pick two or three buildings at most to focus on. Both agreed that the Eversource representative that said we needed a Level 2 audit was incorrect. Level 2 audits are required for Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grants. SEEDS said their audits are level 2 compliant. SEEDS is too busy until 2024, but would like to work on future projects with us. GDS said they have time and will get what we need to Eversource to get to the next steps. Both GDS and SEEDS are auditors only, and in GDS's case were so focused on audit funding that it took a while for Jon to figure out that we were talking about implementation funding and GDS was talking about audit funding.

There is also a "technical assistance study" which is a level 3 audit, and that is a more detailed audit, perhaps more on the implementation phase, and both companies said we didn't need that at all.

GDS has asked for information for each building: address, sqft. and the audit report from Shakes to Shingles and he will work with Eversource for the next steps. He thinks that perhaps he can get funding from Eversource for a scoping audit, considered a level 1 audit, which would look at a couple of the buildings and build on the Shakes to Shingles report and would have to add the cost savings amounts, which Shakes to Shingles did not yet provide. GDS has not worked with Shakes to Shingles before and so wasn't confident that a "donated" or business development free audit would be detailed enough, though SEEDS was confident that it would be a good report.

We also have the audit from 2010 Integrated Building Energy Associates. Jon will send that report to GDS as well.

Electric Vehicles and Charging Stations

Jon emailed Robyn Payson (Hillsborough Planning Director) and New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) to see what resources they know about and if there is any way to find out about grants earlier than we have been so we can work on applications earlier rather than racing at the last minute. Robyn said she would keep an eye out for us, but didn't have any mailing lists to sign up for, etc.

NHMA had a number of resources for us:

- There is a new pilot program that is just launching: Coaching and Technical Assistance Program (CTAP). <https://nbrc-nh.com/municipal> The deadline to sign up is July 5th.
- They also recommended that we reach out to Griffin Roberge at the Department of Energy (DOE) at 603-271-8341 and/or griffin.j.roberge@energy.nh.gov.

They also said keeping an eye on the federal grants website would be good:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html>

Brett attended a NHMA webinar that was partially useful for some information (and contained the CTAP as well). He verified that we are still on the list for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program as well as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvements that we applied for previously.

Energy Use Report 2022

Sue appreciated Adam's work from last time and they are working towards finding the best cost savings to inform our prioritization of the results of the building audits.

Secretary's report:

Minutes from May 25th, motion to approve as amended by Adam, seconded by Jon; all approved except for Sue who abstained.

Communication:

The Mason Energy Commission asked Brett to come to their virtual meeting. They were interested in electric vehicle charging stations and Community Power. He told them what he could as they are just starting out on navigating these issues.

Motion to adjourn at 8:33 PM by Adam, seconded by Sue. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon Daley