



CITY OF CONCORD
New Hampshire's Main Street™
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(603) 225-8570

CONCORD ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CEEAC)

MEETING MINUTES

July 23, 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, Gerald Eaton, Jeffrey Evans (left at 7:33 pm), Thomas Kolling, Councilor Jeffrey Foote, Nick Babladelis

Absent Members:

Joe Kwasnik, Miriah King, Allen Desbiens

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. The Committee made introductions.

2. Adoption of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Willing and duly seconded by Mr. Kolling to adopt the minutes of June 25, 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. 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.

Mr. Eaton inquired if any of the basic assumptions from Kearsarge's have been adjusted due to the change of policy in the Federal Government and if they were relying upon certain tax credits. Ms. Fenstermacher reported Kearsarge was eligible to receive the tax credits because they submitted the majority of their permit requests and purchased their materials. Chair Werner reported Kearsarge and Lodestar are receiving tax credits because they were vested prior to policy change.

1 **West Portsmouth Street Solar Project (Lodestar)**
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3 Chair Werner reported Lodestar is moving forward with the construction phases this summer and they expect to
4 have their construction completed by the end of the year. Lodestar is a 5-megawatt project located off W. Portsmouth
5 Street by the Merrimack River. He reported the Lodestar project has three off takers for their group net-metering
6 agreement: State of NH, McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, and Exeter School District.
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8 A brief discussion ensued about visiting these solar sites while under construction, liability of site visits, and potential
9 of involving the local school on these visits.
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11 **4. C-PACE Update**
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13 **Model Ordinance and Background Material**
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15 Chair Werner reported he spoke with Mr. James Key-Wallace and Mr. Key-Wallace indicated the CPACE model
16 ordinance and background material would be available for review. Chair Werner reported he had not received the
17 material nor did Ms. Fenstermacher and he will reach back out to Mr. Key-Wallace. Chair Werner reported after
18 reviewing the documentation and if it is the consensus of the committee, this matter may be referred to FPAC for
19 review and recommendation to City Council.
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21 **5. COMMUNITY POWER**
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23 **Community Power Coalition Policy Update**
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25 Mr. Willing distributed and reviewed a Community Power report to the CEEAC dated July 23, 2025. This report is
26 attached. He reported there has been slight changes to the previously proposed rates. Community Power Coalition
27 (CPCNH) board approved the updated proposed rates as listed in the attached report. Mr. Willing reported CPCNH is
28 now structuring its rates on a "Cost of Service" basis, broken down by utility territory. Unfortunately, the cost to
29 serve customers in Unitil territory right now is higher than the cost to serve customers in the Eversource or Liberty
30 or NHEC territories. The primary reason is that capacity costs are higher in Unitil territory at present. He is
31 researching why these costs are higher and whether anything can be done about it.

32 Mr. Willing reported CPCNH is estimating their cost in advance more conservatively. Additionally, he reported
33 CPCNH's rates include anticipated contributions to Joint Reserves of 1.15 cents/kwh. These rates set CPCNH on the
34 path to rebuild its joint reserves to reach its 60-day target in 3 years. As joint reserves grow again, CPCNH will be
35 able to lower its operating costs and have more operating flexibility. Mr. Kolling inquired how much of the reserve
36 did CPCNH deplete. Mr. Willing reported nearly all of the fund. A brief discussion ensued about CPCNH costs, past
37 rates, and utility purchasing.

38 Mr. Willing reported CPCNH moved towards a new way of ratemaking whereas they set the rates in different utility
39 territories by cost of service. This resulted in CPCNH's customers in Unitil's territory (majority of Concord) having
40 higher rates than the rest of CPCNH customers. This is due to Unitil high capacity costs and he is unsure why Concord
41 is higher. Mr. Willing reported Unitil's distribution rate went up 11.9% effective July 1, 2025. This affects all Unitil
42 distribution customers, including those receiving energy supply from Concord Community Power (or competitive
43 electric supply) and those receiving energy supply from Unitil.

44 A brief discussion ensued regarding utility rate setting, and energy purchasing.

45 Mr. Evans inquired how many communities are waiting to join CPCNH once rates go below the utilities. Mr. Willing
46 reported approximately 8-10 communities. Ms. Fenstermacher reported Manchester is moving towards joining
47 CPCNH.

48 A brief discussion ensued about customer feedback, outreach, and tracking opt-outs since rate changes.

49 Mr. Willing reported CPCNH is currently sponsoring a "Transactive Energy" project centered in Concord and
50 surrounding communities. First, they will host focus groups comprised of 30-35 Concord residents to discuss
51 Transactive Energy on August 5 and 6. The second phases of the project is a "living lab" to study energy use in about
52 3 dozen homes in Concord and surrounding towns in Unitil's Capital Region, equipping such homes with advanced
53 metering and tracking equipment to learn more about when and how they use energy with a goal of developing
54 information that will later support proposals for time of use rates and similar innovations. They have already
55 recruited the focus group participants and soon will recruit the "living lab" participants, though many of these might
56 come from the focus groups. Mr. Willing inquired with CPCNH if there is opportunity to be considered for the "living

1 Lab” portion of the project and there is still space. Chair Werner inquired if the focus groups would be available for
 2 observation. Mr. Willing reported he assumed they are available. CPCNH will share in the data from the project and
 3 use it to influence policy in New Hampshire. Mr. Willing provided an email address to members of the committee
 4 interested in the “living Lab” portion of the project.

5 Mr. Willing reported CPCNH is partnering with one solar project, Poverty Plains, in Warner. It is being developed as a
 6 5 MW group net metering project serving 10 or so municipalities with meters in Eversource territory. It is expected
 7 to come on-line in late summer 2026. CPCNH has a contract with the project developer, Encore Renewable Energy,
 8 under which it found group net metering subscribers for the project and will receive the project’s REC’s. Mr. Willing
 9 reported in the fall, CPCNH is currently considering whether to issue an RFP for more renewable energy projects
 10 under its Annual Solicitation Program to Increase Renewable Energy (ASPIRE).

11 A brief discussion ensued about tax credits, and deadlines.

12 13 **Community Power “Adder” Work group Update**

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15 Mr. Willing reported Community Power Adder group will continue to meet and discuss ideas. Mr. Babladelis
 16 reported much of the conversation is centered around the highest and best use of an adder. He further reported it
 17 was the goal to have an adder put together for the committee to review and comment, and to have the adder ready
 18 for when the timing is right. Mr. Babladelis suggested the adder may be the best way to raise funds for projects to
 19 achieve the City’s renewable energy goals. Mr. Willing reported Mr. Kwasnik has requested to revisit the energy goal
 20 conversation and had some ideas of changes he would like to make.

21 A brief discussion ensued about potential projects the adder funds could be used to support.

22 23 **6. POLICY AND PROJECT UPDATES**

24 25 **UNH Sustainability Fellow Sustainability Fellow Program Update – Kayla Maggio**

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27 Ms. Maggio reported she completed the municipal government inventory numbers and sent the data to ICLEI to do a
 28 quality check. Ms. Maggio reported last year, 8,305 metric tons of greenhouse gas was emitted from the municipal
 29 government operations. Ms. Maggio reported some concerns that she has with discrepancies with the data from
 30 previous inventories. The first inventory was completed in 2020 for 2019 data and the second was in 2022. The
 31 fellow in 2022 corrected the previous 2019 inventory. The first 2019 inventory had the government emissions at an
 32 overinflated 12,000 metric tons. The second 2019 corrected inventory had it at 7,500 metric tons. The issue is there
 33 can’t be a direct comparison on the data because the 2nd corrected inventory did not include water and wastewater
 34 facilities, which are the biggest emitters. Ms. Maggio is confident the current report is closer to reality. The second
 35 issue is the 2019 employee commute survey did not inquire about what type of vehicle they drove. That information
 36 is a large factor when determining emission factors to apply. Ms. Maggio reported difficulty in obtaining identifiable
 37 building data from Unutil. Unutil has the data for the city government 20 times higher than reality. The system Unutil
 38 currently has is not built for providing data needed for greenhouse gas calculations. Ms. Maggio further reported an
 39 additional concern is midway last year the solid waste for commercial is no longer being tracked. The City put an end
 40 to the “flow ordinance”, so after June 2024, there is no data for where commercial waste went. Ms. Maggio used
 41 proxy data from 2023 to calculate the end of 2024 or used averages from the first 6 months of 2024. She is unable to
 42 obtain farming and livestock data and is working on school district data.

43 A brief discussion ensued around tracking solid waste, privacy of commercial solid waste, tracking energy separate
 44 from environment, and presentation to City Council.

45 46 **7. New Business/Announcements**

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48 Ms. Fenstermacher reported the New Hampshire Energy Expo on October 18 now has an event on the City’s
 49 Facebook page and also, they have a website address of nhenergyexpo.org. Ms. Fenstermacher invited the committee
 50 members to share this information.

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52 Ms. Fenstermacher reported the UU Church of Concord is sponsoring the window dressers organization October 23
 53 thru 29. Window Dressers is a program that provides energy efficient window inserts at discounted rates and the
 54 insert help lower heating cost and reduce carbon dioxide pollution. They are seeking volunteers to assist with a
 55 variety of tasks.

1 **8. Other Business**

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Councilor Foote requested the committee consider an education program for elementary school age children that addresses recycling, compost, and other aspects of sustainability. Mr. Babladelis reported there are great non-profits that are already in the community that work to educate school age children and it may be more beneficial to connect those organization with the schools. Chair Werner supported the idea to facilitate an organization that has the expertise to go in and educate students and is open to discussing this further.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Willing and duly seconded by Chair Werner. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie McKim, Administrative Coordinator

Community Power Report to CEEAC (July 23, 2025)

Here are the final utility and CPCNH electricity supply rates for the Fall 2025 (8/1/25-1/31/26) rate period:

	Utility Rates (cents/kwh)	CPCNH Rates (cents/kwh)
Eversource territory	11.196	13.419
Unitil territory	11.777	13.729
Liberty territory	12.420	13.332
NHEC territory	11.464	13.238

All providers' supply rates will be higher in the Fall 2025 rate period than in the Spring 2025 rate period. CPCNH's rates remain higher than the utilities' rates for the second straight rate period, after four periods of being lower than the utilities' rates.

CPCNH is now structuring its rates on a "Cost of Service" basis, broken down by utility territory. Unfortunately, the cost to serve customers in Unitil territory right now is higher than the cost to serve customers in the Eversource or Liberty or NHEC territories. The primary reason is that capacity costs are higher in Unitil territory at present. I am trying to find out why these costs are higher and whether anything can be done about it.

Further perspective on rates:

- Rates are generally higher because natural gas prices (therefore natural gas-fired electricity generation prices) are higher for the upcoming rate period.
- CPCNH is purchasing power more conservatively (hedging more) than it was and projecting its costs more carefully than it was. It is a necessarily careful approach.
- CPCNH's rates include anticipated contributions to Joint Reserves of 1.15 cents/kwh. These rates set CPCNH on the path to rebuild its joint reserves to reach its 60-day target in 3 years. As joint reserves grow again, CPCNH will be able to lower its operating costs and have more operating flexibility.
- For the Fall 2025 rate period, the utilities purchased 50% of their projected power needs in advance and are purchasing the rest from ISO New England markets as they go. For rate purposes, they estimate the cost of their future market purchases. Estimating 50% of their supply costs means the scope of potential under-collections (or over-collections) is high. They will apply the difference in future rate periods.
- The utilities under-collected their costs for the Spring 2025 rate period. Some but perhaps not all of those under-collections were accounted for in their Fall 2025 rates.
- The utilities might be under-projecting their power supply costs again for the Fall 2025 rate period, though we don't know for sure.

Separately, Unitil's distribution rate went up 11.9% effective July 1, 2025. This affects all Unitil distribution customers, including those receiving energy supply from Concord Community Power (or competitive electric supply) and those receiving energy supply from Unitil. Unitil had requested temporary and permanent increases in distribution rates. Last month, the PUC approved the temporary rate increase. The permanent increase is still under consideration.

As discussed last month, CPCNH is currently sponsoring a “Transactive Energy” project centered in Concord and surrounding communities. There are two phases to the project. First, they will host focus groups comprised of 30-35 Concord residents to discuss Transactive Energy on August 5 and 6. Second, they will set up a “living lab” to study energy use in about 3 dozen homes in Concord and surrounding towns in Unitil’s Capital Region, equipping 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. They have already recruited the focus group participants and soon will recruit the “living lab” participants, though many of these might come from the focus groups. If you want to be part of the living lab, let me know.

CPCNH is partnering with one solar project, Poverty Plains, in Warner. It is being developed as a 5 MW group net metering project serving 10 or so municipalities with meters in Eversource territory (the project is in Eversource territory). It is expected to come on-line in late summer 2026. CPCNH has a contract for differences with the project developer, Encore Renewable Energy, under which it found group net metering subscribers for the project and will receive the project’s RECs.

CPCNH is currently considering whether to issue an RFP for more renewable energy projects this fall under its Annual Solicitation Program to Increase Renewable Energy (ASPIRE). Any solar projects that respond could be structured similarly to Poverty Plains. CPCNH previewed ASPIRE to the public last fall, but CPCNH’s final approval and implementation was delayed due to its issues last winter.