

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

**ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, January 3, 2024**

**8:00 AM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Zach Luse, Chair  
Paul Roth, Vice Chair  
Councilor Raleigh Ormerod  
Councilor Bryan Lake  
Diana Duffy  
Clair Oursler  
Lisa Maxfield  
Michael Winograd, Alternate  
Rowland Russell, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner  
Megan Fortson, Planning Technician

**Members Not Present:**

Jake Pipp  
Jude Nuru  
Kenneth Swymer  
Charles Redfern, Alternate

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

Chair Zach Luse called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM.

**2) Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Councilor Bryan Lake nominated Zach Luse for Chair and Paul Roth for Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Councilor Raliegh Ormerod. With no discussion and all in favor, the motion was approved.

**3) Approval of Minutes- December 6, 2023**

Councilor Bryan Lake moved to approve the minutes of the prior meeting. Mr. Roth seconded the motion and with no opposition, the minutes from December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, were approved.

**4) Presentation and Discussion on City of Keene's participation in the U.S. Department of Energy Clean Energy to Communities: Planning and funding for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Deployment Peer Learning Cohort.**

Ms. Brunner said David Chernak from Empire Clean Cities Coalition will be joining the meeting remotely to talk about this item. As he was not present at the start of the meeting, they proceeded to move on to the Community Power update.

Upon completion of the Community Power update, Ms. Brunner explained that this agenda item is in regards to a free technical assistance program offered by the U.S. Department of Energy that the City of Keene participated in to learn from peer communities about electric vehicle charging. The City of Keene had to apply to participate, and they were one of fifteen communities nationwide that were accepted. The cohort met once per month from July through December and each of those cohort meetings had a specific topic that was covered. The workshops were each 2-2.5 hours long.

Ms. Brunner noted that each community in the cohort was paired with a Clean Cities Coalition. The Granite State Clean Cities Coalition is the coalition for New Hampshire, but they did not have capacity to work with Keene on this. Therefore, they were partnered with the Empire Clean Cities Coalition, which is where Mr. Chernak is from, and they were excellent to work with. They cover New York City and the lower Hudson Valley area, so it was a different experience for them to work with a small rural community.

Between the workshops, City staff (Mari Brunner and Chelsea North) met with the Empire Clean Cities Coalition to work on the deliverables and homework from the previous workshop. She explained the different topics that were covered. In July, they talked about the role of local governments and accelerating EV charging infrastructure deployments, which was an introductory workshop. In the memo, she highlighted the deliverable, where the Clean Cities Coalition used a tool called EVI Pro Lite to forecast the current and projected demand for EV chargers in Keene based on a few different assumptions that she will get to later.

Workshop number two was about funding and financing for EV charging infrastructure. In that session they heard from communities about different ways that they have funded or financed charging infrastructure. The options came down to local, state, utility or federal funding. The City of Keene is planning to go after federal funding to help with this.

Workshop number three was called "Equitable Deployment of EV Charging Infrastructure," which covered topics such as accessibility, how to choose and prioritize charging sites, or incentivize charging to occur. Workshop four was about permitting and zoning for EV charging infrastructure as well as utility engagement. Ms. Brunner noted that the recommendations mentioned in the memo came from this workshop.

Workshop five was about contracting with EV charging providers and setting these structures. Workshop six was a peer showcase with consulting and coaching. Each community presented to the other communities in a small breakout session and helped each other with key questions that they had.

There were three main takeaways that they highlighted in the memo. The first, at least for her, was that the current and projected demand for EV charging is high. There were a few assumptions that went into this model that she wanted to make sure people were aware of. The tool looked at three different scenarios that all had different assumptions about the level of electrification. On the low end, it was assuming at 26.8% electrification by 2030 and on the high end it was estimating 73.1% electrification by 2030. The other main assumption was the level of at home charging in the community. The more at home charging that a community has, the fewer charging stations will need to be installed. There were only two options that could be used. It was either 100% charging at home or 50% charging at home. She is guessing that Keene is somewhere in between, but they assumed 50% and the numbers in the memo reflect that 50%. She welcomed Mr. Chernak to add to this.

Mr. Chernak introduced himself. He lives in the Hudson Valley, but visits New Hampshire frequently and said it was nice to work with the community of Keene as he has visited a few times before. In talking about the projections, he explained that the tool used was called the EVI Pro Lite tool, which was developed by the Department of Energy to help take a model of municipality and put in the various inputs to figure out what level of EV adoption and then subsequent electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) or charging station adoption would be needed to support those. It was developed to help model for larger cities. They used the City of Bangor, Maine as an analog for the city of Keene because it was the smallest city in the New England Northeast Region. They then adjusted to the population of Keene, which is about 40% of what Bangor is (in terms of population size). They then normalized for the number of electric vehicles that were currently in the county, which was data procured from the State of New Hampshire. It did not allow for a high level of granularity in terms of selecting what number of chargers would be used in the home versus in the public. They figured it would be somewhere in the middle. This would account for people who are commuting into Keene using electric vehicles and for people who live in multi-unit dwellings.

Chair Luse recognized Ms. Nora Hanke. She wondered in terms of the projections, how much the non-single-family housing was taken into consideration because the whole group is unable to charge at home. Anyone who is living in a condominium complex, renting or in a retirement community are likely to have limited to no access to charging. Chair Luse said it looked like the private multifamily is factored in here, meaning apartment buildings and such.

Ms. Brunner clarified that is an output, not an input, and that those numbers are estimating how many chargers need to be provided at multifamily properties. She did not believe there was an input for the number of multifamily units, which was a factor in choosing the 50% number for at-home charging versus 100% at home charging. Keene does have multifamily units and there are

a lot of rentals. This is different from communities around Keene, which would probably use 100% charging at home because they have far fewer multifamily units and rentals.

Ms. Brunner said that the last key takeaway was that during the presentation on best practices for permitting and zoning, one of the things they realized is that Keene already had taken many of those steps and have already done many of the best practices that are low-hanging fruit, which was really encouraging. There is, however, a lot more Keene could be doing, which was the purpose of the memo to summarize some of the recommendations.

Ms. Brunner continued, stating that there are seven recommendations. The first is to update the website to better communicate the permitting process, timelines, and documents for installing EV charging. They have permitting checklists for installing EV chargers, but they are outdated. They thought it would be helpful to accompany them with a “how to” guide with a flow chart outlining the different steps to help people through the process. Some people just do not like to call for assistance and for those people, a tool like this might be beneficial.

The second is to adopt an EV Ready code amendment for new buildings and construction. When somebody submits a building permit to construct a new building or do to a new construction such as a large addition or something that required parking, this would be an amendment that would require that the building expansion or parking expansion is something called “EV ready,” meaning that it is capable of installing an EV charging station should someone want to without having to tear up existing infrastructure to add new infrastructure. This is also in the energy plan as a recommendation.

The third is to revise the city code pertaining to parking restrictions and enforcement for publicly accessible EV charging stations operated by the City of Keene. This is specific to parking, operations, and enforcement. Right now, The State of New Hampshire has a law that says that drivers cannot park in a space equipped with a public electric vehicle charging station unless such person is operating a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle or battery-operated electric vehicle. There is nothing in current city code or in the practices for parking enforcement on how to enforce that law. So, the recommendation is to create some sort of process so that people on the ground doing the enforcement know what to do if they find somebody with a non-EV vehicle parking in a spot that is a public electric vehicle charging station.

Chair Luse said he knows the permit fees and zoning issues have come up in the past and asked if there is a timeline for looking into changes for that. Ms. Brunner said that is one of the recommendations and added that would be a policy decision.

Councilor Ormerod had a question specific to occupying the charging station. He asked if one could park there with an electric vehicle, even if they were not charging. He wondered what the intent of that was. Ms. Brunner said that was to be decided but said she would imagine that the station is to be used for those who are actively charging. She asked Mr. Chernak if he had seen other communities allow people to park their EV’s when not charging at a charging station.

Mr. Chernak said that, in general, communities have tried to be proactive about not allowing parking when not charging. He suggested having a conversation with the EV charging station installer to make sure they have the ability to notify the individual charging that their charging is complete and they should move to a regular space to vacate for someone else to charge. Cities have written it right into their code and enforcement, but he has not heard any stories about it needing to be enforced. It is as much an honor system as possible, but it requires getting infrastructure that can do those types of notifications and being proactive with EV drivers. Most EV drivers are used to this and know the song and dance and to be nice to other EV drivers.

Ms. Brunner said they heard from a few other communities that base their permit fees on the cost of the overall project and how this can be a barrier for DC fast chargers, which cost quite a lot of money. Keene also bases permit fees on project cost, and in most situations this is fair. However, in some situations it may not be fair, and in talking with the building inspectors, the Plans Examiner and the Permit Technician, it sounds like when a level two charger comes in and a level three charger comes in, there is not a big difference in terms of the level of review, complexity and number of inspections required for each. If a new transformer needs to be installed or something like that, it would be an extra inspection, but the cost differential (between the permit fee for a level 2 charger versus a DC fast charger) is an order of magnitude right now. She noted that modifying the permit fee structure specifically for EV chargers in order to incentivize them would be a policy decision and would be something for City Council to discuss and consider.

Recommendation number six is to clarify that EV charging stations at private residential properties are designated as private restricted use. Some communities ran into a few situations where someone installed a private EV charger then allowed people to use their charger for a fee, running a commercial operation out of their home where commercial operations are not allowed. This problem does not exist here to her knowledge, but it is something that could be written into the code allowing for a fallback should issues arise down the road.

The last recommendation is to explore offering incentives beyond any minimum requirements that they might adopt. For example, if they do adopt requirements that new construction must be EV ready, can it be paired with some incentives to get the developer or property owner to install the stations or otherwise go above and beyond what the minimum requirements are. As there are no minimum requirements currently, they could just go with incentives and not have any requirements.

Ms. Brunner opened it up for questions.

Chair Luse recognized Nora Hanke, who suggested one incentive could be refunding the permit fee after the charger is installed.

Chair Luse and the committee thanked Ms. Brunner.

5) **Community Power Program Update**

Mr. Luse welcomed Mr. Bob Hayden who would be providing an update on community power. Mr. Hayden shared that the community power program has been in place for a while now and it is doing well. When looking from the start of the plan to now, there has been little movement between the different electricity options within the plan. A small percent of people opted out, a small percent opted up to 50%, and a small percent opted up to 100%. Most people went with the default option and very few moved around. He recalled that the Committee did an “Opt Up” campaign on Earth Day in hopes of encouraging people to opt up to 100%. He noted that a major goal of this program is to get people to purchase and be more involved in renewables. It is illustrative of how hard it is to get people to do things, to change and to look at material. He suggested that they may want to consider doing another campaign later in the year and by then, there should be some succinct data from Good Energy regarding the internal movement within the plan over the first eight or so months.

The second part is what is happening with the rates. The electricity rates have changed dramatically (or will) on February 1<sup>st</sup>. For towns that are about to launch, it is a great concern that folks will either not sign up or choose to opt out because that is their option to opt out. That is part of the three parts of this plan that makes sense: save people money, add more renewables and provide stable rates. Those are the primary goals of the plan and within that, people can come and go. For example, he said he has always talked about a scenario with net metering (e.g., rooftop solar) where somebody that produced fifty percent of their own electricity could be on the plan in the winter and off the plan in the summer. The program allows them to come and go.

Mr. Hayden continued, saying that they (Standard Power) spoke to ~250 people on the original launch about their net metering choices. He and Emily Mans spoke to everybody who wanted counsel on net metering.

The point is that with the rate change, they are not likely to see significant migration even though the rate will be three cents lower. The rate from Eversource on February 1<sup>st</sup> will be 8.285 cents. Right now, it is 12.5 and before that it was 20 and 22. This is the supply cost. The transmission and distribution (T&D) cost will most likely start creeping up as well. They (the utilities) have not endured the inflationary push in every aspect of their lives that everyone else has over the past eighteen months. They have been slow in catching up, but it is likely that they will petition for significant rate increases in T&D. That side of the bill will go up and is not something that can be easily dealt with. The only way to really push against it is for individuals to have solar in their home or some other form of self-generation.

Mr. Hayden stated that with community power in general, they look ahead for ways to affect some of those things to minimize them locally through additional legislation, additional flexibility with utilities and Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and Department of Energy (DOE). However, those mechanisms do not exist currently, and the software does not exist, or the hardware cannot support software to even affect those things.

Right now, at the PUC and DOE level, they are trying to impact grid modernization, net metering, and a couple of other elements of the system where there is currently no ability for the utility to do those sorts of things. The reason Standard Power provided personal service for everyone (with respect to net metering) is because the utility cannot provide enough data. Those are all weak points in the system on the T&D side and the ability to fix those things is incumbent upon modernizing the systems and software by our utilities so that some of those things are possible.

The rate change will occur February 1<sup>st</sup> and last through the end of July. Mr. Hayden stated that, for people who participated in the plan's default option at launch through the end of that timeline in July, those folks will be net positive over those fifteen months. For the four towns that were the early adopters, the message is that folks have had very stable rates, and they will still be net positive but have the right to opt out if they want. If there is migration, it is incumbent upon the community power community to do the best job possible from the system and the vendor side to recapture them in six months.

Mr. Hayden went on to discuss the February rate and why it is not expected to stay this low. Some of the data that backs that up is out of the PUC dockets. There are a few pieces that point to this being aberrational rate. They (Eversource) have a negative offset of 1.486 cents, in other words, a negative rate adjustment. That negative rate adjustment comes from overcharges when the rate was \$0.20 and then twelve cents, but during the 20-cent window. The next piece is the unusually mild winter. Coming into the building today, it is 28 degrees. Most people are thinking it is cold. However, it really is not cold for January 3<sup>rd</sup>. It is mild if you look back historically and that is how he looks at this conversation.

He shared that he spent Christmas at his friend's house, who had been a life-long friend. They talked about how they used to play ice hockey on New Year's Day when they were in their 20s. At current temperatures, there is no way you can play ice hockey right now and that was illustrative of the temperature difference.

The upshot of the mild winter last year and (so far) this year is that while natural gas production has continued to rise across the country, the storage (amount of storage available for natural gas) has stayed level. There is no storage available anymore for natural gas. The forward market is at a very low point and was at a low point on the day this electricity was bought, which was at 2.33 cents per dekatherm. He noted that this does not even illustrate parts of the market that are not long-term buys. There is a spot market right now for natural gas that is incredibly low. He explained that if he and another person owned a natural gas turbine somewhere and the market price said that it was 2.3 or even 2.36, they might be able to find somebody in their network of pipes that has extra. They might have spot extra and could buy it for \$1.75 because the spot market is a daily market of what is available on that day. While Eversource cannot bet on that, it does affect the general market if the spot market continues to suppress the long-term market. That gets deep in the minutiae, but the reality is that Eversource has an excellent rate. The rate of 8.285 includes the 1.5 cent write down. The large meters (second to largest class- over 1,000kw)

have monthly variable rates that range from a low of \$0.09 to a high of over \$0.18 during the same time for an average of over \$0.11. That does not include a write down. So, when he says he believes that this is a short-term thing for Eversource, it is based on that large meter rate that does not have the same write-downs as the GNR rates. In the marketplace now, if he were talking to someone commercially, he would suggest they may want to go to the utility for those six months because it is a very low rate. If he were buying community power pricing today for this group because the vendor direct has kept it active, it would be \$0.09.

Mr. Peter Hansel asked if they had gotten any large commercial options. Mr. Hayden responded that he thought they may have been one or two. Mr. Roth asked if the G rate was higher than the residential (R) rate at this point. Mr. Hayden explained G and R are the same.

Mr. Hansel asked how should this committee get ahead of this information as he is sure it will be in the Sentinel. For example, should they put out some explanation on the need to be looking ahead long term rather than responding to the immediate situation. Mr. Hayden suggested that it would be a cogent message to send to whoever the reporter is who may be asking about this. He asked if the committee had a website for this kind of information. Ms. Brunner shared that Keene Community Power has a website.

Mr. Hayden said they (Standard Power) have been a little concerned about the municipal level participation in that message. If the municipality does some information sessions or other information every time the rate changes, it set an expectation that they will do the exact same thing every time the rate changes, which would impact the municipal budget. He said they try not to impact the municipal budget. He explained that their opinion, but the bottom line is that it is their committee, their town.

Ms. Diana Duffy wondered if anything in the renewables market affects the change in rate. She believed there was more wind that came into New Hampshire, and she was not sure if it was affecting the prices in New Hampshire for renewables. She wondered if there were any other reason renewables might have gone down.

Mr. Hayden explained that the price that they can capture has gone down. He posited if they were building a municipal solar project at 5 megawatts that was dependent on net metering and dependent on the G or R rates (the current low rate we're discussing), they would, as a developer, have seen their values statement go from something around \$0.18 down to less than either. Their ability to build that project may be diminished and significantly so. He said to add a little color to this, the ability to connect a big solar project is significant and difficult. Each project is almost unique because of the unique nature of the grid. Over the last couple of years in Maine and Massachusetts, they have reached a saturation point. There is no way to add more solar easily without major expenses.

Ms. Duffy clarified that he was speaking about utility scale projects. Mr. Hayden responded that he is talking about projects that are five megawatts. It is not utility scale yet. That is what is



happening here (in NH) because of the municipal solar law which allows for up to five megawatts for municipal projects, which gives the best return on investment because it is based on the default service rate for net metering.

He explained they were inundated with developers coming in from Massachusetts and Maine talking about all these towns they wanted to do business with that Standard Power and Freedom Logistics happened to have as customers. Those same developers that were calling daily have gotten quiet over the past ten days. They know the same information he does, that this is likely to be an aberration, but that base price is low enough that it is down. He explained that if someone was depending on the range of the last two rates (12 and 20), they may have been expecting fifteen. Now it is down to seven cents and the adder might be two or three. It is still a small number.

To get back to the wind, he does think it will be impacted. Wind stands on its own because it is efficient at, or rather cost effective at, lower efficiencies in comparison to solar.

Chair Luse wanted to circle back to Mr. Hansel's question about communicating this. He said it seemed to him that if someone is chasing rates and going to switch and opt out, they would continue to do that with future rate changes.

Mr. Hayden said the reason he started with how much movement there was from the default was because of that exact point. He thinks that 10% of people might look, of those half might complain, and of those half will do something. Unfortunately, those are the statistics that companies and committees will try hard to eke out because it is hard to know. They already know how many people did anything different at the initial mailing. They got two mailers and information sessions and still it was hardly anybody who did anything.

Ms. Brunner said the slide they were viewing is the recommendation that they got from Good Energy for messaging, and she thinks the city is planning to respond to inquiries with the appropriate information and post this information on their website. As Mr. Hayden was suggesting, she did not think they wanted to set a precedent or expectation that every six months when the utility rate changes, they are going to do a big publicity effort. Should they ever drop the ball, the public would be rather upset with them. She suggested this committee should think about what they want to do on the education side.

Mr. Hayden said if people opted out, during that six-month term, they would receive at least two cards offering them the chance to get back in. There is at least a quarterly sweep of data, and it is in the suppliers' interest to do it monthly if there is an attrition to get people to come back.

Chair Luse recognized Mr. Mike Winograd, who said he did not think it was the committee's place to make any comments one way or another if asked, providing that type of information is perfect. People can monitor, they can see what is going on and they can act if they want, but he agreed with Mr. Hayden that they are likely to not do anything.

Chair Luse agreed and said when they are asked, having a clear message is important. He questioned the likelihood of people doing anything, especially given the volatility chart showing that there is still a net gain for anyone on community power.

Mr. Roth mentioned the lag in the net metering resulting in losing a month to month and a half and commented that it is a lot of work.

Ms. Duffy wondered, independent of this development and with Keene having its net zero goal, whether this committee or the council had any formal plan for upping the default over time and what that schedule is. Mr. Roth wondered if she meant upping the amount of renewable in the default to which Ms. Duffy responded in the affirmative.

Chair Luse said he did not believe that could happen until the end of the contract at 30 months. Mr. Hayden would interject that if asked and an addendum was made to that contract, that it could be done.

Ms. Brunner said in the community power plan, it talks about ramping up over time to try and get to that 2030 goal and added what was envisioned was that each time a contract was renewed, it would go up.

Mr. Hayden said an opportunity mid-contract could be explored. It is not his contract, so he cannot guarantee anything.

With no more to add and no further questions, Chair Luse thanked Mr. Hayden.

**6) 2024 Energy Fair Collaboration with the Monadnock Sustainability Hub**

Chair Luse said he would address this item under the work group report-out for the Education and Outreach work group.

**7) ECC Work Group Report Outs**

**A) Community Solar**

Peter Hansel said he had nothing to add to the summary in the agenda packet. He mentioned that one of the projects that they have been monitoring is the five-megawatt project down near the airport. He wondered if that is going to be affected by some of the things that got brought up today about the difficulty in pursuing some of these bigger projects. It may be something councilors want to explore with the city manager.

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

Mr. Ken Swymer and Mr. Charles Redfern were not present, but Chair Luse shared that he talked to Mr. Redfern who said he is exploring Portland Maine who has utilized AmeriCorps to get additional help with their energy initiatives.

In addition to that, he is going to jump into this workgroup and explore other pathways or research into other models and come back with Mr. Redfern to make a recommendation on what paths they may want to explore in trying to get additional resources to further their efforts.

### **C) Education and Outreach**

Chair Luse shared that the education and outreach workgroup discussed supporting an energy fair that Ms. Ann Shedd is here to talk about. Before she talks, he explained that the workgroup had discussed the effort that goes into Keene Energy week and the return on investment on that annual event, and has decided that they are not going to do a Keene Energy week this year and will put their energy into supporting other events and showing up at events like Earth Day. Ann Shedd has proposed collaborating with the sustainability hub and others to do an energy fair. His work group is recommending that the committee cosponsor and collaborate with them on that project. Chair Luse then opened the floor to Ms. Ann Shedd.

Ms. Shedd explained that she was a former member of this committee back during the years that the city adopted its 100% sustainability energy goals and adopted the energy plan. She commented on how good it was to see those plans being implemented now.

She shared that she came to the committee as a member of the board of the Monadnock Sustainability Hub (the “Hub”), which Nora Hanke is program manager of. They have been interested in expanding their existing EV expos that they have been doing since 2018. They do them twice a year on Earth Day and again in the fall. Last year, they did exploration of expanding from just the EV focus to a clean energy fair, explaining that those have happened in other parts of the country.

Ms. Hanke and one other board member visited energy fairs at a couple of different scales in Vermont and in the fall, they did their first launch of a clean energy fair in Peterborough. It was a collaborative effort with the Peterborough Renewable Energy Plan (PREP), which is their Implementation Committee for their energy plan. Both the Hub and PREP were actively involved in the planning for the event, but with the long-range picture of alternating between Peterborough and Keene over the next several years.

The attendance was two hundred people. They had counters for those entering the event, but there were people who came to the outside EV expo but did not go inside to the eighteen vendors/exhibitors representing weatherization, heat pump contractors, solar contractors, non-profits and even one geothermal company. Exhibitors had follow-up surveys with an almost 50% return. At least one stated that they got twenty-five new leads for home visits for heat pump installations. In terms of impact, she believed it was well-attended and resulted in active pursuit of progress in clean energy in the region.

She came to the committee asking for the committee's co-sponsorship of an event to be planned for this fall. This committee has co-sponsored a number of other events such as some of the EV expos. Having the sponsorship gives extra credibility to the public and may help with processes in terms of getting permits. She stated they would be delighted if the committee was interested at a minimum in cosponsoring the event.

Beyond that, in terms of active engagement of the committee, she welcomed interested parties to participate and said there are a couple of specific touch points where it might be helpful. The venues in Keene that have been considered thus far include their airport, which does not have a big indoor space and is a limitation in terms of having space for the vendors. Other than that, they could tie in tours of the solar facility at the end of the airport, there is plenty of parking, room to do the EV test drives, room to potentially do an electric lawn care event. There is a nice model for that in Vermont, where they bring in both commercial and residential scale lawn care equipment with vendors. She believed there was a lot of potential there with some concern about the indoor space limitation.

The Blastos Room at 350 Marlborough has also been considered. The very first expo was held there and has potential. The Rec center is also an option.

Chair Luse recognized Councilor Ormerod, who said the airport just presented to some of the committees and they are in marketing mode. Tents can also be put up there, which is a benefit. He suggested connecting with Mr. David Hickling.

Ms. Shedd said when she spoke to Mr. Hickling in the spring, one of the limitations was that for any non-aviation use of the airport, he needs approval from the State Department of Transportation and from the Federal Aviation Administration, which he said may be a lengthy process. One exciting potential tie-in that he is excited about is the possibility of getting an electric aviation company up in Burlington called Beta Technologies that has been producing and flying a vertical take-off and landing and conventional takeoff electric vehicle to attend. They have started installing charging stations strategically around the country. If he could lure them into coming to that event, she thought it would draw in more people and make it an aviation related event. If the airport is in consideration, the time needs to be pinned down. She has been trying to obtain the date of the business expo from the city so as not to coincide with that. Vendors for the energy expo this past year were charged a pittance, and it was orders of magnitude less than what is charged for the home show in the spring and for the Chamber's business expo.

Chair Luse and Ms. Duffy asked for clarification on what cosponsoring means. It is not financial assistance, rather the committee would provide support with volunteers, and it provides access to city resources like places to have the event, signage, etc.

Ms. Brunner added that there is some limitation to that. In the past, the committee would co-sponsor events and then then we took that as the city co-sponsoring, which is not the case. If desired, the Council can certainly be asked to cosponsor, which would provide the highest level of access and waive any sort of room fees. Committee sponsorship would be more in the form of promotion, volunteers, and things along those lines.

Ms. Shedd asked if there is potential that this committee could vote to cosponsor and make a recommendation to the Council. She added that the Hub's budget will get voted on in a couple of weeks, but they have allotted \$5,000. They have also been doing private fundraising. She noted that the \$5,000 figure under-represents what was spent for the event last fall, but they may be able to up the fees for vendors and recruit more commercial sponsors to underwrite the cost of the event. She said the biggest single cost was running an ad on NPR, which was surprisingly expensive.

Chair Luse said it sounds like they have a motion. Councilor Lake made a motion to cosponsor the 2024 Energy Expo event and make a recommendation to the City Council to sponsor the event on behalf of the city. Paul Roth seconded the motion. With no discussion and all in favor, the motion was approved.

Ms. Shedd thanked the committee and said they would be in touch as soon as they clarified the date of the business expo. They offered to keep everyone in the loop about conversations with Mr. Hickling and about the potential to use the airport as an event site.

#### **D) Legislative Tracking**

Councilor Lake shared that their work group put together a list of about twenty bills that are at the Statehouse now that they will be keeping an eye on. There is one about parking on EV spaces, one about nuclear power, one on net metering. He added that there are additional suggestions coming out of that memo Ms. Brunner sent to look at. They will discuss which of those, if any, make sense to explore at this time.

Ms. Hanke pointed out that the New Hampshire Network is sponsoring a virtual meeting at 4pm today with Chris Children. She will send the link to Councilor Lake.

#### **E) Food Security**

Mr. Rowland Russell said the next session is scheduled for January 29<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. They are trying something different this time as it is a meetup with farmers around economic opportunities for farmers. Anyone from the committee is invited to attend. It is a public space but reserved for this purpose. He plans to invite Jude to talk about agrivoltaics (solar integrated with farming) opportunities. They have been collaborating with Southwest Region Planning Commission and Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition. They have been able to amplify the outreach and the final report to this group will include the asset mapping that they are doing together along with the strategic plan that Southwest Region Planning is putting together. It will be

supplemented with additional notes from the work group's sessions and work that he has been doing with the committee.

**8) Adoption of 2024 Meeting Schedule**

Chair Luse said the meeting schedule looked good except for July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ms. Brunner explained that typically on the second Wednesday of the month there is another committee that meets in the room during that time. So, it cannot simply be pushed out a week, but she did not know of any conflicts for other days. It could be moved to a Monday or Tuesday of the following week.

Chair Luse asked if Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup> worked. Ms. Lisa Maxfield said she would prefer to avoid a Monday. Ms. Duffy asked if this needed to be done now and suggested waiting until June. Chair Luse said a decision did not need to be made today. The schedule could be adopted as is now and the change could be decided upon and made later.

Councilor Lake moved to approve the annual meeting schedule as presented. Councilor Ormerod seconded the motion. With no discussion and all in favor, the motion was approved.

**9) NH Climate Action Plan Update**

Chair Luse reported that the State's Climate Action Plan is being updated and there are a number of opportunities, both in person and remote, to get involved with this effort. If anyone is interested, the information is all in the packet as a link on the agenda.

**10) New Business**

No new business was raised.

**11) Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 7, 2024- 8:00 am**

**12) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Luse adjourned the meeting at 9:17 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner