

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**AD HOC COMMUNITY POWER COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Friday, February 12, 2021**

**8:00 AM**

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Peter Hansel, Chair  
Councilor Mike Giacomo  
Dr. Ann Shedd  
Paul Roth  
Dan Belluscio

**Staff Present:**

Rhett Lamb, Community Development  
Director  
Mari Brunner, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Dr. Ann Shedd read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency.

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

Dr. Ann Shedd called the meeting to order at 8:06 AM. Roll call was taken.

Paul Roth motioned to make Dr. Ann Shedd pro-tem Chair. Dan Belluscio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mari Brunner realized the approval of minutes was not listed in the agenda and stated she will add them to the agenda to be approved at the next meeting.

**2) Discussion: Draft Community Power Plan**

Mari Brunner stated that during the previous committee meeting, Daria Mark and Patrick Roche from Good Energy gave a presentation on the Community Power Plan and survey results. This meeting they wanted to see if anyone had any questions since the committee had some time to review the plan.

Patrick Roche from Good Energy first addressed a question from the previous meeting regarding what kind of opt-up program participation it would take to get the overall program to 100% renewable energy. He stated they would need almost everyone to opt up to the 100% product to get there, which demonstrates that opt-ups are likely not the way to get the whole program to 100% renewable energy. Instead, they will have to increase the renewable energy in the default option over time. However; he wanted to

show how impactful having opt-up campaigns can be to the total percentage of program renewables.

Patrick Roche showed a graph with percentage of participants who are opting up for more renewables on the horizontal axis, demonstrating the impact on total program renewables of the y-axis. Background details of the graph: They assumed that 2% of people would opt down to the basic product and that the ratio of people who choose the opt-ups would be at a 2 to 1 ratio, meaning more people opting-up to the 100% product than the 50%. They also assumed the default product had 5% extra renewable energy. The Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in 2021 is shown at 21.6%.

Patrick Roche explained that if the program launched and no one opted-up, they'd add about 5% additional renewable energy, because that's what the default product is adding. If 5% of participants opted-up that would put them at a little over 30% total renewable energy for the entire program, 10% of participants opting up would put them at 35% renewable energy, and so on. In summary, 5% participation in opt-ups adds 5% to the total program renewables, thus doubling the extra renewable energy they are getting in the program. This demonstrates how opt-ups are impactful. Patrick Roche clarified that this wouldn't be a way to get to 100% renewable energy, but it's important in increasing overall percentage of renewable energy for the program.

Patrick Roche mentioned again that they could also increase the default, but keeping that product competitive will maximize people who stay in the program, so that's not something they'd do right out of the gate.

Councilor Mike Giacomo asked if there is a way to help supplement others who have opted for the basic service or who can't afford to upgrade. He wondered if that would be legal and something that's possible with their program to be able to get to 100% renewable energy as a city. Patrick Roche stated the plan as currently written would allow participants, for both opt-up products, to have the amount of extra renewable energy purchased go up to 100% of their usage, on top of the RPS. However, they would still need to get 60-75% of participants into the 100% group to reach that 100% total renewable energy mark, and typically they've seen rates of around 5% opting up. Mike Giacomo stated the city has a tough goal with this program. He suggested they include in program promotion the percentage of residents needed to opt-up, the extra amount they'd need to pay, in order to reach the goal of 100% program renewables.

Peter Hansel joined at 8:20am.

Chair Hansel asked why we tie rate to RPS and stated it might make more sense for people to talk about the program without having to bring up the RPS, and instead just use a flat number. Patrick Roche stated that the reason for discussing the program in relation to the RPS is because the RPS can change. For example, if the legislature slashes the RPS that would mean this program would have to increase the amount of renewables in the default rate to make up the difference, which would decrease cost competitiveness, and that's why they refer to the RPS – to ensure the default rate will be cost-competitive.

However, he stated it's a good point for marketing and educating outreach to focus on total renewable energy instead of RPS plus additional. Chair Hansel asked if the RPS is slashed, will the amount of renewables stay the same. Patrick Roche stated the amount of renewables on the grid will stay the same, but the cost connects with the RPS because of the following: When you're buying power supply there's a purchase of the power and also the renewable energy credits. If you want to claim the use of an hour of renewable electricity you need to have a renewable energy certificate saying you own that hour of renewable energy production. If the RPS goes down, default service would have to purchase fewer renewable energy credits, which would mean they would have less cost. For the RPS, and any additional renewable energy they are going to include, they need to make sure they also purchase renewable energy credits to match up for the quantity.

Paul Roth asked if that information is based on the assumption that dirty energy is cheaper than renewable energy. Patrick Roche answered that you need to hold the renewable energy certificate if you want to claim the renewable electrons, but for dirty energy you don't have to hold a certificate.

Dr. Ann Shedd asked, in terms of process for the plan, the energy supply agreements are one, two, or three year contracts and she wondered if it would be advisable to go with shorter term contracts. This way the City can determine if they are meeting interim targets and then with each new contract they can have a higher expectation of renewable goals. Patrick Roche answered yes, they'd like to move closer to the 100% goal with each contract and they will be asking for a range of different time periods when the bids come in. Dr. Ann Shedd then asked if they have an approximate delta in cost of the 50% or 100% renewable offerings above either the utility default or program default pricing. Patrick Roche stated often they are looking at around a three, maybe four, cent increase to get to 100%. Dr. Ann Shedd stated that it would be helpful to frame that information to the public at some point. Patrick Roche agreed and stated it would be good to put it in terms of average household use and understanding cost. Mari Brunner added that in Greenfield, MA they have a calculator on their website where residents can enter in their electricity use data and see how much they'd pay, and then compare that to the default rate. She spoke with Daria Mark who stated they could do something similar on their website. Patrick Roche stated he thinks Greenfield even added in a greenhouse gas emissions calculator, which they could also look at adding on their website to demonstrate impact beyond dollars.

Paul Roth stated it's important to remember they are talking about a subset of all the other electricity being used in the community, so it would be good to keep this in mind, that 100% within the Community Power Program is part way to their goal.

Chair Hansel asked if they've done a "what if" analysis if some of the legislation goes through relating to Community Power Programs. Dan Belluscio agreed that would be a good thing to do. Patrick Roche answered that the plan is to stop that bill entirely but they have identified "showstoppers" or aspects of the bill that would most negatively impact the program, and they did join a call with Eversource to voice concerns but haven't yet seen amendments on those.

Bob Hayden commented that having interim goals, as far as purchasing features early on, is extremely important to generate revenue or greenness into the program. He mentioned that one of their extended teammates, Bob King, pledged one of his hydro-facility's monetary benefits to the Community Power Program, so they've been working on that. Bob Hayden reiterated that having clear definitions going forward, as to what the benchmarks are in time, is critical and also a great thing to publicize. He assured them that Good Energy is already working on the things that will become the next steps with launch of the plan, both long and short term.

Bob Hayden urged everyone to vote against HB213 and stated everyone is welcome to call him if they need help with that. He explained that HB213 is the reduction of the RPS from the 20% range down to about 9%, by eliminating biomass. It also significantly reduces solar. This would cut the RPS in more than half and is one of the building blocks for this plan, and renewable objectives across the state. Chair Hansel reminded everyone to register their opposition for the hearing at 2:00 PM that day. Rhett Lamb added that the City of Keene's opposition had been expressed regarding HB213.

Dan Belluscio asked how price competitive they are against those on the outside of the program. Bob Hayden stated he works in the NH marketplace on energy every day with a variety of customers on third party supply in Keene. He noted that a large customer might use 30 or 40 million kilowatt hours, which might be a couple of companies in town. Medium sized businesses use one to five million kilowatt hours. Both often get very good rates; however, they believe participation in Community Power Program will create a bid that will be based on 70 or 80 million kilowatt hours (per year) for the residents only. So it's likely that the initial price will be extremely competitive compared to what some of the businesses are now enjoying with third party services, in a declining market. They will need to be sure to reach out to folks who are being served as well as those who are not being served.

### **3) Keene Community Power Website ([www.KeeneCommunityPower.com](http://www.KeeneCommunityPower.com))**

Daria Mark from Good Energy reviewed the new website launch. She stated their goal is for the website to be a resource for all information about the Keene Community Power program, so the website will be growing and changing at different stages of the plan, and they welcome and encourage ongoing feedback. Dan Belluscio asked if they'd be tracking the progress on total energy usage for the community to be able to track against city goals. Daria Mark stated they will add an impact page once the program has launched and they have that information to be able to show how they are doing compared to basic service. This will also include the percentage of participants in each program category. Rhett Lamb added that the entity that has all that information is the default utility and they don't necessarily share that information readily, but they are trying to work with them.

Paul Roth asked if Eversource had given any numbers about what they currently supply as far as volume of power. Rhett Lamb and Mari Brunner stated they have spreadsheets for 2019, but they are very high level, there's not much information on how much energy

is being used and when, and Eversource's categories for electricity customers don't match with how the average person would think about uses such as residential, commercial, and manufacturing or industrial. They do have interconnected solar data for 2020.

Yves Gakunde from the community asked what the difference is between the website for the Sustainable Energy plan and this Community Power website. Mari Brunner responded that the Keene energy plan is a project website and there is a page about Community Power on there but it is not meant to be a program page. The Community Power website will be a program website which will be managed by consultants and be more sophisticated. The Keene website is a low cost website managed by staff. The Community Power page on the Energy Plan site will direct people to the Community Power website.

**4) HB 315, "Relative to the aggregation of electric customers"**  
**a) Public Hearing: Friday, February 12, 2021 at 3:00 PM**

Bob Hayden stated it's very important to participate in the hearing process and anything they can do to encourage others to register against HB315 would be great. It might be appropriate to watch proceedings as well. Dr. Ann Shedd agreed that it's very important to register opposition and wanted everyone to recognize the community impact that the bill could have. Rhett Lamb commented that HB315 includes an element of state oversight and approval of locally drafted community power plans, which defies the principal of the original legislation that allows for communities to draft their own plans. He added that there is no other statute where a municipal plan requires review and approval from a state agency, so this really takes away local control.

Chair Hansel stated they've had good coverage in the Keene Sentinel on this issue so hopefully the public will see it and participate. Councilor Giacomo stated while everyone was talking he was able to get in and register against both bills and it took about a minute, so very easy to do. Chair Hansel asked about possible amendments to the bill. Bob Hayden stated the amendment should be made available soon but they may not know what the amendments are until the meeting occurs. Rhett Lamb responded that this should be mentioned to the committee because they didn't have a chance to look over the amendments in advance. Bob Hayden agreed and Chair Hansel stated he would raise that comment if needed.

**5) New Business**

Chair Hansel stated the Community Power Plan is now available to the committee and the public. Mari Brunner stated there will be public hearings on Tuesday, March 30th at noon and 6:30pm. The committee can bring up any comments or concerns about the plan at the next meeting on Friday, March 5, or send comments or questions directly to Mari Brunner, Rhett Lamb, or the consultants. Comments and questions can also be submitted via the Community Power website.

- 6) **Upcoming Meetings:**
  - a) **Friday, March 5, 2021 at 8:00 AM (regular meeting)**
  - b) **Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at 12:00 PM and 6:30 PM (public hearings)**
- 7) **Adjourn**

Chair Hansel adjourned the meeting at 9:12 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Mari Brunner, Planner

Additional edits by,  
Katie Kibler, Clerk's Office