



ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE (ECC)

AGENDA

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

8:00 AM

Room 22, Parks & Rec Center

Members:

Paul Roth, Vice Chair

Maureen Nebenzahl

Gordon Leversee

Councilor Bryan Lake

Annu Joshi Bargale

Clair Oursler

Kenneth Swymer Jr., Chair

Lisa Maxfield

Steven Larmon

Tim Murphy

Jake Pipp, Alternate

Chuck Redfern, Alternate

Rowland Russell, Alternate

Staff:

Megan Fortson, Planner

Emily Duseau, Planning Technician

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Approval of Minutes** – March 5, 2025
3. **NH DOE** – Request for Comment on Potential Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program
4. **NH DOE** – Request for Comment on Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Program
5. **Community Power Program Updates**
6. **Monadnock Earth Fest** – Planning & Preparation
7. **Annual Retreat**
8. **Potential Meeting Days & Times**
9. **Annual Reports for Boards & Commissions**
10. **Work Group Report Outs**
 - a. Community Solar
 - b. Grants, Fundraising, and Partnerships
 - c. Education and Outreach
 - d. Legislative Tracking
 - e. Food Security
11. **New Business**
12. **Next Meeting:** Wednesday, May 7, 2025 at 8:00 am

Link to ECC Google Drive Folder:

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

**City of Keene
New Hampshire**

**ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

8:02 AM

**Room 22,
Recreation Center**

Members Present:

Paul Roth, Vice Chair
Councilor Bryan Lake
Maureen Nebenzahl
Steve Larmon
Timothy Murphy
Jake Pipp, Alternate
Rowland Russell, Alternate
Gordon Lerversee

Staff Present:

Megan Fortson, Planner
Emily Duseau, Planning Technician

Members Not Present:

Clair Oursler
Lisa Maxfield
Kenneth Swymer, Chair
Annu Joshi Bargale
Charles Redfern, Alternate
Michael Winograd, Alternate

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice Chair Roth called the meeting to order at 8:06 AM. Mr. Roth invited an alternate, Mr. Rowland Russell, to participate as voting member.

2) Approval of Minutes- February 5, 2025

Councilor Lake moved to approve the minutes of the prior meeting. Mrs. Maureen Nebenzahl seconded Councilor Lake’s motion. Without further discussion, the meeting minutes were approved for February 5, 2025. Vice Chair Roth welcomed a vote on the 2025 meeting schedule. The 2025 meeting schedule was approved with all in favor.

3) Updates

A) Community Power Program

25 Councilor Lake reported that the Finance, Organization, and Personnel (FOP) meeting had
26 included productive discussions. The council split the voting process on a new tiered plan, taking
27 an initial unanimous vote to establish three levels: 25%, 50%, and 100%. A separate vote on the
28 adder fee was more contentious and passed narrowly with a 3-2 vote due to concerns about the
29 additional cost.

30

31 In response to Mrs. Nebenzahl's inquiries, Councilor Lake confirmed that the primary concern
32 was the cost of the adder fee, which had been brought before the full council. While the spread
33 was unanimously supported in a 5-0 vote, a request was made to reconsider it at the next
34 meeting, leading to the tabled adder fee discussion.

35

36 Councilor Lake noted that some councilors might propose adjustments, such as reducing the 50%
37 level or making 25% the default instead of 50%. He expects significant discussion at the
38 upcoming council meeting and emphasizes the need for final decisions. Several councilors were
39 concerned about the cost, especially given the current state of the economy. Councilor Lake is
40 hopeful the council maintains its unanimous support for the three-tiered structure while
41 determining how to incorporate the adder fee.

42

43 Members questioned the reasoning behind the reconsideration of the vote. Councilor Lake
44 explained that he believed Councilor Bosely was looking for a compromise solution, such as
45 adding the adder fee but reducing the default percentage. Mr. Steve Larmon wondered if the
46 ECC should vote for a recommendation, given the committee's desire to get to 100%.

47

48 Councilor Lake did not believe they could meet the deadline for submitting agenda items to the
49 Council for consideration. He reminded members that the best thing they could do was contact or
50 reach out to their councilors and voice their support.

51

52 Dr. Rowland Russell added that while council meetings are not open for public comment, they
53 have found that showing community support is often beneficial. He suggested spreading the
54 word and wearing solar power T-shirts to show support.

55

56 Mr. Pipp asked Councilor Lake if, despite not being able to submit a letter, the committee could
57 still take a vote. He asked Councilor Lake if he could share the outcome at the meeting as a point
58 of information, reaffirming the committee's support for the program.

59

60 Councilor Lake stated that he could reiterate the committee's unanimous support for the program
61 and emphasize its alignment with their plan. He pointed out that if they were to make a motion to
62 send another letter of support, it would not reach the Council in time, as it would not be provided
63 until two weeks after the vote.

64

65 Dr. Russell shared that all the city councilors have emails, and if members did not have time for
66 a phone call, he urged them to write a letter of support and email it to each councilor.

67

68 Vice Chair Roth recognized Mr. Peter Hansel. Mr. Hansel reiterated that while not all council
69 members may be fully aware, some recognize the committee's involvement in energy matters.
70 He suggested their presence at the meeting could add subtle pressure on the Council.

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B) Solar Pavilion- Northern Borders Timber for Transit Grant

Ms. Fortson informed the committee about a nearly \$2 million grant awarded to the Public Works Department through the Timber for Transit program, run by the Northern Border Regional Commission. This organization supports economic development in New Hampshire, New York, Maine, and Vermont. The grant will be used to construct a solar pavilion behind the yellow building and the transportation center on Guilford, with solar panels designed to help power the downtown area.

Ms. Fortson added that the solar pavilion will include 120 solar panels and a 230-by-30-foot structure. She emphasized this project’s importance and wanted to bring it to the committee’s attention.

Dr. Russell added that he has a friend who works for Northern Border’s and shared that the Department of Government Efficiency has not cut them off. He asked Ms. Fortson if there was any risk of that happening. Ms. Fortson was unaware of the answer but offered to follow up with the Public Works Director, Mr. Don Lussier.

C) 2025 Monadnock Region Earth Day Festival

Ms. Fortson informed the committee about the Monadnock Region Earth Day Festival, scheduled for Saturday, April 20, from 12:00 to 4:00 PM. She noted that the agenda item was to discuss the committee’s participation and the need to apply by March 10. While there is no cost to sign up, participants must provide their tent and tables. She asked whether the committee was interested in taking part.

Vice Chair Roth said he would be interested and shared that he has done it for the last three years at Railroad Square. He emphasized the need for a 10x10 tent and a banner to help the committee stand out at the event. They mentioned that Zach had worked on distributing leaflets, including QR codes for scanning. Roth confirmed their availability for the event and inquired whether the sign-up was for volunteers or organizations.

Ms. Fortson clarified that the sign-up was to register an organization for the event. She stated that the committee should have everything needed for setup, including tables, a tent with weights, and a tablecloth featuring the City of Keene logo. She suggested possibly creating a poster for additional display.

Dr. Russell, involved with multiple organizations tabling at the Earth Festival, emphasized that this year is significant for demonstrating strong support for environmental values. They noted that city committees, such as BPAC, typically participate and encouraged this committee to do the same. They also mentioned plans to organize special activities to enhance the committee’s presence at the event.

114
115 Councilor Lake emphasized the importance of making the Community Power Program and its
116 options highly visible. He suggested that the Earth Festival would be an excellent opportunity to
117 distribute informative handouts and documentation, incorporating any updates to the program for
118 the upcoming year. He would be in support of participating in the event.

119
120 Vice Chair Roth asked if they needed to take a vote. Ms. Fortson felt it would be a good idea.
121 Vice Chair Roth made a motion to vote to have the ECC participate in the Monadnock Earth Day
122 festival. Dr. Russell seconded his proposal. With unanimous support and no opposition, the
123 motion and vote were approved. Dr. Russell suggested that someone on the committee take the
124 lead in filling out the form.

125
126 Councilor Lake suggested organizing a meeting this month or next to coordinate responsibilities
127 for the Earth Festival. He proposed that this effort could fit within an existing work group, such
128 as Education and Outreach, or a new group if needed. He expressed a willingness to participate.

129
130 Vice Chair Roth shared that Mr. Zach Luse was leading that group. Dr. Russell asked if anyone
131 from the Education and Outreach group, to which Vice Chair Roth shared that he was. He shared
132 that the ECC has one more meeting before Earth Day and agreed with Councilor Lake that they
133 should have a planning meeting. He suggested holding the planning meeting between now and
134 the next meeting. Ms. Fortson reminded them that they need to ensure that any interim meeting
135 should not constitute a quorum and should consist of less than six members. Mr. Larmon and Mr.
136 Pipp expressed interest in participating.

137
138 Ms. Fortson also urged to keep Staff in the loop, as they have software to streamline the
139 production of outreach materials. Vice Chair Roth asked if there were QR codes available. Ms.
140 Fortson was unaware and offered to investigate and get back to him. She added that it was easy
141 to create a QR code and did not anticipate that being a barrier. Ms. Duseau offered to share what
142 marketing materials are available following the meeting.

143
144 Dr. Russell noted that in the past, assignments varied—sometimes predetermined and other times
145 on a first-come, first-served basis. They mentioned that similar organizations, such as Pathways
146 and BPAC, often cluster together to better engage attendees in shared interest areas, like those
147 near the co-op.

148 149 **D) 2025 Meeting Schedule & Annual Retreat**

150
151 Ms. Fortson explained that while meeting availability was shared, no formal survey was
152 conducted due to past challenges in gathering responses. Instead, spreadsheets with potential
153 dates and times were provided to help members determine availability. The scheduling options
154 included each month's second, third, and fourth Tuesdays, with various morning, afternoon, and
155 evening slots available, and the second Thursday of each month.

156

157 She clarified that "availability" refers to booking city meeting rooms. There has been ongoing
158 discussion about adjusting the meeting time, with feedback indicating that early morning
159 meetings can be difficult for those who work, preventing some from attending.

160

161 Dr. Russell stated he was the opposition, as most meetings involve West Coast Antioch
162 Campuses, making him unavailable before five o'clock. Mr. Larmon asked if any specifics
163 regarding the options discussed seemed better.

164

165 Ms. Fortson noted that meeting scheduling has been an ongoing discussion, but responses to
166 previous inquiries have been limited. She suggested sending out the options again to gather
167 updated input, especially with new members joining and others cycling off the committee.

168

169 Mr. Hansel recalled that previous discussions about meeting times were influenced by a member,
170 Mr. Jude Nuru, who had difficulty attending 8:00 AM meetings due to childcare responsibilities.
171 However, Jude is no longer a member and recently emailed to inform the committee that he is
172 moving to Massachusetts.

173

174 Ms. Fortson offered to send out a survey and noted that the committee will continue to meet on
175 the first Wednesday of the month at 8 am until a decision is made. Dr. Russell asked if the
176 current time was problematic for anyone, to which no one responded. He noted that the key
177 person would be Chair Ken Swymer, who was not present to offer input. Dr. Russell said that the
178 current Wednesday time was not listed as an option and suggested that be added.

179

180 Vice Chair Roth moved on to the dates for the April retreat. Vice Chair Roth listed potential
181 dates for the committee's retreat in April, which is typically a two-hour session. Mrs. Nebenzahl,
182 a new member, asked about the purpose of the retreat.

183

184 Vice Chair Roth explained that this would also be their first retreat, as one was not held last year.
185 Ms. Fortson explained that in a previous retreat, Mr. Sam Evans-Brown presented, saying the
186 retreat serves as an annual opportunity for the committee to reflect on priorities, decide on focus
187 areas, and determine whether to maintain or adjust workgroups. Ideally, the committee would
188 have three to five workgroups, with the current structure including five. The retreat also provides
189 a chance to identify speakers who could present on relevant topics, similar to previous guest
190 presentations. Ms. Fortson asked if any members had specific topics or speakers to include in the
191 retreat planning.

192

193 Mr. Murphy shared that the city is in the process of updating its municipal hazard mitigation
194 plan, which addresses potential natural and man-made disasters such as floods and ice storms. He
195 emphasized the strong connection between climate, energy issues, and hazard mitigation. Since
196 the plan is about one-third to halfway complete, he suggested it might be valuable to hear from
197 those leading the effort for informational purposes and potential feedback.

198

199 In response to a question about whether this is similar to the hospital's Hazard Vulnerability
200 Assessment, Mr. Murphy confirmed that the two are closely connected and involve
201 communication between the hospital and the city to share vulnerabilities. Vice Chair Roth felt it
202 would be a great topic but was unsure of the group and City's bandwidth.
203

204 Ms. Fortson noted that the City recently received an update on the Hazard Mitigation Plan from
205 Kurt Blomquist, the former Public Works Director, who now serves as the Emergency
206 Management Director. She clarified that he is no longer in his Public Works role but continues to
207 work in a limited capacity.
208

209 She also mentioned that Mike Hagan, the city's plans examiner and certified floodplain manager,
210 updated FEMA's map revisions as part of the same presentation to the Master Plan Steering
211 Committee. Vice Chair Roth felt that with the increase in floods, Mr. Hagan might be a good one
212 to talk to. Ms. Fortson agreed, noting that Mr. Hagan deals with the city's floodplain
213 development permits that come through for large projects and thought it would be an excellent
214 opportunity to learn how all these things connect.
215

216 Vice Chair Roth suggested having materials for their booth on Earth Day to highlight the Energy
217 and Climate Committee's role as the city's voice on energy-related matters. He emphasized the
218 opportunity to engage in education and outreach by directing attendees to available resources.
219 The group agreed that this would be beneficial.
220

221 Mr. Hansel asked how far along the Comprehensive Master Plan was and whether it was used as
222 informational material in the booth. Ms. Fortson stated they are collecting qualitative data and
223 engaging with students. By Earth Day, they expect their community survey to be ready, making
224 it an excellent opportunity to promote it at the event.
225

226 Vice Chair Roth suggested using a QR code for the survey, encouraging Keene residents to
227 participate. Ms. Fortson clarified that the survey is open to anyone who lives, works, shops, or
228 spends time in Keene, not just residents, as they aim to gather broad community input.
229

230 Dr. Russell suggested keeping the master planning as a separate document to avoid
231 overwhelming the booth with too many activities. They noted that managing multiple topics
232 would require more volunteers to engage visitors effectively.
233

234 Vice Chair Roth noted that while engaging conversations can happen, volunteers may not be
235 familiar with master planning. He suggested that those directly involved, including consultants,
236 should be present to provide accurate information. Due to the expertise, Dr. Russell agreed and
237 felt their materials would get more attention.
238

239 Vice Chair Roth was curious about the level of engagement on Earth Day on behalf of the city.
240 Ms. Fortson was unsure whether Community Development Staff was interested in participating,

241 but she could see how it would be a good opportunity. She offered to contact Ms. Brunner and
242 get back to Vice Chair Roth.

243
244 Agreeing with Dr. Russell, Vice Chair Roth felt the ECC could act as a conduit for the City only
245 if the City did not intend to be at the event. Ms. Fortson felt they could coordinate having a city
246 staff member present to provide that information. Mrs. Nebenzahl suggested referring
247 community members to the code. Mr. Murphy said that, at a minimum, they could promote the
248 survey if the point completes it. Dr. Russell felt it would go a long way if the city had three
249 booths of representation to encourage all the various efforts and activities.

250
251 Vice Chair Roth asked if there was any other representation from the council. Dr. Russell and
252 Councilor Lake shared that the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee also attends several
253 events. Dr. Russell highlighted the connection between the Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathway
254 Advisory Committee and multimodal transportation, aligning with the connected mobility pillar.
255 He emphasized that there are six pillars and seven priorities or themes, covering more than just
256 the work of those two groups. To ensure comprehensive representation, they suggested having
257 people at the booth who can speak to the full scope of the initiative.

258
259 Ms. Fortson noted that they were at 8:45 and suggested that this could be discussed in the
260 preparatory meetings between now and the meeting.

261
262 Councilor Lake focused on planning the retreat, noting the proposed dates in April and
263 questioning whether a survey would be sent out to gather feedback. They suggested April 7th
264 was too soon and to allow for better preparation. Given the early April dates and potential
265 scheduling conflicts, including religious holidays, they proposed considering May as an
266 alternative to avoid last-minute planning. He suggested adding some May options if they send
267 out a survey. Dr. Russell favored holding the retreat in May due to April being busy.

268

269 **E) Annual Reports from Boards and Commissions**

270

271 Vice Chair Roth recognized Ms. Fortson. Ms. Fortson informed Vice Chair Roth about a city
272 councilor Haas's request for annual updates from boards and committees on their activities over
273 the past year. These reports, likely due around June or July, would align with the city's fiscal
274 year, starting July 1. The reports are expected to be concise, possibly a one-page summary, and
275 distributed to city councilors. The purpose is to provide insight into committee work without a
276 strict format. Councilor Lake mentioned that the updates might be discussed at an upcoming
277 retreat, allowing members to share ideas on what to include. Vice Chair Roth expressed a desire
278 to get Mr. Zach Luse's input. Dr. Russell noted they have all the past meeting minutes, which
279 could help shape the reports.

280

281 **4) Work Group Report Outs**

282 **A) Community Solar**

283

284 Vice Chair Roth recognized Mr. Hansel. Mr. Hansel noted that their group has not met recently
285 and acknowledged that their organizer, Mr. Jude Nuru, resigned and had been handling themes
286 and meeting invitations. Mr. Hansel questioned whether Dr. Gordon Lerversee is an official
287 member, as only Ms. Diana Duffy and Dr. Lerversee seem involved. Dr. Lerversee expressed the
288 need for an official member.

289
290 Dr. Russell shared that the upcoming retreat would discuss potential committee adjustments.
291 He also mentioned that committee structures are periodically reviewed to determine if new
292 committees or membership changes are needed.

293
294 Mr. Hansel shared that regarding ongoing projects, he noted a slowdown in activity due to
295 delays between the City and Revision Energy, with a backlog at Eversource affecting progress.
296 He was uncertain whether these delays resulted from the hold on grant funding.

297
298 Ms. Fortson mentioned that a solar conditional use permit application, boundary line
299 adjustment, and primary site plan application are under review for the March Planning Board
300 meeting. The project involves the construction of a medium-scale solar array for Cedarcrest.
301 The meeting is scheduled for March 24th, the fourth Monday of the month, at 6:30 PM in the
302 second-floor council chambers at City Hall.

303
304 Dr. Russell expressed concern about the solar project's potential impact on the community
305 garden. Rumors have been circulating that a significant portion of the garden might be
306 displaced, effectively ending its existence.

307
308 Ms. Fortson explained that the solar project is on City-owned property, but many line
309 adjustments are being made to transfer enough land for the solar array to be placed on
310 Cedarcrest property. Vice Chair Roth said his boss is on the Board, and he would connect with
311 him. Dr. Russell asked if the project plans are publicly available. Ms. Fortson confirmed they
312 were on record and offered to send them to him.

313
314 Mr. Hansel mentioned another ongoing solar project at the airport: a large 5 MW array.
315 However, he has not received any recent updates on its progress.

316
317 Vice Chair Roth asked if they planned to meet before the next meeting. Mr. Hansel responded
318 that they needed to find someone with a Zoom account. Ms. Fortson offered to set them up with
319 a team meeting and agreed to coordinate with him to schedule that.

320
321 **B) Grants, Fundraising, and Partnerships**

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323 No representatives present to report.

324
325 **C) Education and Outreach**

326

327 Vice Chair Roth shared that education and outreach have not met but expects activity given the
328 upcoming Earth Day event.

329

330 **D) Legislative Tracking**

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332 Councilor Lake shared that the legislative tracking group has not met in a few months and, as
333 such, did not have anything to report.

334

335 Vice Chair Roth noted that the state legislature has been active and invited anyone interested to
336 join their efforts. Councilor Lake agreed, stating that significant legislative activity is happening
337 in the House.

338

339 **E) Food Security**

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341 Dr. Russell provided an update on the Food Systems Group working through Southwest
342 Regional Planning, representing the Food Security Work Group. A final report is mainly drafted,
343 with a few sections still in progress, and it is expected to be ready for distribution by the end of
344 spring.

345

346 Additionally, Hannah Grimes is planning a public event: a story circle focused on food stories
347 from various parts of the food system. More details will be shared at the next meeting.

348 At the upcoming retreat, Dr. Russell also plans to discuss broadening the Food Security Work
349 Group's scope to include climate resilience, with food security remaining a key component.

350

351 Vice Chair Roth recalled last year's retreat discussion on New England's food import reliance.
352 Dr. Russell noted that grocery store supplies would only last two days and shared that only 5% of
353 food in grocery stores is locally sourced and that some locally raised food is exported due to a
354 lack of processing facilities for dairy and other products.

355

356 Vice Chair Roth noted that New Hampshire's natural resources focus more on lumber than food,
357 but climate factors are interconnected. Given this, Dr. Russell explained that it makes sense to
358 expand the focus beyond food security to include issues like flooding, which has also been a
359 recurring topic of discussion.

360

361 Dr. Russell suggested discussing the committee's future direction at the retreat, noting that
362 wrapping up the current report is a natural conclusion to the work done so far. He believes the
363 committee's work will continue but sees value in reframing or broadening its focus to better
364 align with evolving priorities.

365

366 Mr. Hansel wanted to add to the solar report that Eversource recently released the 2024 solar
367 hookup results, which had some notable findings. While the residential solar installations were
368 the second highest on record, there was only one commercial installation for the entire year. He
369 sees this as both good news and a challenge, highlighting the need to improve commercial solar

370 adoption. He attributed some of the difficulties to Eversource delays and other contributing
371 factors.

372

373 Vice Chair Roth mentioned that the Volkswagen settlement funds were primarily for charging
374 infrastructure, which he believed the state had yet to spend entirely. He noted that the hospital
375 has installed a standalone solar array for EV charging, but it has not yet been activated. The
376 system operates independently, charging cars when the sun is shining but not when it's cloudy.

377

378 Mr. Hansel shared that Ms. Brunner uploaded the solar hookup information and Eversource's
379 solar installation records to the ECC website for anyone interested in reviewing the data.

380

381 5) **New Business**

382

383 6) **Next Meeting:** Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 8:00 AM

384

385 7) **Adjournment**

386

387 There being no further business, Vice Chair Roth requested a motion to adjourn, which was
388 offered by Dr. Russell and seconded by Mrs. Nebenzahl. Vice Chair Roth adjourned the meeting
389 at 9:03 AM.

390

391 Respectfully submitted by,
392 Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

393

394 Reviewed and edited by,
395 Emily Duseau, Planning Technician

From: [Zach Luse](#)
To: [Megan Fortson](#); [Mari Brunner](#); [Emily Duseau](#)
Subject: FW: Request for Public Comment – Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program
Date: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 4:06:43 PM
Attachments: [Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program Questions for Public Comment.pdf](#)
[Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program Request for Comments.pdf](#)

Not sure if this is something the ECC or the solar workgroup might want to comment on.

From: Tomasi, Emily <Emily.J.Tomasi@energy.nh.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 4, 2025 1:46 PM
To: Tomasi, Emily <Emily.J.Tomasi@energy.nh.gov>
Subject: Request for Public Comment – Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program

You don't often get email from emily.j.tomasi@energy.nh.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good afternoon,

The New Hampshire Department of Energy is seeking public comment on the development of a Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program, a new initiative funded through the Renewable Energy Fund (REF) and established by SB 303 (2024). This program will be designed to support political subdivisions in New Hampshire in developing solar projects that reduce energy costs and provide long-term community benefits.

The two attached documents provide an example of how the program may be structured, giving insight into potential requirements and processes and outline key questions to help guide your feedback on the program's structure, eligibility, funding allocation, and evaluation criteria.

We greatly appreciate your time and input as we work to design a program that best serves New Hampshire's needs. Your comments will help ensure the most effective and equitable use of REF resources.

Please submit all written comments by **April 18, 2025**, via email to Emily.J.Tomasi@energy.nh.gov with the subject line: "**Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program Comments.**"

Thank you for your participation and valuable feedback. Please feel free to share this request with others who may be interested.

Warm Regards,

Emily Tomasi
Renewable Energy Fund Program Specialist, Division of Policy and Programs
New Hampshire Department of Energy
Walker Building, Suite 10
21 S. Fruit Street, Concord NH, 03301
Office: (603) 271-6334
Emily.J.Tomasi@energy.nh.gov

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
New Hampshire Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program
Request for Public Comment on Draft Program Design

Comments Due April 18, 2025

Request for Comments:

Mindful of the importance of supporting renewable energy development at the local level, the Department is seeking feedback on the design and implementation of the new Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program legislatively mandated in SB 303 (2024). This program aims to maximize the impact of Renewable Energy Fund (REF) resources by ensuring that every dollar spent plays a critical role in advancing projects that might not otherwise be feasible and build on the interest generated by the recent municipal solar grant program, funded with one-time federal money through the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG). Given the finite nature of REF funding, the program’s design will prioritize projects that enable new solar installations, rather than subsidizing those that would proceed without financial support.

While the demand for the EECBG program demonstrated a tremendous need for this kind of funding, there is always room for improvement in programs in order to better serve the people of the State. The Department has produced a straw proposal for this new program, using that EECBG program as a base.

Stakeholder input will be vital in shaping this new program that effectively addresses the energy needs of political subdivisions and processes and delivers long-term benefits to local communities.

Definitions:

The Department proposes to define the term “political subdivision” to include the following entities:

- Counties
- Towns
- Cities
- School districts
- Chartered public school
- Water districts subject to RSA 31:137
- Sewer districts subject to RSA 31:137
- Combined water and sewer districts subject to RSA 31:137
- Village districts established under and subject to RSA 52
- Solid waste management district established under and subject to RSA 53-B

Submission Instructions:

Please submit all written comments by **April 18, 2025** via email to Emily.J.Tomasi@energy.nh.gov with the subject line “Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program Comments” All comments must be submitted in a pdf format. Please note that all written comments submitted are subject to New Hampshire’s ‘Right to Know Law’ RSA 91-A. Please do not include in your comments any proprietary or confidential information.

The Framework:

The Department has provided a series of questions in which the Department is particularly interested in receiving feedback. This framework is intended a guide, not as a limit on your comments. Please feel free to comment to subject matters relating to the proposed program design outside the confines of the questions below.

Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program: Questions for Stakeholder Input

General Questions to Consider:

Design Elements:

1. While the 60kW array size for the EECBG program was required due to federal requirements, there is no such requirement for REF funded programs. Should there be a cap on the size of an array, and if so, what should it be?
2. Should the program continue to prioritize communities that disadvantaged in terms of resources and demographics?
3. Should additional criteria be considered to further prioritize disadvantaged municipalities, beyond the potential use of the Community Development Finance Authority’s (CDFA) Core Data Index Score (<https://nhcdfa.org/cdfa-introduces-new-core-data-index/>)?
4. How well does a proposed tiered grant funding structure (Tier 1: \$50,000–\$200,000; Tier 2: \$40,000–\$120,000) address the varying capacities and needs of political subdivisions?
5. Should the program maintain its current funding allocation between Tier 1 and Tier 2 grants, or are there alternative allocation strategies that could better meet municipal needs?
6. Are the eligibility requirements, such as direct ownership and site restrictions, appropriate to ensure equitable access to the program while balancing the maximum benefit accruing to the political subdivision?
7. Does the requirement that an array serve no more than 125% of the electric load of the proposed members of the group host help to ‘right size’ an array, or does this requirement create stumbling blocks? Or is there a better way to ensure that the array is not over built?
8. Are there additional technical requirements for program eligibility (e.g., hosting capacity, insolation minimums) that should be included to ensure project viability and effectiveness?

9. What metrics should the program use to assess the success of funded projects (e.g., energy cost savings, community benefits, etc.)?
10. Are there other approaches to project evaluation that the program should adopt to ensure continuous improvement?
11. What forms of technical assistance or educational resources would be most beneficial for political subdivisions during the application and implementation process?
12. Are there successful examples or models from other states that could inform the ongoing development of this program?

Proposal Requirements:

1. Are there required proposal attachments that are particularly onerous to provide?
2. Are there other proposal attachments that should be required to better convey the details of the proposal?

Questions for Analyzing the Scoring Process:

1. Does the scoring process align with the program's objectives, such as prioritizing disadvantaged political subdivisions as defined by their CDFA Core Data Index Score and promoting high-impact projects?
2. Are the current scoring categories (e.g., energy savings, project design, financing plan) comprehensive enough to evaluate project viability and impact effectively?
3. Is the emphasis on optimal siting and detailed project design (5 points each) sufficient to encourage political subdivisions to prioritize high-quality installations?
4. Should additional points be awarded for incorporating emerging technologies, such as battery storage or advanced monitoring systems?
5. Are the scoring guidelines and expectations clear and transparent enough for political subdivisions of all sizes and capacities to compete effectively?
6. Are there additional scoring elements that could be introduced to more effectively evaluate projects?

Timing:

1. What is the best time frame for the Department to release an RFP to maximize a community's ability to apply for these funds?
2. How long should the RFP remain open in order to give communities sufficient time to put together a competitive application?

Definition of Political Subdivision

NOTE: This definition is separate and distinct from the definition of 'political subdivision' included in the net metering statute (RSA 362-A:1-a II-c).

1. Are there other entities that should be considered as a political subdivision, that are not included in the list provided above?
2. Is there an entity that should not be considered as a political subdivision, that is included in the list provided above?

**New Hampshire Department of Energy
Renewable Energy Fund
Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program**

SAMPLE PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Please note this is not an official Request for Proposals (RFP). This document serves as a sample outline of the program to allow stakeholders to provide valuable feedback to the New Hampshire Department of Energy. The title on this sample RFP “Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program” is subject to change

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Hampshire Department of Energy (Department) issues this Sample Request for Proposals (RFP) for the new Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program, as mandated in SB303 (2024). The program aims to maximize the impact of Renewable Energy Fund (REF) resources by supporting new solar projects that may not otherwise be feasible, with a focus on projects that provide direct energy cost benefits to political subdivisions.

The program is designed to build on the momentum generated by the recent Municipal Solar Grant Program, which was funded with one-time federal money through the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG). The availability of funding for this program is contingent upon the approval to accept and expend the funding through the Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee and the New Hampshire Governor and Executive Council (Governor and Executive Council).

Proposals must present a comprehensive project overview, including expected kWh generation and energy cost reductions. Projects must be located within the political subdivision proposing the project. Proposals that seek funding for the expansion or replacement of existing solar electricity/photovoltaic systems or for operational or installed facilities are ineligible for the Political Subdivision Solar Grant Program.

Given the finite nature of REF funding, the program will prioritize new solar installations that would not proceed without financial support. Stakeholder input will be vital in shaping the program to ensure it delivers long-term benefits to local communities while addressing their specific energy needs.

If the Department decides to award a contract or contracts as a result of this RFP process, any award is contingent upon approval of the contract by the Governor and Executive Council. Projects must be completed no later than 24 months after approval of a grant agreement by the Governor and Executive Council.

Letter of Intent Requirement

A letter of intent is required before submitting a proposal to this RFP and must be submitted by email to an email provided by the Department. The letter of intent is non-binding and does not commit the filer to submit a full proposal in response to this RFP; however, a proposer must submit a letter of intent by the deadline, or its proposal will not be considered.

OVERVIEW

A. Background and Purpose

The State of New Hampshire, through the Department, is responsible for establishing a new state funded Political Subdivision Solar Program. With input from the public and interested stakeholders throughout early 2025, the Department has developed the Political Subdivision Solar Program grant municipalities to advance the development and construction of solar photovoltaic projects that will reduce a political subdivision's energy costs. These reduced energy costs will lessen a political subdivision's operating costs and provide a financial benefit to municipal budgets and local property taxpayers.

The Political Subdivision Solar Program will prioritize larger grants to disadvantaged municipalities that meet certain criteria and retain full ownership of completed projects. These larger grants are meant to incentivize interest in the Political Subdivision Solar Program from disadvantaged municipalities as they often struggle to raise their own funds or do not have the administrative means to readily handle federal funding requirements.

B. Definitions

As used in this RFP, the term "project" includes both the equipment and facilities comprising the solar PV system and the management and administration of financing, funding, operations, maintenance, replacement, and other related matters.

C. Basic Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for Political Subdivision Solar Program funding, proposers must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. A proposer shall be an individual New Hampshire city or town that proposes a new ground-mounted, parking canopy-mounted, or rooftop solar electricity/photovoltaic system that exclusively serves the electrical load of municipally owned buildings within the same city or town.
2. The proposed project shall have a Solar Site Survey completed and showing (at a minimum) 80% Total Solar Resource Fraction (TSRF).

3. Proposers shall wholly own the project site location and any buildings that benefit from the project.
4. Projects shall be physically located in New Hampshire and within the geographic boundaries of the political subdivision proposing a project. Any point of grid interconnection shall also be in New Hampshire.
5. Projects must be operational no later than 24 months after grant agreement approval by the Governor and Executive Council.

The following proposers shall be ineligible for the Political Subdivision Solar Program:

1. Proposers seeking funding for expansions of existing solar electricity/photovoltaic systems or for installed or operational facilities.
2. Proposers seeking to replace or supplant existing funding sources for their projects.

D. Allowable Costs

Grants made under the Political Subdivision Solar Program shall only cover the cost of materials and equipment delivered to the project site and to be incorporated into the project. Labor costs directly related to the design, construction, and installation of the project will also be covered.

The Political Subdivision Solar Program will not cover other costs unrelated to the direct material, equipment, or labor costs related to the design, construction, and installation of the project. Such costs include, but are not limited to, the repair, reinforcement, or replacement of roofs, permits, landscaping, inverter replacement or ongoing operation and maintenance costs, distribution system upgrades and any interconnection fees/costs and other related expenses.

E. Hosting Capacity Maps

New Hampshire's electric distribution utilities have hosting capacity maps available to the public. These maps help identify where distributed energy generation resources could be accommodated on a utility's distribution system without significant infrastructure upgrades and without adversely impacting safety, power quality, reliability, or other operational criteria. These maps may be helpful to proposers as they look to site their projects. Each of the utilities and their hosting capacity maps can be found below:

Eversource: [Hosting Capacity Map | Eversource](#)

Liberty Utilities: [LUNH HOSTING CAPACITY \(arcgis.com\)](#)

New Hampshire Electric Cooperative: [Hosting Capacity Map - NHEC](#)

Unitil: [New Hampshire Interconnection Hosting Capacity Map | Unitil](#)

The Department provides these maps solely for informational purposes. Their use is not a requirement of the Political Subdivision Solar Program. Proposers should be mindful of each utility's respective disclaimer on their hosting capacity maps and are encouraged to investigate interconnection costs (which are not reimbursable) with their local utility prior to proposal submission.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In order to apply to the Political Subdivision Solar Program, proposers must first submit a Letter of Intent. Proposers must also complete and submit complete the Political Subdivision Solar Program proposal form

The Political Subdivision Solar Program proposal form must be completed in its entirety. Failure to do so will be considered an incomplete proposal and will be ineligible for scoring.

Along with the Political Subdivision Solar Program proposal form, proposers shall include other attachments in their proposal. Those attachments include:

1. Aerial and panoramic photos of the proposed project site.
2. Evidence of municipal ownership of project site and municipal property that benefit from the project – property deed, property tax card, etc.
3. All specification sheets for generating facility equipment, including manufacturer and model, as well as inverters, panels, racking, production meter, and monitoring software.
4. A copy of the solar site survey.
5. A copy of the [PVWatts Calculator](#) results.
6. Any letters of intent/commitment from any third-party investors, lenders, and financiers, or for any other local, state, or federal funding sources.
7. Resumes of key personnel from the project team, including of the solar developer and, if applicable, solar installation company, contractors, and subcontractors, such as electrician(s). Resumes should include years of experience, specifically including municipal or commercial/industrial solar project experience, if applicable.

8. A copy of the political subdivision's most recent financial audit. This audit must be performed by an independent third-party.
9. If the proposer's project is not directly owned, provide a copy of any approved power purchase agreement (PPA) or third-party ownership arrangement.
10. If the proposer's project causes any ground disturbance or is not in conformance with Appendix B, 4f of the New Hampshire executed [Historic Preservation Programmatic Agreement](#), provide a [Request for Project Review Form](#) that has been reviewed and signed by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. See Section II, Part E or Sections VI and VII for more information.
11. Letters of community support for the project from:
 - a. The applicant's local governing body.
 - b. One of political subdivision's state representative(s), state senator, or executive councilor; and
 - c. A local, regional, or statewide entity.

See RPF Section IV, Part B for more on letters of community support. Letters of community support are not required; however, they must be submitted with the proposal if the proposer desires to receive points for having them during the evaluation process.

Scoring Criteria and Weight

The Department will consider the following criteria and assign a corresponding point score. A maximum score for all criteria would be **105** points:

Political Subdivision Data and Clarity of Proposal: Applicant contact information is concise and submitted proposal is well-organized. **Maximum Point Score: 5**

Optimal Project Siting & Location Details: The proposer's solar project is reasonably sited to ensure insolation to the greatest extent possible and project location is optimal. **Maximum Point Score: 5**

Project Design Details: The proposal states project design details including relevant specifications in relation to the Recommended Project Design outlined in RFP Section II - Part E in relation to the NH Historic Preservation Programmatic Agreement. **Maximum Point Score: 5**

Labor & Equipment Warranties and Operations and Maintenance Plan: The proposer provides a clear description of the operations and maintenance plan that will be adopted following project completion. The proposer has obtained appropriate product and labor warranties for project components, and adequately describes those warranties. The

proposer also provides a detailed long-term plan to ensure at least one full replacement of project inverters. **Maximum Point Score: 5**

Detailed Project Timeline: The project timeline is detailed with specific realistically achievable milestones and the project is anticipated to be completed within 24 months following an approved grant agreement by the Governor and Executive Council.

Maximum Point Score: 10

Municipal Energy Cost Savings: The annual generation of the proposer's project covers 100-125% of the 2023 calendar year electrical load of the participating municipal buildings. The proposer also provides a detailed summary of expected kWh and energy cost savings using reasonable assumptions and methodologies.

Maximum Point Score: 20

Energy Efficiency Measures: The proposer will implement energy efficiency measures as part of, or alongside, the project. The proposer provides a detailed description of those measures and their expected energy savings. **Maximum Point Score: 5**

Project Budget and Financing: The proposal provides a detailed outline of project development costs and financing. The summary includes any anticipated personnel, contractual, supply/equipment, and permitting costs; and other relevant costs for the proposed project. The proposal also has a detailed financing plan that clearly identifies the source and financial value of any other leveraged funds to complete the project.

Maximum Point Score: 15

Management of Local, State, and Federal Funding: The proposal includes the political subdivision's most recent financial audit performed by an independent third-party. The audit demonstrates the political subdivision's ability to handle local, state, and federal funding.

Maximum Point Score: 15

Project Management Team Experience: The project management team has significant experience in overseeing, constructing, and completing municipal solar projects.

Maximum Point Score: 10

Letters of Community Support: The number of points awarded under this category will depend on the number of letters included in the proposal. One letter will result in one (1) point. Two letters will result in two (2) points. Three letters will result in all five (5) points. **Maximum Point Score: 5**

The proposal includes letters of support for the proposer's project from the following:

1. A letter from the political subdivision's governing body (i.e., selectboard or city council).

2. A letter from any one of the political subdivision's state-elected officials. Such officials shall include the political subdivision's state Representative(s), state Senator, or Executive Councilor. Proposers can find their state representative(s) and state senator on the NH General Court website: <https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/>. Proposers can find their executive councilor here: <https://www.nh.gov/council/districts/index.htm>.
3. A letter from a local, regional, or statewide entity that is connected to the political subdivision. Such entities may include a municipal board or commission that is not the municipal governing body, a municipal department, the political subdivision's regional planning commission, or a non-profit group of which the political subdivision is a member.

Project Ownership: The Political Subdivision Solar Program will prioritize larger grants to disadvantaged municipalities and retain full ownership of completed projects. Proposals with political subdivision ownership will receive 5 points, PPAs and third-party ownership will receive 0 points in this category. **Maximum Point Score: 5**

From: [Zach Luse](#)
To: [Ken Swymer JR](#); [Megan Fortson](#)
Subject: FW: RPS 2025-002 - Proceeding to Review Renewable Portfolio Standard - Order of Notice
Date: Thursday, March 27, 2025 4:29:26 PM
Attachments: [RPS 2025-002 Order of Notice.pdf](#)

Hi Megan and Ken,

This may be of interest to ECC. I think there was some talk in the state house of trying to eliminate the RPS or gut it.

Thanks!
Zach

From: Dumond, Christina <Christina.M.Dumond@energy.nh.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 4:18 PM
To: ENGY: Proceedings <proceedings@energy.nh.gov>
Subject: RPS 2025-002 - Proceeding to Review Renewable Portfolio Standard - Order of Notice

You don't often get email from christina.m.dumond@energy.nh.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good afternoon,

The Department of Energy (“Department”) is conducting a review of the Renewable Portfolio Standard Program (“RPS”), as required by RSA 362-F:5. As part of the review process, the Department will hold multiple stakeholder sessions to receive public comment on the RPS. For more information, please see the attached Notice of Order, which will also be posted on the Department’s website under the RPS section of the Proceedings page.

You received this notice because of your interest in prior Renewable Portfolio Standard matters concerning the Department.

If you would like to be **removed** from any RPS Review updates and emails, please go to the notifications sign up page and select **unsubscribe**: [Subscribe to our Newsletters](#).

If you wish to **receive updates and emails** regarding the 2025 RPS Review, **please email** Proceedings@energy.nh.gov to be included in the email list.

Please note a new email service list will be created for this proceeding and this email service list will no longer be used for RPS Review matters.

Thank You,

Christina Dumond

Legal Assistant
New Hampshire Department of Energy
Division of Administration
21 South Fruit Street, Ste. 10
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-6006
Christina.M.Dumond@energy.nh.gov

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

RPS 2025-002

Proceeding to Review the Renewable Portfolio Standard

ORDER OF NOTICE

New Hampshire’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (“RPS”) law requires the Department of Energy (“Department”) to conduct a review of the RPS program beginning in January 2025 and to make a report of its findings to the General Court by November 1, 2025, pursuant to RSA 362-F:5. In addition to literature review, research, and data analysis, the Department will seek stakeholder input during its review.

The first stakeholder session is scheduled for Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 1:00 pm via a Microsoft Teams meeting, and it will provide a status of national RPS efforts. This will be followed by an overview and status of New Hampshire’s RPS, and discussion of the 2025 RPS review process and schedule.

Additional stakeholder sessions to discuss specific elements of the review are scheduled for Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 1:00 pm via a Microsoft Teams meeting and Thursday, June 26, 2025, at 1:00 pm via a Microsoft Teams meeting.

The meeting agenda and discussion topics, including the link to the Microsoft Teams meeting, will be posted to the Department’s proceedings page in the coming weeks and circulated to the service list.

Petitions to intervene are not required to participate in the stakeholder sessions. Persons wishing to be on the service list for this proceeding should provide an email address to be added to the service list by emailing Proceedings@energy.nh.gov. Inquiries regarding this proceeding may also be directed to Proceedings@energy.nh.gov.

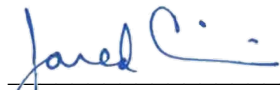
Based upon the forgoing, it is hereby

ORDERED, the Department of Energy shall announce that it is commencing a proceeding to review the Renewable Portfolio Standard; and

FURTHER ORDERED, a copy of this notice shall be posted on the Department of Energy's website no later than Wednesday, March 26, 2025; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, the Department of Energy shall post non-confidential information received regarding the Renewable Portfolio Standard review on its website.

So ordered, this 25th day of March 2025.



Jared S. Chicoine
Commissioner

Individuals needing assistance or auxiliary communication aids due to sensory impairment or other disability should contact the Department of Energy, 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2429; 603-271-3670; TDD Access: Relay N.H. 1-800-735-2964. Notification of the need for assistance should be made no later than one week prior to the scheduled event.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.13.

Meeting Date: March 20, 2025
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: Recommended Amendments - Keene Community Power Plan

Council Action:

In City Council March 20, 2025.

Voted 11-4 to carry out the intent of the first recommendation of the report.

Voted unanimously to carry out the intent of the second recommendation of the report.

Recommendation:

On a 3-2 vote, the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee recommend that the next Community Power Plan electricity options have four levels. These levels would include the Keene Basic as an elective option with the minimum renewable energy content required by the State of New Hampshire which is 25% total renewable energy, the Keene Green Local with 35% total renewable energy, the Keene 50 as the default option with 50% total renewable energy, and the Keene 100 as an elective option with 100% total renewable energy.

On a 4-1 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the Community Power Plan with amendments shown in the draft dated February 10, 2025 be adopted with the recommended revisions to have a four-level plan.

Attachments:

None

Background:

Senior Planner Mari Brunner addressed the committee and stated that there are two major parts to this recommendation, which is coming from the Energy and Climate Committee and staff. One recommendation pertains to the next bid for the Community Power Program, and the other recommendation pertains to the plan.

She stated that the Energy and Climate Committee spent two months (January and February) hearing from the current consultants and looking at the data for the program and what the participation levels had been for the first round. Ms. Brunner stated the first round had four products, including the default, which has 35% renewable energy, which is 10% more than the state minimum. There is also a basic option, which is a little bit cheaper – it has the bare minimum amount of renewable energy, but someone would have to choose that option intentionally; it is not automatic. There are also two options where you can increase the amount of renewable energy and pay extra for that.

Ms. Brunner stated looking at the data it shows that the vast majority of program participants stayed with the defaults. 4% choose to opt down to that cheaper option. There was around 2% to 3% that went up to the 100% option and less than 1% go to the 50% option. Looking at this data, the Energy and Climate Committee recommends going down to three options instead of four and increasing the amount of renewable energy in the default product to move towards our communities' goals to transition to 100% renewable energy.

The final piece, which was the most confusing item discussed at the last meeting, was the idea of building up a discretionary reserve fund using what is referred to as an Adder Fee. In the plan it is referred to as a Rate Component. What this would do is to put a small component of the rate to build up this fund which could be used for local projects. The Energy and Climate Committee was recommending that this rate be .1 cent per kWh and that it be added to the default product and the 100% product but not the basic plan.

Ms. Brunner stated because the bid recommendation included the Adder Fee if the Council wants to move forward with that Adder Fee, the City will need to amend the plan to explicitly state that staff has the authority to collect the Adder Fee to build the discretionary reserve fund.

Ms. Brunner stated putting this in the plan does not mean that it has to be included in the product. Regardless of whether the Council decides to incorporate the Adder Fee, staff still recommends that they update the plan to give the option to do that in the future – should they choose to do so. If the Council decided to add the fee to the plan now, it does not mean it would have to be included in the bid now.

Ms. Brunner further stated in terms of cost, it would be helpful to think about the impact of the fee and the impact of the extra renewable energy content equally. The recommendation for the Adder Fee is about .1 cent per kWh. According to the consultants, each additional 5% of extra renewable energy equates to about .2 cents per kWh. The Energy and Climate Committee recommends including 25% extra renewable energy, which is 50% total and 15% more than what we have now. The goal is to be at 100% renewable by 2030. This would equate to about \$80.00 more per year for an average household.

Councilor Remy stated the cost of everything is increasing and people are hesitant to increase prices knowingly. He felt whatever comes out of committee tonight, there will be debate at Council and the best way we can do this is to structure it in a way that the Council gives itself clear options and the easiest way to do that is to leave the original four options for the percentages, including the one from today which would make it easier to amend. He added with respect to the second motion - it is to give the Council the option to add the fee.

Attorney Palmeira pointed out the rules will contemplate making a recommendation that could be either adopted or not adopted, and a recommendation to choose one.

Councilor Lake stated he disagrees with the idea of lowering what the base plan is. He felt the idea of having three tiers is to simplify the program. He felt having three numbers is good from a consumer standpoint. He asked what the administrative cost associated with the Adder Fee would be. Ms. Brunner stated there is no direct cost to the city, everything associated with the program is paid through another rate component that goes directly to the consultants which is a .1 cent per kWh. The consultants gets paid out of the fee directly by the supplier. The monies collected by the city goes directly into a fund, which has already been created by the City Manager which has approximately \$75,000. The only cost the city would incur would be for example advertising costs or matching grants – any program the council decides to create.

The Manager stated this is the response staff received when they decided to add the Adder Fee to the 100% plan - the response was this was going to be such a small amount of administrative burden it would not be worth it. She stated the City always has costs, which is attached to bidding; it is how the City structures our bids.

Councilor Roberts stated he likes the ability to be able to add the fee in, depending on the economic climate.

Councilor Chadbourne asked how long ago the city came up with these goals. Ms. Brunner stated the 100% renewable energy goals were adopted in 2019. The City Council again adopted the Sustainable Energy plan in early 2021. This was a plan that was developed by staff with a lot input and help from the Energy and Climate Committee that laid out pathways to get to those goals. The Implementation Strategy from that plan was Community Power. The City went through another planning process with Community Power. Public outreach for Community Power was during COVID, which was adopted by Council in 2022 and launched in 2023. Councilor Chadbourne stated she agrees leaving the four and having a discussion at Council level, especially because of the economic climate we are living in right now and asked whether staff and Council could be asked to consider moving the goal from 2030 because of what is going on at the national and world level.

Councilor Favolise stated he agrees with Councilors Remy and Chadbourne at keeping the four options which gives flexibility to the Council. He also felt he does not see a path forward through the Council for this Adder Fee for a number of reasons. He stated keeping it on the default is probably a non-starter for reasons raised at the last meeting. He felt the City could not get to the 100% renewable goal by 2030 no matter what it is going to cost the residents and taxpayers. He stated he appreciates the role of the Energy and Climate Committee but as a Council they have to consider a number of competing priorities. One of those pieces is clean energy, clean environment and moving towards our goals but the bigger piece is for people to be able to afford to live in Keene and take advantage of all these initiatives.

Chair Powers stated he likes to accomplish everything we want to do but we are in a time-period where that could be difficult. He stated it would be good to realize we have a goal, but we might not be able to achieve it for a number of reasons. He felt simplifying the process is what he is looking to put in place.

Councilor Remy stated he could agree to going with four but 50% being the default rate, with an amendment to drop it back to 35% as opposed to an amendment to bring it up to 50%. Councilor Chadbourne stated she was not in favor of the 50%. Councilor Lake felt this was a very reasonable compromise. The consensus of Council was that the Adder Fee was not the way forward and it is fair to leave that piece out. The Councilor further stated until the Council comes together to reset these goals and until the Council decides to go away from the goals, we need to move to 100 and would support keeping the four plans with the default set at 50% with no Adder Fee.

Councilor Roberts felt it was not up to the committee to make it easy for the Council to come up with a decision. It is up to the Finance Committee to come up with the best plan and let the Council deliberate that plan. He felt Councilors had the opportunity to be present today to add their comment to this item.

Councilor Chadbourne stated she knows of a few Councilors who could not be present today due to other commitments but is aware that they watch this meeting, have opinions and some have given their opinion to her to be conveyed at this meeting.

Councilor Remy made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a 3-2 vote (with Councilor Roberts and Chadbourne voting in opposition.) the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee recommend that the next Community Power Plan electricity options have four levels. These levels would include the Keene Basic as an elective option with the minimum renewable energy content required by the State of New Hampshire which is 25% total renewable energy, the Keene Green Local with 35% total renewable energy, the Keene 50 as the default option with 50% total renewable energy, and the Keene 100 as an elective option with 100% total renewable energy.

Councilor Lake stated he did not feel the FOP Committee was trying to make it easy for Council but more a compromise with respect to what the Energy and Climate Committee had recommended which was brought to Council by the FOP Committee and the feedback received from the Council based on that. He felt sending this back based on the motion was a good compromise.

Councilor Remy made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lake and was then withdrawn by Council Remy.

No vote was made after the motion was withdrawn by Councilor Remy regarding allowing for a potential future choice by the City Council to include an Adder Fee into the Community Power Plan.

Councilor Lake stated the Committee is essentially making the same motion they had made at the prior meeting. There are a number of amendments that have been made to the Community Power Plan. He asked whether the language should say that the plan was adopted in March or was it okay to leave it as February? The Manager stated they are just referring to the draft that was dated February 10th, but the adoption will be the date that the Council actually adopts it.

Councilor Remy made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a 4-1 vote (with Councilor Chadbourne voting in opposition.) the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the Community Power Plan with amendments shown in the draft dated February 10, 2025 be adopted with the recommended revisions to have a four-level plan.

Councilor Roberts asked why a motion needs to be made to give a future Council approval to change the plan when they have that opportunity any time they want. Attorney Palmeira stated her understanding is that the plan is going to be in effect for five years and if the Manager wants to add a Fee it needs to be decided now. The Manager agreed once the Plan is adopted it gets filed with the PUC. The next time the City goes out to bid and wants to add the Fee the City does not need to go back to the PUC to add additional language.

EVENTS

2025 Monadnock Region Earth Festival

April 26 @ 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Monadnock Region
2025 EARTH

FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH 12PM-4PM
DOWNTOWN KEENE, NH

MONADNOCKFOOD.COOP/EVENT/EARTHFEST

Join us for the 2025 Monadnock Region Earth Festival! We'll celebrate some of the many things that make this region special: a commitment to ever-greater sustainability, healthy communities for all, and preserving and sustaining our planet, which is increasingly threatened by climate change's impacts.

Visit the festival learn about what others are doing and making, buy delicious food, learn something new, enjoy performers and activities throughout the Co-op, Railroad Square, the bike path & amphitheater (behind the Co-op)! Join others in our community to celebrate everything we are doing well and renew our commitment to keep striving ever onward.

Earth Fest BBQ from MFC's Prepared Foods Team!

Join our Prepared Foods team for a BBQ from 12 pm – 4 pm in the amphitheater behind the store!

Enjoy Live Music from Local Bands!

Featuring Dimitri Flamouropoulos & Down In The Ground

We still have some openings: [Apply to be a vendor here!](#)

Drive Electric Event

The absolute best way to learn about EVs is to talk to actual EV owners who have driven their EVs for years, and sometimes decades.

You will find these friendly and knowledgeable EV owners at the upcoming Drive Electric EV Showcase hosted by [Monadnock Sustainability Hub](#). You will find a wide variety of EV models from Ford, GM, Honda, Hyundai, Kia, Rivian, Tesla, and others. There will also be mini-talks with information about charging or taking trips in an EV.

ROOTED Film Screening and Q&A with Filmmaker Germaine Jenkins

After the festival, join [Monadnock Food Co-op and the Monadnock International Film Festival for an Earth Festival encore at Hannah Grimes!](#)

ROOTED is the story of Germaine Jenkins, a North Charleston resident, activist, and mother who, in 2014, convinced the City Council to lease her a sliver of land so she could grow food and start a grocery store, Farm Fresh Food. For decades, her community has been ravaged by the racial and social inequalities exacerbated by living in a food desert. This film ignites a powerful dialogue about the threats of food insecurity and its intersection with the history of racism and economic inequality in the American South.

Enjoy a tasting of freshly-grown food and a special Q&A with Filmmaker Germaine Jenkins and local agriculture advocates after the screening!

[Don't miss the Spring Textile Drive on Sunday, April 27th!](#)

DETAILS

Date:

[April 26 \(2025-04-26\)](#)

Time:

12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Event Categories:

Co-op Event, Community Event

ORGANIZER

[Monadnock Food Co-op](#)

Phone

603-355-8008

Email

outreach@monadnockfood.coop

[View Organizer Website](#)

VENUE

Monadnock Food Co-op

34 Cypress Street

Keene, [NH \(New Hampshire\)](#) 03431 United

States + [Google Map](#)

[View Venue Website](#)



34 Cypress St, Keene, NH 03431

[\(603\) 355-8008](tel:6033558008)

Co-op Hours:

Mon – Sat: 7AM – 9PM

Sun: 8AM – 9PM

Monadnock Food Co-op is a community-owned grocery store and deli in downtown Keene, NH, focused on providing local, organic, and sustainable products.

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CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Energy & Climate Committee

FROM: Megan Fortson, Planner and Emily Duseau, Planning Technician

DATE: March 28, 2025

SUBJECT: Potential Days & Times for the Regular Energy & Climate Committee (ECC) Meetings and 2025 Retreat Dates

Recommendation:

To select one of the days and times for the regular monthly ECC meetings and 2025 retreat date listed below.

Monthly Meetings:

Over the course of the past year, the Energy & Climate Committee has discussed potentially changing the day and time of their regular monthly meetings. The impetus for this discussion was to make the meeting time more convenient for both existing committee members as well as potential future members. Below are the preferred days/times that were selected by six members the committee as part of a poll. Planning Staff can determine what specific day during the month on which the meetings can be held and find a meeting location once a day and timeslot have been selected.

- Wednesdays, 8:00 – 9:00am
- Thursdays, 8:00 – 9:00am
- Wednesdays, 4:30 – 5:30pm
- Thursdays, 4:30 – 5:30pm

2025 Retreat:

The Energy and Climate Committee will hold a yearly retreat. The retreat will remind members of the purpose and function of the ECC and designate its top three priorities for the year. Once the priorities are identified, the Committee will review the existing work groups and propose potential updates or changes to their topics and functions. Below are the following dates that were selected by seven members of the committee as part of a poll.

- Wednesday, April 16th, 1:00 – 3:00pm
- Wednesday, May 7th, 8:00 – 10:00am
- Thursday, May 8th, 10:00 – 12:00pm



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.6.

Meeting Date: January 16, 2025
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: Annual Reports of Boards and Commissions

Council Action:

In City Council January 16, 2025.

Voted unanimously to carry out the intent of the report.

Recommendation:

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council request that City Boards and Commissions submit an annual report to the City Council on or about July 1st, 2025.

Attachments:

None

Background:

Councilor Haas stated he is before the committee on behalf of the volunteers who serve on of the various City Boards and Commissions. He felt these individuals don't get the recognition and appreciation they deserve. He stated he would like to call for an annual report from these various Bodies, giving them a chance to bring forward their challenges, their goals, and how they can do a better job in advising the city.

The Councilor also suggested deleting from the website those public bodies that don't meet anymore, such as the Agriculture Commission. He asked to resurrect the City College Commission. He felt the same extends to Standing Committees. He felt this could be a one-page description of what they did and what they want to do.

The Manager stated she likes the idea of requesting an annual report, but wasn't sure it can be required based on different statutes.

Councilor Lake felt it was a good idea to get periodic reports from the committees. He asked what the process for requesting these reports would look like. The City Manager suggested a motion be made that the Council requests annual reports from Boards and Commissions – staff can then pass that message along.

Councilor Jones began by thanking Councilor Haas for recognizing the City College Commission which the Councilor stated he had served on. He stated during the tenure of Mayor Lane there was a

process to obtain such reports from Board and Commissions. Further, it is a process that worked in the past and he felt it is something that could be accomplished by staff and the Mayor.

The Manager stated she did speak with the City Clerk about this and added it was a process to request all Bodies to come before Council and that is not what staff is proposing here. What staff is proposing now is an annual report and if there is a committee that Council would like to hear from, they could be requested to attend a Council meeting. In addition, there could be a topic the Council is deciding on and would like input from a specific Board or Commission, staff could also coordinate that.

Mayor Kahn addressed the committee and stated he wanted to assure the public that the City has on its website is information regarding all its Boards and Commissions. He indicated that recommendations that need to reach the Council are being conveyed to the Boards and Commissions. He felt that if staff could obtain this information in a less labor-intensive manner that would be prudent. He also suggested adding an expected date as well. With respect to the City College Commission, he noted there is a lot of dialogue that goes on between the City and the college. It is an important part of the City. He stated the City Manager and Mayor meet with college staff frequently and the college will be presenting their master plan to the Planning Board later this month. He stated there is continuing dialogue that happens with the college regarding housing, neighborhoods – there is Keene Police Officer working on neighborhood issues.

The Mayor indicated if there is purpose, it will be brought back to the City Council because that charge was written in 2008; it is a dated charge and needs to be refreshed if there is going to be an ongoing effort.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council request that City Boards and Commissions submit an annual report to the City Council on or about July 1st, 2025.

114 Jordan Road
Keene, NH 03431

December 17, 2024

Keene City Council
City Clerk Office
Keene, NH 03431

Council Agenda Item:
Request for Annual Reports

Honorable Mayor and City Council:

A strength of our local government and community capabilities are the twenty-six Committees, Commissions, and Boards that make up the advisory service to the City staff and Council.

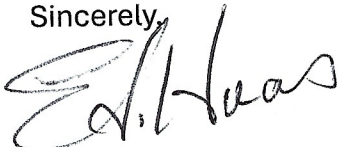
Unfortunately, many of these groups labor in quiet, without worthwhile public acknowledgement. Likewise, after a time some may have been concluded or no longer have relevance.

I ask the City Council to initiate a routine of each Commission, Board, or Committee presenting a brief annual report of their activities, accomplishments, challenges, and goals and ideas for the coming year. These reports could be as brief as desired by the submitters, and should be presented at a Council meeting, spaced out over the year for time efficiency.

The same annual reporting could at some time soon be extended to the Standing Committees as well as City departments.

I believe having this public forum will improve the visibility of the work done by these groups and will keep all Councilors aware of their accomplishments and goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Haas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed Haas
Councilor-at-Large
603 633 8832

Solar Workgroup

Online Meeting of 03/12/2025, 12:00-1:00 PM

Attending: Peter Hansel, Scott Maslansky, Bruce Norlund, Gordon Lerversee

Informational Meeting: No actions recommended.

Topics Discussed:

Solar Workgroup History: Peter Hansel--reviewed the history of the work of the Solar Workgroup for the benefit of new member Gordon Lerversee.

Focus has been on identifying sites for solar arrays in Keene and surrounding area. Most feasible sites have now been identified and some are in various stages of moving forward.

In addition, there has been a successful effort to develop "coaching" for commercial enterprises considering solar projects. This effort in collaboration with Hannah Grimes.

Peter Hansel shared that the greatest increase in solar projects completed in 2024, as measured by grid "take-offs" (Eversource data) was in residential projects.

Bruce Norlund asked about status of the Keene airport site and availability of federal funding given various federal freezes.

Scott Maslansky gave an update on status of funding resources across the state. He reports that more funds will be coming to the state but not much on the municipal side.

Looking Ahead: There was some brainstorming about the future focus of the Solar Workgroup. One idea was for an invited speaker to attend the May ECC retreat who might generate ideas for future work. In addition, there was some thought that development of smaller array sites like sheds, carports, pole barns and parking lots were likely in the future.

Gordon Lerversee asked whether micro wind turbines might be a future focus.

Scott Maslansky noted that the focus for the foreseeable future will be on solar given the state of technology as well as funding streams.

Scott suggested the coaching efforts might develop a structured model with a marketing focus as a resource for businesses, a model emphasizing cost, return on investment, etc., to engage business owners in further exploration of solar alternatives.

Next Meeting: Wednesday April 9:00, 12:00-1:00