



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

**CONCORD ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CEEAC)**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**June 25, 2025 @ 6:30PM**

**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**37 Green Street (2nd Floor) - Concord, NH 03301**

**Attendees:**

**Committee Members:**

Chair Rob Werner, Councilor Stacey Brown, Chuck Willing, Miriah King, Thomas Kolling, Allen Desbiens

**Absent Members:**

Gerald Eaton, Jeffrey Evans, Joe Kwasnik, Councilor Jeffrey Foote, Nick Babladelis

**Staff Present:**

Beth Fenstermacher, PLA, LEED AP, Director of Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives

**1. Welcome by Chair Werner**

Chair Werner welcomed those in attendance. The Committee made introductions and welcomed guests James Key Wallace and Kayla Maggio.

**2. Adoption of Minutes**

A motion was made by Mr. Kolling and duly seconded by Councilor Brown to adopt the minutes of May 28, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. Municipal Project Updates**

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

Ms. Fenstermacher reported the City is doing a 5-megawatt solar facility on a capped landfill with Kearsarge Energy. Kearsarge Solar submitted all the final documents to D.E.S. for the Tier 1B permit for building on the capped landfill, and staff anticipates the permit will be issued soon and they will be addressing Planning Board comments. She reported they are waiting on the finalized documents. Ms. Fenstermacher reported meeting with Unutil at the landfill to locate interconnection poles so that the plan can be completed for the license agreement. Kearsarge anticipates construction start date is end of summer and completion by end of winter. Ms. Fenstermacher reported off takers of this project consists of: City of Concord, Concord School District, Concord Housing Authority, and potentially NHTI.

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

Chair Werner reported Lodestar is moving forward with the construction phases this summer and they expect to have their ribbon cutting April/May 2026. Lodestar is a 5-megawatt project located off W. Portsmouth Street by the Merrimack River. He reported the Lodestar project has three off takers for their group net-metering agreement: State of NH, McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, and Exeter School District.

1 Chair Werner reports that the completion of the two solar project brings 10 megawatts of solar power within the City  
2 of Concord borders in the next year.

3  
4 Discussion ensued regarding Exeter's Solar Project on their capped landfill and Unital's Solar Project in Kingston.

#### 6 **4. C-PACE Presentation – James Key-Wallace Executive Director NH Business Finance Authority**

7  
8 Mr. James Key-Wallace reported in 2010, the legislature adopted a statute titled Commercial Property Assessed Clean  
9 Energy or resiliency (C-PACE) with the purpose of creating new ways for securing private loans for energy  
10 improvement projects. Mr. Key-Wallace reported there was a lot of compromise in the legislation and as a result C-  
11 PACE was difficult to implement in the private market. From 2010 to 2024, there has been no C-PACE activity in New  
12 Hampshire. Mr. Key-Wallace reported at the request of the Business Finance Authority (BFA), Governor's Office,  
13 Lender, Developers, and Legislature he reviewed the C-PACE statute. He revised the language, it passed legislature,  
14 and it became the first bill signed by Governor Ayotte in 2025. Mr. Key-Wallace reported one of the key changes to  
15 the statute was moving the responsibility of running the program from local municipalities to a State Agency. Mr.  
16 Key-Wallace reported the BFA is a quasi-state entity which means the BFA was created by the state but the state does  
17 not give the BFA funding. It is self-funded through private capital. The mission of the BFA is to do economic  
18 development finance all across the state. BFA has approximately 6,000 business and non-profits in their portfolio and  
19 \$13 billion in financed projects over the past 12 months. Mr. Key-Wallace reported when the State has complicated  
20 finance initiatives, BFA is the entity the State will assign the task to.

21  
22 Mr. Key-Wallace reported C-PACE is a compelling opportunity for Concord. At its core, C-PACE is a private loan to  
23 privately-owned projects for energy-efficient upgrades, including building insulation, cost-effective renewable  
24 energy, and water conservation measures. C-PACE loans are secured by special assessment on the property which in  
25 many ways is equivalent to a municipal property tax lien. The City/Town/State is not lending the money nor is  
26 responsible for collecting money on the loan. These are private loans and private projects serving both the  
27 profitability of the building but the public good by being more energy efficient. The C-PACE loan stays with the  
28 property and cannot be extinguished by property sale or foreclosure. Developers are not the personal guarantee of  
29 the loan.

30  
31 Mr. Key-Wallace reported C-PACE loans and bank loans are essentially equivalent when determining market interest  
32 rates and C-PACE loans are readily sellable on the secondary capital market like a mortgage would be. He reported C-  
33 PACE loans can't be more than 35% of the appraised value of the building. C-PACE loans can be utilized on  
34 commercial properties, multi-family building with 5 or more apartment units, and non-profits paying property taxes.

35  
36 Mr. Key-Wallace reported C-PACE lenders lend the money, collect the payments, and handle non-payment issues if  
37 they arise. BFA vets lenders and publishes a list of approved C-PACE lenders. BFA also reviews every application for a  
38 C-PACE loan to certify that the project and loan meets all the statutory requirements for the municipality.

39  
40 Mr. Key-Wallace reported the role of the municipality is to opt in by adopting a City Ordinance. Once the municipality  
41 adopts the C-PACE ordinance, BFA will send the completed loan packet to the municipality for them to record the  
42 special assessment tax lien. Once the C-PACE loan has been paid in full, BFA will notify the municipality to release the  
43 lien.

44  
45 Discussion ensued regarding C-PACE points of contact, development of housing, energy efficiency rating standards,  
46 economic development, eligible lenders, and potential projects. Mr. Key-Wallace will provide a copy of the ordinance  
47 template to Ms. Fenstermacher to distribute for review. Committee members discussed next steps and potential  
48 other City committees that would need to review before recommending that City Council adopt the ordinance.

#### 50 **5. COMMUNITY POWER**

##### 51 **Community Power Coalition Policy Update**

52 Mr. Willing distributed and reviewed a Community Power report to the CEEAC dated June 25, 2025. This report is  
53 attached. He reported the Community Power Coalition (CPCNH) Risk Management & Finance committees met and are  
54 recommending rates in the \$0.13 range to the Board for a vote. The current CPCNH rate is \$0.09 range. The Unital rate  
55 is expected to be in the \$0.11 cent range up from the current \$0.08 cent range. Mr. Willing reported the CPCNH rate  
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1 differentials are due to varying factors such as: CPCNH taking a more conservative approach to purchasing, conflict in  
 2 the Middle East, utilities under collecting and under projecting, and CPCNH's new utility territory-specific approach  
 3 to rates for Concord residents in Unitil territory. Mr. Willing reported CPCNH works with Calpine, a load serving  
 4 entity, and they assist with the energy purchases for CPCNH. Calpine has been forgoing payments from the CPCNH to  
 5 allow payments to other entities when CPCNH temporarily lacks the funding. As a result, Calpine insists the CPCNH  
 6 operate more conservatively. Calpine has reviewed the proposed rates and has approved.  
 7 Discussion ensued regarding the financial impact to the average CPCNH customer, informing CPCNH customer about  
 8 the rate change and how to opt out of the program.

9  
 10 Mr. Willing reported the CPCNH needs to rebuild its reserves. The proposed rates include an anticipated contribution  
 11 to Joint Reserves of about \$0.01/kwh. Once the reserve is sufficient this contribution will no longer be a factor.

12  
 13 Mr. Willing reported the utility companies over the years pre-purchased all of their electricity which left them with  
 14 little energy supply pricing risk; however, they paid for that by offloading that risk to consumer by paying more.  
 15 Since the launch of CPCNH, the PUC has reduced the pre-purchasing requirement to 50% for the utilities, and the  
 16 utilities are buying the remaining 50% as they go in the next rate period, which reduces risks and allows for lower  
 17 pricing.

18  
 19 Discussion ensued regarding utility rate setting, and energy purchasing.

20  
 21 Mr. Willing reported CPCNH's new utility territory-specific approach to rate setting based on "Cost of Service" rates,  
 22 which for this period increases the rates for residents in the Unitil territory. CPCNH has collected information on how  
 23 much it costs to supply electricity to each class of its customers. Their information indicates that the cost to serve  
 24 customers in Unitil territory is higher than the cost to serve customers in the Eversource or Liberty or NHEC  
 25 territories. The biggest (but not the only) difference relates to ISO New England "capacity tags." More capacity tags  
 26 seem to be assigned to customers in Unitil territory than to other utility territories, on average. Mr. Willing reported  
 27 he voted against structuring rates based on utility territory preferring one rate for all its customers.

28 Mr. Willing reported CPCNH has a much better understanding of its cost to operate after launching two years ago and  
 29 will be in a better position to set rates that cover its costs going forward.

30 Discussion ensued regarding CPCNH reputation, customer engagement and communication regarding rates.

31 Mr. Willing reported CPCNH is participating in a "Transactive Energy" program that proposes to study energy use in  
 32 about 3 dozen homes in Unitil's Capital Region. The program installs advanced metering and tracking equipment to  
 33 learn more about when and how residential properties use energy with a goal of developing information that will  
 34 later support proposals for time of use rates and similar innovations.

### 35 36 **Community Power "Adder" Work group Update**

37 Mr. Willing reported Community Power Adder group will continue to meet and discuss ideas.

## 38 39 **6. POLICY AND PROJECT UPDATES**

### 40 41 **UNH Sustainability Fellow Sustainability Fellow Program Update - Kayla Maggio**

42 Ms. Kayla Maggio introduced herself and discussed her educational background. She has met with Chair Werner and  
 43 Ms. Fenstermacher weekly. She is currently working on processing data to calculate the greenhouse gas emissions  
 44 inventory of the City of Concord, fleet electrification and reduce energy usage and ways to be more renewable. Ms.  
 45 Maggio has been working out of Clean Energy NH and is preparing to present this information by the end of summer.  
 46 Discussion ensued regarding the data breakdown, and future projecting.

## 47 48 **7. New Business/Announcements**

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 50 Mr. Kolling reported Eversource has partnered with Enphase Solar Energy Systems on a residential battery project  
 51 that will allow Eversource to pull power from residential solar generators during peak use to ease the burden on the  
 52 power plant. For net-metering customers, Eversource will give an Eversource customer up to \$3,000 to install an  
 53 Enphase battery wall in your home and a separate system to draw power back when needed. Ms. Fenstermacher  
 54 reported there are approximately 40 homes in the City that are Eversource customers but this would be something to  
 55 watch to see if other utility companies adopt this type of program.

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1 **8. Other Business**

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Councilor Brown reported she has the composter prize from Earth Day. The winner is unable to take possession due to living situation. Ms. King reported a secondary option for the composter prize is the social media post with the designated hash tag from the Earth Day Challenge. Chair Werner requested Ms. King review the social media posts from that day and select a winner.

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Ms. King reported the Energy Expo on October 18 will have a table and she is seeking a topic to present and a volunteer. She requested the committee discuss topics at the next meeting.

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A motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Brown and duly seconded by Mr. Desbiens. The motion passed unanimously.

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**9. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.

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Respectfully Submitted,

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Beth Fenstermacher, PLA, LEED AP

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Director of Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives

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## Community Power Report to CEEAC (June 25, 2025)

- On Monday, the CPCNH Risk Management and Finance Committees recommended rates to the CPCNH Board for the August 1, 2025-January 31, 2026 (Fall 2025) rate period. The Committees are recommending different residential electric supply rates for CPCNH member communities in different utility territories. The recommended **CPCNH Granite Basic** rate for residents in Unitil territory is **13.691 cent/kwh**. The recommended **CPCNH Granite Basic** rate for residents in Eversource territory is **13.425 cent/kwh**. There are some small moving cost pieces so the final rates that the Board approves likely will be slightly different from these numbers, but not much. The Board will meet on June 26 (tomorrow) to decide on rates.
- The **Unitil** rate for the Fall 2025 rate period, already approved by the PUC, is **11.777 cents/kwh**. The proposed **Eversource** rate for the Fall 2025 period, which is expected to be approved by the PUC, is **11.196 cents/kwh**. So the CPCNH rates will be roughly 2 to 2.5 cents higher than the rates of the utilities serving Concord in the rate period. FYI, the Liberty Utilities rate for the Fall 2025 period is 14.811 cents/kwh, about 3 cents higher than Unitil or Eversource and over a cent higher than CPCNH.
- All of the Fall 2025 rates – CPCNH’s and the utilities’ – are significantly higher than their Spring 2025 rates.
- There are a few reasons for the rates and the rate differentials:
  - Natural gas prices (therefore natural gas-fired electricity generation prices) are high for the upcoming rate period. Note that turmoil in the Middle East and impacts on oil prices indirectly affect natural gas prices.
  - CPCNH is taking a more conservative approach to purchasing power, purchasing more of its anticipated power needs in advance (especially for the cold winter months) to lock in prices and minimize risks. With the depletion of CPCNH’s reserves it can’t afford to take risks. It is also budgeting for cost adders that it had not fully anticipated before.
  - The utilities under-collected their costs for the Spring 2025 rate period. We think that Unitil and Eversource might not have fully accounted for these under-collections in their Fall 2025 rates. In the Spring 2025 rate period, Unitil and Eversource had 70% of their power supply locked in while Liberty was 50% locked in. Consequently, Liberty was more exposed to the market and experienced more under-collections. Unitil added 0.5 cents to its Fall 2025 rate for its Spring 2025 under-collections. Liberty added 2.4 cents to its rate. That is why Liberty’s Fall 2025 rate is higher than Unitil and Eversource. Any remaining under-collections will be collected in the Spring 2026 rate period.
  - The utilities are probably under-projecting their power supply costs again for the Fall 2025 rate period. All three utilities are only locking in 50% of their costs for the Fall 2025 rate period up front. Whether they are under-projecting and by how much will depend on the difference between projected and actual costs in the Fall 2025 rate period. Any under-collections for the Fall 2025 rate period will not show up in their rates until future rate periods.
  - CPCNH's new utility territory-specific approach to rates increases the rates for our residents in Unitil territory. These are “Cost of Service” rates. CPCNH has collected information on how much it costs to supply electricity to each class of its

customers. Their information indicates that the cost to serve customers in Unitil territory is higher than the cost to serve customers in the Eversource or Liberty or NHEC territories. The biggest (but not the only) difference relates to ISO New England “capacity tags.” More capacity tags seem to be assigned to customers in Unitil territory than to other utility territories, on average. I will try to collect more detailed information on the capacity cost and other costs.

- As a member of the CPCNH Risk Management Committee, I voted against structuring these rates on utility territory-based “Cost of Service,” preferring that CPCNH continue to use one rate for all of its customers in the next rate period. I didn’t think I had enough information to support the switch and that even if in the long term it made sense to use Cost of Service this particular proposal was introduced too late in the process for people to digest and understand it. But I was outvoted. That said, if CPCNH follows my preference the CPCNH-wide rate would be about 13.445 cents/kwh, still well above the utility rates. Despite the committee votes, there still might be some appetite at the Board meeting to stick with a CPCNH-wide rate. We’ll see.
- The rates include anticipated contributions to Joint Reserves of about 1 cent/kwh. These rates set CPCNH on the path of rebuilding its joint reserves over the next 2-3 years so that CPCNH will be in a better financial position which will lower its operating costs and give it more operating options.
- After two years of operations and a lot of work in the last few months, CPCNH now has a much better understanding of its costs than it did before, so will be in a better position to set rates that cover its costs going forward.
- Separately, Unitil’s distribution rate will go up 11.9% effective July 1, 2025. In May, Unitil filed a petition with the PUC seeking temporary and permanent increases in distribution rates. The PUC granted the temporary rate increase by order issued June 23. The PUC will consider the permanent rate increase proposal on a longer timeframe.
- On the innovation front, CPCNH is participating in a “Transactive Energy” program that proposes to study energy use in about 3 dozen homes in Unitil’s Capital Region, equipment such homes with advanced metering and tracking equipment to learn more about when and how they use energy with a goal of developing information that will later support proposals for time of use rates and similar innovations. I expect we will be looking for candidate homes including Concord residents to participate in this study.
- The CEEAC Community Power Adder working group will meet again July 8.