



**CITY OF CONCORD**  
*New Hampshire's Main Street™*  
**41 Green Street, Concord NH 03301**  
**(603) 225-8570**

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**CONCORD ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CEEAC)**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 26, 2025 @ 6:30PM**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**37 Green Street (2nd Floor) - Concord, NH 03301**

**Attendees:**

Committee Members:

Rob Werner, Chair, Councilor Stacey Brown, Councilor Jeffrey Foote, Dot Currier,  
Gerald Eaton, Chuck Willing

**Absent Members:**

Carl Cooley  
Miriah King  
Nick Babladelis  
Allen Desbiens  
Jeffrey Evans

**Public:**

Joe Kwasnik  
Elliot Clendenning, Student Representative  
Frances Lesser, Student Representative

**Staff Present:**

Beth Fenstermacher, PLA, LEED AP, Director of Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives  
Stephanie McKim, Administrative Coordinator

**1. Welcome by Chair Werner**

Chair Werner welcomed those in attendance.

**2. Adoption of Minutes**

A motion was made by Mr. Eaton and duly seconded by Councilor Brown to adopt the minutes of February 03, 2025. Mr. Willing recommended edits. A motion to accept the amended minutes was made by Councilor Brown and duly seconded by Mr. Eaton. The motion passed unanimously.

1 **3. Municipal Project Updates**

2 **Solar Project at Landfill (Kearsarge Solar)**

3  
4 Ms. Fenstermacher reported that the solar project at the Landfill (Kearsarge Solar) is still waiting for  
5 permit response and there is no new information to report.

6  
7 **West Portsmouth Street Solar Project (Lodestar)**

8  
9 Ms. Fenstermacher reported that the West Portsmouth Street Solar Project (Lodestar) project is still  
10 waiting for permit response and there is no new information to report.

11  
12 **Wastewater Treatment Plant Solar Project**

13 Ms. Fenstermacher reported that the Waste Water Treatment Plant Solar Project is now operating. The  
14 dashboard is not currently active on the City website, but will soon be under the General Services Division  
15 webpage.

16  
17 Discussion ensued regarding touring the wastewater treatment plant, and student involvement.

18  
19 **4. COMMUNITY POWER**

20  
21 **Community Power Coalition Policy Update**

22  
23 Mr. Willing distributed and reviewed a Community Power report to the CEEAC dated February 26, 2025.  
24 This report is attached.

25  
26 Mr. Willing reported that the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPNCH) approved new  
27 rates effective February 1<sup>st</sup> but almost immediately had to raise the rates effective March 3<sup>rd</sup>. In the  
28 fall 2024 rate period, Concord had a default rate of 9.3 cents/kilowatt-hour (kwh) for the default  
29 product Granite Plus with higher 33% renewable portfolio standard (RPS) content. Currently, in  
30 February, the default product for Concord residents is Granite Basic with RPS content 25.2%. The  
31 default rate experienced a rate reduction to 8.9 cents/kwh because they were moved to the CPCNH  
32 Granite Basic rate. In March, the rate for Granite Basic will increase to 9.7 cents/kwh. Thus, Concord  
33 residents receiving the Concord Community Power default product will have seen their rates first  
34 move down for a month then move up to a rate that is 0.4 cents/kwh higher than the fall 2024 rate.

35  
36 Mr. Willing reported the CPNCH set initial rates low. Additionally, in the winter of 2024-25 wholesale  
37 electricity prices rose to the second highest that they have been in 20 years. These two factors have  
38 contributed the increased rates.

39  
40 Mr. Willing reported that there has been a significant change in how New Hampshire utilities  
41 purchase power. Historically, the utilities purchased all of their power from power suppliers in  
42 advance of a 6-month rate period. The utilities are gradually moving away from a single bulk buy and  
43 shifting toward buying in the daily power markets. Mr. Willing reported that because they set their  
44 rates before the rate period begins, the utilities have to estimate in advance what their costs to  
45 purchase power on the market during the period will ultimately be and have to fold those estimates  
46 into their rates. Their actual costs will ultimately be higher or lower than their estimates. Differences  
47 between estimated and actual power costs are then charged or credited to the same group of  
48 customers in a future rate period. For the current (spring 2025) period, the utilities purchased only  
49 70% of their power in advance and are purchasing 30% on the market as they go. The PUC has asked  
50 utilities to propose plans for 50% advance purchase and 50% purchase from daily markets in the

1 next (fall 2025) rate period. The PUC and utilities appear to be heading toward eventually  
 2 purchasing 100% of their power supply needs from the daily markets. This approach allows the  
 3 utilities to reduce the price premiums they were paying for advance power purchases and potentially  
 4 lower their rates. It also exposes the utilities and ratepayers to market price fluctuations.

5  
 6 Mr. Willing summarized the discussion from the February 3 CEEAC meeting. The Public Utilities  
 7 Commission (PUC) has asked the utilities to propose a mechanism to charge or credit any energy  
 8 supply cost under-collection or over-collection to all customers in their service territories including  
 9 those receiving power from community power programs and competitive electricity suppliers  
 10 through a stranded cost recovery charge. Mr. Willing expressed concern that the utilities are more  
 11 likely to underestimate their costs than overestimate them. If they underestimate them, Concord  
 12 residents on Concord Community Power will pay for both their own energy supply through Concord  
 13 Community Power and also a portion of the utilities' cost to supply other customers through this  
 14 charge. Mr. Willing asserts this stranded cost approach is fundamentally wrong.

15  
 16 Chair Werner filed a comment at the PUC on behalf of the CEEAC opposing the stranded cost idea. As  
 17 requested by the PUC, Unitil submitted a filing proposing the stranded cost approach. The PUC has  
 18 not issued a decision on the proposal but it is expected to accept Unitil's filing proposal.

19  
 20 Additionally, there is a bill under consideration in the state legislature, HB760, that would bar the  
 21 PUC from approving cost-shifting of this sort. Mr. Willing reported that this bill was referred to the  
 22 House Science, Technology, and Energy Committee, which held a hearing and heard testimony from a  
 23 number of stakeholders and individuals in favor of the bill and also from Eversource and the PUC  
 24 against the bill.

25  
 26 Discussion ensued regarding bipartisan nature of support for HB760, potential legal challenges if the  
 27 PUC ultimately approves cost-shifting, and related issues.

28  
 29 CEEAC members also discussed potential further steps for communicating the rate changes and  
 30 customers' right to opt out. Mr. Willing reported that if a Concord resident in Unitil territory opts out  
 31 of Concord Community Power during the current rate period (ending July 31), they will move to  
 32 Unitil's variable monthly rates for the rest of the rate period. After the rate period ends, if the resident  
 33 does not change from Unitil as power supplier, the resident would receive Unitil's then-effective 6-  
 34 month fixed rate for the fall 2025 rate period.

## 35 36 **5. POLICY AND PROJECT UPDATES**

### 37 38 **CEEAC Community Power "Adder" workgroup**

39  
 40 Mr. Willing reported that the Community Power Adder workgroup has not met to date but is  
 41 coordinating a meeting for the near future. Mr. Willing reported workgroup topics could include: the  
 42 adder, returning to Granite Plus as the default product, and an opt-up campaign similar to the one  
 43 conducted by several New Hampshire seacoast communities. Mr. Willing said he hopes the group will  
 44 formulate proposals and bring them back to the committee before decisions need to be made about  
 45 the fall 2025 rate period.

46  
 47 Discussion ensued about how an adder can work, potential projects that the adder could support, the  
 48 additional cost to customers, possible suspension of the adder during high rate periods, and future  
 49 public information session.

### 50 51 **UNH Sustainability Fellow (Summer, 2025)**

52

1 Chair Werner and Ms. Fenstermacher interviewed three candidates for the UNH Sustainability  
2 Fellow. All the candidates are well qualified for the position and Chair Werner and Ms.  
3 Fenstermacher will discuss candidate selection further at a later time.  
4

5 Discussion ensued about the candidate's qualifications, educational background, relocation, and traits  
6 that stood out in the interview.  
7

### 8 **Earth Day Workgroup**

9

10 Chair Werner discussed a workgroup meeting date of March 11<sup>th</sup>. The workgroup will meet at the  
11 City Hall to discuss Earth Day celebration.  
12

13 Councilor Brown discussed an idea to make the Earth Day celebration longer than one day to give  
14 Concord residents a chance to decide how they can contribute to the Earth Day celebration based on  
15 events scheduled on different days of the week. Councilor Brown would like to encourage  
16 participation from other committees in the Earth Day celebration. Councilor Foote has proposed a  
17 trash cleanup day along the corridor of Constitution Ave, Storrs Street, and Hall Street.  
18

19 Discussion ensued about potential events if Earth Day celebration is extended over a week or more,  
20 other committee involvement, marketing for the events, school involvement, and volunteer  
21 management.  
22

### 23 **Weatherization/Solarization Program (Q1, 2025)**

24

25 Chair Werner has no new information to report.  
26

### 27 **6. Other Business:**

28

29 Mr. Kwasnik suggested revising the goals of the strategic plan to include not only renewable energy  
30 sources but no carbon or low carbon (existing) energy sources as well. Mr. Willing expressed there is  
31 an opportunity to rewrite the Energy Chapter of the Master Plan. Ms. Fenstermacher reports the  
32 overall City master plan is in the budget for fiscal year 2026 and the City will be going out to bid for  
33 consultants this summer.  
34

35 A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Eaton and duly seconded by Councilor Brown. The motion  
36 passed unanimously.  
37

38 **7. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 7:53 PM.  
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41 Respectfully Submitted,  
42

43 Stephanie McKim  
44 Administrative Coordinator – Development  
45  
46

**ATTACHMENT****Community Power Report to CEEAC (February 26, 2025)**

- Once again, below are the previous, current and next CPCNH and utility rates. Also included for reference is a sampling of the broker model supply rates.

Product	Previous Rate (cents/kwh) – 8/1/24 through 1/31/25	Current Rate (cents/kwh) – 2/1/25 through 3/2/25	Next Rate (cents/kwh) – 3/3/25 through 7/31/25
CPCNH Granite Basic	8.6	8.9	9.7
CPCNH Granite Plus	9.3	9.6	10.4
CPCNH Granite Clean 50	10.0	10.3	11.1
CPCNH Granite Clean 100	12.0	12.3	13.1
Unitil	10.506	8.306	8.306
Eversource	10.403	8.929	8.929
Liberty Utilities (Granite St Elec)	10.976	8.416	8.416
NH Electric Cooperative	8.648	8.108	8.108
Keene CP (RPS+10%)	11.471	11.471	11.471
Milford CP (RPS)	10.568	10.568	10.568
Hampton CP (RPS)	9.425	9.425	9.425

- The default rate for Concord residents has moved from 9.3 cents/kwh (Granite Plus) last rate period to 8.9 cents/kwh (Granite Basic) in February to 9.7 cents/kwh (Granite Basic) starting next week. The current rate period is the first time in the 5 rate periods CPCNH has operated that it has not offered a rate lower than all three investor-owned utility rates.
- Concord residents can opt out of the community power program if they wish (or opt up). Their choices will take effect at next meter read. To do this, residents can call 866-603-7697 or email to [Info@CommunityPowerNH.gov](mailto:Info@CommunityPowerNH.gov) or go to <https://www.communitypowernh.gov>, click on residential rates, then scroll down to “To Get Started.” Have your utility account number handy.
- If a Concord resident in Unitil territory opts out of Concord Community Power during the current rate period, they will move to Unitil’s variable monthly rates for the rest of the rate period (through 7/31/25). Those monthly rates are below. If they remain with Unitil, they will receive Unitil’s 6-month rate starting in the next rate period.

March	April	May	June	July
7.738 cents/kwh	6.528 cents/kwh	6.211 cents/kwh	7.294 cents/kwh	8.722 cents/kwh

- We should communicate with Concord residents about the rate change to keep residents informed about program and their options.
- The increase in CPCNH’s rates has primarily been caused by high wholesale energy prices and higher than expected electricity consumption due to colder than average winter temperatures, compounded by the loss of an anticipated biomass power contract.
- At the same time, we are seeing a significant change in how New Hampshire utilities purchase power. Traditionally, they issued requests for proposals (RFPs) and entered contracts with suppliers to cover all of their anticipated power needs before the start of the rate period. At the PUC’s direction, they are shifting toward buying more and more of their power on ISO-New England daily markets. For the current (spring 2025) period, the utilities are purchasing only 70% of their power from RFPs and 30% from ISO-NE markets. At the PUC’s request, Unitil proposed to purchase 50% from RFPs and 50% from ISO-NE daily markets in the next (fall 2025) rate period. They appear to be heading toward eventually purchasing 100% from the market. This approach can lead to lower but more volatile prices (volatile because the utilities are subject to much more pricing risk). When relying on daily market purchases, they have to estimate their future energy purchases in advance when they propose their rates so there is likely to be a large discrepancy between the utilities’ assumed and actual power supply costs. Most likely, they will underestimate their costs.
- Community power deserves its share of the credit for providing the competition that delivered the current, low utility rates.
- The PUC also asked the utilities to propose a mechanism to charge or credit any energy supply under-collection or over-collection to all of their customers including community power customers through a stranded cost recovery

1 charge. We anticipate that the utilities are more likely to underestimate their costs rather than overestimating  
2 them. If they do, Concord Community Power customers will both pay for their own energy supply through  
3 Concord Community Power but also a portion of the utilities' supply through this charge. This charge (if  
4 implemented) is unfair, anti-competitive and most likely illegal. It is also a direct threat to community power. As  
5 authorized at our last meeting, Chair Rob Werner filed a comment at the PUC on behalf of the CEEAC opposing  
6 this idea. Unfortunately, Unitol subsequently submitted a filing proposing the stranded cost idea with the PUC.  
7 Eventually, there will be a hearing.

- 8 • HB 760, a bill to bar the PUC from approving a cost-shift along the lines currently contemplated, received a  
9 hearing in the House Science, Technology and Energy Committee on 2/18/25. Some of us filed comments  
10 opposing the bill. At some point in the next couple of weeks STE is expected to vote on the bill.
- 11 • The CPCNH Board of Directors have had one meeting this month and have another on 2/27/25. There has been a  
12 heavy schedule of committee meetings too.

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