



## ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE (ECC)

### AGENDA

Wednesday, July 3, 2024

8:00 AM

City Hall,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room

#### Members:

Zach Luse, Chair  
Paul Roth, Vice Chair  
Annu Joshi Bargale  
Diana Duffy  
Gordon Lerversee  
Jude Nuru  
Clair Oursler  
Kenneth Swymer Jr.  
Councilor Bryan Lake

Lisa Maxfield  
Chuck Redfern, Alternate  
Rowland Russell, Alternate  
Michael Winograd, Alternate  
Jake Pipp, Alternate

#### Staff:

Evan Clements, Planner

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes – June 5, 2024
3. ECC Work Group Report Outs
  - a. Community Solar
  - b. Grants, Fundraising, and Partnerships
  - c. Education and Outreach
  - d. Legislative Tracking
  - e. Food Security
4. New Business
5. Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 7, 2024, 8:00 am
6. Adjourn

Link to ECC Google Drive Folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1O1WIR0fADTNijRt13v3DU7k2FwxXDcGs?usp=sharing>

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

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5 ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE  
6 MEETING MINUTES  
7

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

8:00 AM

Council Chambers,  
City Hall

Members Present:

Zach Luse, Chair  
Councilor Bryan Lake  
Diana Duffy  
Clair Oursler  
Kenneth Swymer  
Annu Joshi Bargale  
Gordon Leverage  
Jake Pipp, Alternate  
Charles Redfern, Alternate  
Rowland Russell, Alternate  
Michael Winograd, Alternate

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

Paul Roth, Vice Chair  
Jude Nuru  
Lisa Maxfield

8 **1) Call to Order and Roll Call**  
9

10 Chair Luse called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM. Upon completing the roll call, he invited all  
11 four alternate members to participate as voting members.  
12

13 **2) Approval of Minutes**  
14

15 Chair Luse welcomed any comments or discussion on the minutes. With no comments or  
16 discussion, Councilor Bryan Lake moved to approve the minutes of the prior meeting. Dr.  
17 Rowland Russell seconded the motion. Ms. Diana Duffy commented on the quality of the  
18 minutes, stating that it was captured well despite being a discussion-heavy meeting. With  
19 unanimous approval, the minutes from May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, were adopted.  
20

21 **3) Introduction for New Members**  
22

23 Chair Luse welcomed a new member, Dr. Gordon Leverage, who was unable to attend last  
24 month's introductions. Each member shared a brief recap of who they are and how long they

25 have been involved with the Energy and Climate Committee (ECC). Guest attendee, Mr. Frank  
26 Richter of Clean Energy NH, introduced himself as having taken over the role previously held  
27 by John Kondos. He shared that he started in the role a few months ago and is working with 32  
28 towns in the region doing everything from grants to policy to technical implementation.  
29 Councilor Ed Haas stated he was also attending as a guest and is on the Bicycle Path and  
30 Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Planning, Licenses, and Development committees.

31  
32 Dr. Leverage shared that he retired as Dean of Social Sciences at Keene State College. Before  
33 that, he did environmental research on organic fuels and metals from fossil fuel use and  
34 development. Former Members, Peter Hansel and Ann Shedd, both active members of the  
35 Monadnock Sustainability Hub were also in attendance and introduced themselves. Catherine  
36 Owen Koning, also of Monadnock Sustainability Hub provided a quick introduction. Ms. Shedd  
37 introduced the new sustainability hub program manager, Jack Lamonte. He shared that he just  
38 started last month and is in the process of outreach and introductions. He welcomed ideas and  
39 suggestions and offered support wherever he could. Subcommittee members, Mike Metell  
40 (legislature) and Carolyn Jones (education and outreach) also introduced themselves.

41

#### 42 **4) Budget Discussion**

##### 43 **A) Clean Energy NH Membership Dues**

44

45 Chair Luse introduced Ms. Mari Brunner for the budget discussion regarding the Clean Energy  
46 NH Membership dues. Ms. Brunner explained that in the past, the ECC has paid for the city's  
47 membership out of the ECC budget. There is an annual budget of \$850. Historically, that was  
48 because they paid \$600 to be members of ICLEI and \$250 to be members of Clean Energy NH.  
49 ICLEI has more than doubled its membership costs. They graciously let the ECC maintain their  
50 membership at the pre-increase cost for several years. ECC decided to drop the membership.

51

52 Clean Energy NH has also increased its membership. There is a \$300 level of membership,  
53 which has benefits like what they had previously (two registrations to the local Energy Solutions  
54 Conference). With the \$500 level membership, it would provide four additional registrations for  
55 a total of six to attend the local Energy Solutions Conference. The decision in front of the  
56 committee is whether to stay at the current level of membership at the increased price of \$300 or  
57 upgrade membership to the \$500 level. Chair Luse shared that he has never been able to attend  
58 and questioned whether those additional tickets would get used. Mr. Redfern, Mr. Pipp, and Mr.  
59 Swymer all said they had used them and would again. Chair Luse stated he would be in support  
60 of paying extra to further the work. There was a lack of clarity as to whether the \$500 level  
61 offered a total of four registrations or a total of six. Mr. Richter offered to get clarification on that  
62 for the committee.

63

64 Ms. Duffy suggested staying at the current level and challenging themselves to utilize the  
65 expertise and offerings by pushing the limits of the membership before increasing. Mr. Pipp  
66 asked if it was known what the registration was. No one provided a price, but Ms. Jones

67 commented that the conference is always well-attended, informative, and generally geared  
68 toward municipal players. She urged people to attend.

69  
70 Councilor Lake urged caution as sending six committee members might be considered a quorum.  
71 He suggested staying at the current level and seeing how it plays out for the following year.  
72 Ms. Brunner reminded the committee that should they stay at the \$300 level, there is always the  
73 option to use the remaining budget to purchase additional tickets for interested members who  
74 decide they do want to attend.

75  
76 Chair Luse asked for a motion. Mr. Pipp moved to join Clean Energy NH as a municipal member  
77 at the \$300 level and received a second from Councilor Lake. With no opposition and all in  
78 favor, the motion was approved.

79

80 **5) Community Power Update**

81

82 Ms. Brunner explained this agenda item was initially intended to be used to review the  
83 community participation report received from Good Energy. It was included on page ten of the  
84 committee's packet along with the original launch report for comparison. She explained that  
85 participation levels have dropped since the original launch, which she believed to be because  
86 Eversource currently has cheaper rates and because several people left the program after having  
87 installed solar. She added that the State of New Hampshire requires that any energy supplier  
88 provide information to their customers about the energy mix that they provide. Recently, Direct  
89 Energy sent out a letter to everyone on community power. She noted that the letter created quite  
90 a bit of confusion and she warned that committee members may receive questions from  
91 community members. She added that the letter is simply to report on the energy mix for the  
92 Keene Community Power Program. Mr. Peter Hansel said looking at the enrollment, he thought  
93 the numbers were encouraging.

94

95 **6) Discussion about Potential AmeriCorps Volunteer Opportunity**

96

97 Ms. Brunner explained that she had included a link to the report that Mr. Redfern had completed.  
98 It was linked to the agenda and was also e-mailed out. Mr. Redfern completed extensive research  
99 on the AmeriCorps program, current programs in other communities, and how they are using  
100 AmeriCorps volunteers to build up capacity to complete this type of energy and climate work.  
101 With the City Council's approval, the ECC could recommend the city apply for an AmeriCorps  
102 volunteer. It would be a full-time, year-long appointment. Chair Luse added that this volunteer  
103 could be used to implement and complete many of the things the committee has been trying to do  
104 but did not have the capacity or volunteers to be able to.

105

106 Mr. Winograd asked who would administer or manage this person and what the objectives of the  
107 position were. Mr. Redfern explained that the report outlined suggestions for a reporting  
108 structure and included potential job descriptions, gathered from an already-established, working  
109 program. Ms. Brunner shared that Community Development and the City Manager's office were

110 two potential reporting structure options available for this position. She said there are also a  
111 couple of deputy city managers that this person could potentially report to. Chair Luse pointed  
112 out that there is still research and conversations that would need to happen before this could be  
113 taken to the City Council. The conversation currently in front of the committee is whether this is  
114 something they want to move forward with.

115  
116 Mr. Winograd spoke up and wondered whether working with the county had been investigated  
117 since they have grant writers. Chair Luse responded that this position would be more for finding  
118 and monitoring grants. The county does more of the “back office” work of the grant with  
119 applying, tracking, sponsoring, and administering the grants. Mr. Pipp asked when the  
120 application was due and when the position would start. Mr. Redfern responded that there is a  
121 cycle every year and all that information is included in the packet. Chair Luse shared that he  
122 found that the application was due October 13<sup>th</sup> and the service term was January to October.  
123 Ms. Brunner clarified Mr. Luse’s comment stating that the application in the packet that Mr.  
124 Redfern sent out was specific to Portland and their program is structured differently. A direct  
125 reach-out to AmeriCorps would likely be necessary to get more information on how the average  
126 timeline works.

127  
128 Mr. Winograd suggested the committee wait to decide until the stakeholders are identified and  
129 brought into the conversation. Discussion around whether to move forward ensued. There was a  
130 miscommunication on whether that included applying. Mr. Luse clarified that the decision at  
131 hand was whether to move forward with more in-depth research on and for the application  
132 process. Chair Luse stated he believed the next steps would be to research the timeframe,  
133 deadlines, and associated costs. Ms. Duffy offered to research deadlines, costs (host fee and  
134 expenses), and timeframe from AmeriCorps. Chair Luse said if the timing is right, then they  
135 could start having those conversations and prepping to present and recommend to the City  
136 Council.

137  
138 With no further discussion, Chair Luse asked for a motion. Mr. Swymer moved to move forward  
139 with gathering information to submit for the submission of the application of the AmeriCorps  
140 Volunteer Program. Mr. Pipp offered a second. Councilor Lake asked for clarification on the  
141 motion in terms of who is being directed to do the work and what is the intended outcome of the  
142 motion. Ms. Brunner stated the motion may not be necessary at this point, but it is good for  
143 solidifying what the committee wants to do. When it gets to the point of needing city staff, then  
144 that is the point to which it probably needs to go before the City Council. She clarified that she  
145 could provide support, but if it starts taking up more than the normal amount of committee  
146 support, it will need to go through the City Council. Dr. Russell asked Mr. Redfern who else was  
147 in his work group. Mr. Redfern responded that it currently is just him and Mr. Swymer. Ms. Beth  
148 Campbell was on it, but she moved.

149  
150 With all in favor and no opposition, the motion was approved.

151  
152

153 7) **ECC Work Group Report Outs**

154 A) **Community Solar**

155

156 Mr. Hansel shared that they spent most of their discussion on the community solar rebate  
157 concept, which is available to municipalities and the school district. Time was spent discussing  
158 how to get the Keene School district on board and working towards a solar solution. He thinks  
159 they have support at the facilities level at the school. They hope to get some students involved  
160 or students with their teachers to generate some groundswell of support in the school district.  
161 He highlighted information included in the committee’s packet from Eversource regarding  
162 solar installation numbers in Keene during 2023. There was a total of 70 new residential solar  
163 arrays installed in Keene, which doubled from previous years. Five commercial arrays were  
164 installed, which was lower than in previous years. He stressed the need to do more work on the  
165 commercial side. The workgroup is working on promoting coaching for commercial and  
166 industrial sites. Mr. Hansel noted that Chair Luse is helping to create an e-mail blast to go out  
167 through the Chamber of Commerce members advertising the availability of the program.

168

169 Mr. Redfern asked if the report could be distributed to the members of the committee. Mr.  
170 Hansel clarified that the email is intended to inform that coaching is available and provide  
171 instructions on how to apply. He added that they are working with Hannah Grimes to ensure  
172 there is a webpage for those inquiries to land on. Ms. Jones shared that Clean Energy NH has a  
173 staff person, Gabe, who works on Rural Energy for America. Mr. Richter mentioned a new  
174 staff member, Catherine, who does similar work to Gabe and how both would be excellent  
175 resources.

176

177 Mr. Haas asked if it was known what the oldest PV array is in the city. Mr. Hansel responded  
178 that the oldest he knows of and has tracked was 2009. There may be some older ones, but he  
179 believed this installation to be the oldest. Mr. Haas pointed out that a common concern with  
180 installing solar is the lifespan and suggested reaching out to some of the early installers as to  
181 their experience. Mr. Hansel noted that since 2009, the cost of solar installations has come  
182 down significantly and their capacity has gone up providing a better “bang for the buck”.  
183 Mr. Haas and Mr. Hansel agreed that it is an obstacle. It was suggested by Mr. Hansel to start  
184 gathering information on what to do with the solar arrays once they are taken off.

185

186 Ms. Brunner reminded the group that Eversource has provided data on the interconnected solar  
187 installations within the city of Keene. It is generalized data and does not provide contact  
188 information or anything like that, but the Clean Energy Team has done a lot of work reaching  
189 out to those folks with solar arrays and may be able to provide contacts.

190

191 B) **Grants, Fundraising, and Partnerships**

192

193 Mr. Redfern did not have anything to add. Mr. Richter mentioned the New Hampshire  
194 Department of Energy released information on the municipal solar grant program, which is for

195 sixty kilowatts or less for municipally owned systems. He did not know if any schools or  
196 municipal facilities were able to apply but shared that the deadline was August 1<sup>st</sup>.

197

198 **C) Education and Outreach**

199

200 Mr. Luse shared that they are working on some marketing materials. They are creating flyers that  
201 make a clear case for what they are doing and how outsiders can help. The intention is to create  
202 something visually appealing to hand out during events. He recognized Ms. Bargale for the work  
203 she had done gathering information to create a draft.

204

205 **D) Legislative Tracking**

206

207 Councilor Lake shared that the landfill bill, which was to put a pause on new permits for landfills  
208 in New Hampshire until 2031, did not pass. The other bill which required the nuclear energy  
209 committee to send a report out by 2025 did pass.

210

211 Mr. Winograd asked if New Hampshire brings in garbage from everywhere else. Councilor Lake  
212 noted that fifty percent is brought in. Mr. Winograd questioned whether that should be an area  
213 for the committee to voice their opinion. Councilor Lake was aware that concerns had been  
214 voiced at some point throughout the process. He believed it was a little too late for the committee  
215 to do any additional communication as the bill had already been killed for this session. Should it  
216 be brought up in a future session, he thought it would be worth sending a formal communication.

217

218 Mr. Redfern suggested rather than communicating with only the representatives, he urged the  
219 idea of having a public campaign to increase awareness. Mr. Luse said there is a lot that is not  
220 known about the garbage, and it would require significant research and information gathering  
221 before they could make any sort of comment.

222

223 **E) Food Security**

224

225 Dr. Russell shared that their group did not meet this past month, but they have had a lot of  
226 communication. He shared that they did submit the grant to the Regional Food Systems  
227 Partnership Program through the Federal Government. He has not heard anything back yet. They  
228 are looking at a Community Change Grant through the Environmental Protection Agency related  
229 to reducing climate change pollution and the economic impacts of associated projects. Their  
230 group had already been looking at food waste as a potential focus group. He noted that he  
231 learned a new law is slated to become effective February 1, 2025, for entities that generate as  
232 much as one ton of food waste a week. Other states have this ban, and it has fueled commercial  
233 compost facilities. Their focus group would likely focus on the potential for applying for that  
234 funding and what a program like that might look like in this region.

235

236 Chair Luse asked if Southwest Region Planning Commission was applying for these grants. Dr.  
237 Russell explained that they participated in the one they did submit. He explained that they have

238 been doing the research for the grant and then the follow-up will be to take all that research and  
239 start creating a concrete plan for a project.

240 **8) New Business**

241

242 Ms. Shedd shared that they will be meeting with the Airport Director, Mr. Dave Hickling, in a  
243 couple of hours. He has been very interested in and supportive of the concept of having the  
244 energy fair at the airport on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>. They have tried to avoid conflicts with  
245 other events but discovered that it will be the same day as the International Festival and the  
246 Source to Sea clean-up. It is a busy week. The event would include a drive electric expo. At the  
247 Earth Festival, they had a good cadre of private electric vehicle owners and the Peterborough  
248 Public Works department also brought their F-150 pickup. There were a couple of other pickups  
249 in addition to passenger cars. They are hoping to have an electric school bus at the upcoming  
250 event to tie into the idea of solar-run schools. She agreed with the previously mentioned  
251 suggestion to solicit some efforts on the part of the school stakeholders to encourage the school  
252 district to take advantage of some of the opportunities. They will also have a vendor exhibition  
253 with some nonprofits as well as vendors.

254

255 Their meeting today with the airport director is to discuss the possibility of using the airport  
256 operations and maintenance hangar, which is adjacent to the terminal as the setting for the  
257 exhibition. Mr. Jude Nuru was hoping to determine the feasibility of doing some tourism  
258 promotion of the installation done at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the proposed  
259 installation at the south end of the runways. She had briefly discussed with Mr. Hickling the rain  
260 date for the following day, but she had since learned that the marathon was the next day, making  
261 that a little less feasible. The airport director did mention that he thought there was a fair chance  
262 they could get the electric aircraft manufacturer in Burlington, VT to participate. She added that  
263 they will be meeting with City Staff next week to go through the city property permit process,  
264 which is now a decision that must be made by the City Clerk's office. She intended to have the  
265 ECC tabling at the event and plans to situate them next to the Swanzey Energy Commission to  
266 allow for more opportunities for informal explorations of synergy. She intends to have more  
267 information and details to report next month.

268

269 Dr. Leversee noted the rise of electric motorcycles and wondered if there were plans to exhibit  
270 any of those. Ms. Shedd responded that they have not been able to find a private owner willing to  
271 bring one. She did check with the Harley Davidson dealer in Troy, but they did not have any  
272 electric bikes in stock. Dr. Russell shared that electric bikes have come up a lot in the BPPAC  
273 meetings to which Ms. Shedd said she would like to have a conversation with the BPPAC  
274 committee about that.

275

276 Ms. Brunner announced that the master plan workshop finished last week and there were a lot of  
277 great discussions. The thinktank workshop was a deep dive into the scenario planning for the  
278 future of Keene and now they need to test what came out of the workshop with the public. They  
279 have a series of visioning sessions coming up for the week of June 17<sup>th</sup>. She did not bring the  
280 flyer with her to the meeting but shared that there were three public sessions planned for Tuesday



281 including a table at the Community Event. This is the first Community Event in several years  
282 and will be happening at the Marlboro Street Municipal Complex.

283  
284 The sessions are scheduled for 11-12 pm at the YMCA, 1-2 pm at the Keene Senior Center, and  
285 the third from 4-7 pm at the Community Night event on Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. There will be  
286 a visioning session from 4-5 pm at Heberton Hall and there is also going to be a presentation to  
287 the City Council on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and then Friday from 2-3 pm at Heberton Hall.  
288 She will send those dates out as they are trying to get as many community members involved as  
289 possible and would appreciate any assistance the committee members could provide in getting  
290 that information out. She thanked Chair Luse for the opportunity to share that information.

291  
292

293 **9) Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 3, 2024, 8:00 am- Date to be Confirmed**

294

295 Chair Luse asked for a show of hands for those planning to be present for the July 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.  
296 With six members intending to be present, they decided to move forward with the meeting  
297 scheduled for July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. Ms. Brunner did say that she would not be available for staff  
298 support but was sure that they could identify someone to be available to run the Teams meeting.

299

300 **10) Adjournment**

301

302 There being no further business, Chair Luse adjourned the meeting at 9:20 AM.

303

304 Respectfully submitted by,  
305 Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

306

307 Reviewed and edited by,  
308 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner