

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

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

**Wednesday, October 22, 2025**

**4:30 PM**

**2nd Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Tim Murphy, Chair  
Paul Roth, Vice Chair  
Councilor Bryan Lake  
Steve Larmon  
Lisa Maxfield  
Annu Joshi Bargale (Remote; left at 4:47 PM)  
Gordon Leversee  
Jake Pipp, Alternate (arrived at 4:37 PM)  
Rowland Russell, Alternate (Voting)  
Catherine Koning, Alternate (Voting)  
Matthew Boulton, Alternate (Voting)

**Staff Present:**

Megan Fortson, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Maureen Nebenzahl  
Clair Oursler  
Charles Redfern, Alternate

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

Chair Murphy called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM.

Members of the public were present: Peter Hansel and Bruce Norlund of Keene.

**2) Approval of Minutes – September 24, 2025**

A motion by Vice Chair Roth to adopt the September 24, 2025 meeting minutes was duly seconded by Councilor Lake and the motion carried unanimously.

**3) LES Solutions Conference – Report Out**

Dr. Leversee, Mr. Boulton, and Planner, Megan Fortson, attended the Local Energy Solutions (LES) Conference on September 25, 2025. Dr. Leversee called it a really good, well attended meeting, with a lot of enthusiasm. He thought the general feeling was that New England would

continue moving toward renewables. He also thought there was some concern about how the Public Utilities Commission approved its fees, which he said would apparently be examined. Dr. Leversee said there were also information tables at the Conference.

Ms. Fortson reported being surprised at the sheer size of the Conference at the DoubleTree in Manchester, New Hampshire. She said the whole ballroom was full of tables and people. She thought the Conference was really great and went to a few different panels that were helpful. In particular, one related to affordable housing and sustainability, with Josh Meehan from Keene Housing on that panel. Another woman on the panel worked with ROCs (Resident Owned Communities), which are mobile home parks, and talked about how they help people living in those developments to get energy efficient work done on their homes (e.g., weatherization). Overall, Ms. Fortson was surprised at the Conference experience, having not known what to expect.

Mr. Boulton thought those were good summaries. He attended the Conference in his capacity with the Monadnock Sustainability Hub and to hear a well-received presentation (by Hub Board members, including Dori Drachman) about the Hub's new fund. Mr. Boulton said the idea of the fund is to bring back to the Monadnock region some of the incentives and financial help that was "clawed back" from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). He said it was not a small fund; \$325,000 had been raised to date. At the Conference, Mr. Boulton said the Monadnock Sustainability Hub presented the fund as a new innovation in the state. He said the idea received a lot of feedback and questions. This was Mr. Boulton's first experience at the Conference, and he heard a lot of good things. Chair Murphy was not surprised that the Monadnock Region was taking the lead with a program like this.

#### **4) Report Out from Eversource's Main Streets Event**

Ms. Fortson said she emailed Emily Hazelton, one of the Small Business Energy Efficient consultants with Eversource, who had remotely attended a prior ECC meeting. Ms. Hazelton was a part of a large team coordinating the Main Streets Event with Liberty Utilities and NHSaves. Ms. Hazelton shared some preliminary data from the Main Streets Event, indicating that Eversource visited 54 small businesses in Keene. Based on the findings of those site visits, 10 proposed energy efficiency projects had not yet moved forward, and three energy efficiency projects were signed onto and moving forward. Ms. Fortson thought that data was interesting. Dr. Leversee asked if there was a sense of what some of those projects were.

Ms. Fortson was unsure, noting that a lot of past retrofits were for lighting upgrades, so she wondered if businesses who previously had not made this change were choosing to now. Dr. Koning asked if the Committee would receive more data and information on the project types. Ms. Fortson said yes, Eversource would follow up with more statistics because people had the entire month to sign contracts for projects. Ms. Fortson would be happy to request updated data from Ms. Hazelton in a few months. Dr. Koning thought it could be interesting to find out if

there was a way the ECC could encourage these businesses, who might just be blindsided and need more information.

Ms. Maxfield wondered if the Committee ever received the data from Eversource's previous Main Streets Event in 2021. Ms. Fortson did not believe so, and others agreed. Ms. Maxfield thought it would be nice to have data for comparison. For the next event, Dr. Leversee suggested that it would be nice to have stories in addition to statistics, noting that it is a small community and people can network if they have information. Vice Chair Roth thought that idea aligned with outreach, what is happening in the community, and what the ECC is trying to encourage as positives; he said the Committee should be a clearinghouse for knowledge and resources.

Based on this discussion, Chair Murphy wondered if it would be worth asking Eversource's willingness to write a synopsis of both the statistical data gathered as well as some of the subjective stories, for the ECC's benefit. Then he thought there might be a way, over time, to see if the City made progress compared to the last cycle. Dr. Russell said it would be specifically helpful to have a list of the businesses Eversource met with, the businesses that got proposals, and the ones that were following through on proposals. He thought the ECC would probably know a lot of those business owners. Chair Murphy wondered if that was a reasonable ask of Eversource.

Ms. Fortson was unsure how much storytelling could be accomplished until more time passed and the businesses moving projects forward actually had a chance to do that work and reflect on how much of a change it made for them. She said she would contact Eversource to see if that was data they could provide and if not, whether they could provide it for next year's event. Vice Chair Roth questioned if this would be an annual event and Ms. Fortson was unsure. He thought Ms. Fortson should also request the previous year's data. Vice Chair Roth assumed Eversource had a marketing campaign and would be proud of this.

Ms. Bargale left the meeting.

Ms. Maxfield thought it would be interesting to know which businesses did not sign up and then for the ECC to canvass them, asking why they did not sign up. She said understanding why they *do not* sign up is sometimes more important for the Committee than knowing why they *do*. Ms. Maxfield offered to spearhead that canvassing effort if the ECC could get the Eversource data. Ms. Fortson would inquire with Ms. Hazelton. Ms. Fortson was unsure whether there would be any sort of confidentiality associated with this. She added that she thought the Committee should be careful in how it approaches businesses who did not sign up because it is not a City-run program, so there was really no way to convince someone to participate in it at this point. Also, it was almost the end of October, and Ms. Fortson did not think it was possible to still sign up for the program. Still, She said it would be interesting to know why people decided not to opt in. Ms. Fortson thought it would also be helpful to ask whether Eversource is planning to have another event in the future to help the Committee know how to use the existing data.

Dr. Larmon agreed about the value of stories being the best way to communicate. He noted there were some vague stories from the previous year and now that there was one complete year, he thought it might help to sell what was done. Dr. Larmon thought the Committee could ask Eversource for some stories.

Mr. Boulton noted that he makes short film resources for a living. He suggested that if the ECC came across a really powerful story, testimony, or business that might have a contagious effect in a positive sense, the Committee could make a simple film available. Mr. Boulton planted that seed as an idea that could be applicable to other contexts of the Committee's work as well.

Vice Chair Roth noted that Eversource had performed these Main Street events in other Communities too. He thought they might have information or success stories to share. He said a lot of people were not aware of these events.

Chair Murphy summarized that Ms. Fortson would express to Eversource the Committee's enthusiasm of interest and desire to see some collation of their Main Streets Event data from a legacy standpoint, to monitor that over time, and to know whether they are going to have similar kinds of future outreach.

**5) NHSaves ButtonUp Workshop – Wednesday November 5, 2025 from 6:00–7:30 PM at the Keene Recreation Center**

Dr. Koning spoke about this NHSaves Workshop that the Monadnock Sustainability Hub would be collaborating on. She said the Clean Energy NH team was taking out an ad in the Monadnock Shopper News the week before the event and Dr. Koning was arranging a press release in the newspapers. She said it would be a really good workshop for anyone whose house or business needs more insulation or energy efficiency. She hoped a few Committee members would attend. Dr. Koning would be acting as the point person and was in charge of refreshments. Her co-point person in 2024 was Carolyn Jones, and Dr. Leversee would be this year. Dr. Leversee would be putting up a sign advertising the event at the Monadnock Food Co-Op and Dr. Koning would mention it in her Monadnock Shopper News "Green Monadnock" column. Dr. Koning also shared the Facebook advertisement. Ms. Maxfield noted that she was introduced to and joined the ECC by attending a ButtonUp Workshop; it is bigger than helping people with their houses, it could help with recruitment too.

Ms. Fortson said she shared the social media post and other details with the City's Communications and Marketing team, who did some work to spread it, including with all local press releases (e.g., WKBK). Dr. Koning said she was no longer posting flyers for any events. If anyone had different opinions, she was open.

Vice Chair Roth asked if this event was for the Monadnock Region or anyone interested. Dr. Koning thought it was for everyone, but it was being advertised to Keene and whoever the Monadnock Shopper News reaches. Vice Chair Roth noted the Shopper News goes to Dublin.

Chair Murphy recognized Peter Hansel of Keene, who said the Monadnock Sustainability Hub had been participating with the ButtonUp Workshops for 10 years. Given the Committee's discussion of statistics, he thought it would be interesting to ask NHSaves whether they have any metrics or past results to share. Dr. Koning said she would ask.

Chair Murphy said it sounded like there were big shoes to fill for Carolyn Jones providing treats for the workshops in the past. The Chair said it also seemed like an opportunity to find new Committee members, so the food would need to be good. Ms. Maxfield offered to help.

**6) The White House Effect Film Screening – The Colonial Performing Arts Center Showroom at 20 Commercial Street from 5:30 PM to 9:00 PM**

Mr. Boulton invited Committee members to a documentary that was showing right after this meeting at a free, private event at The Colonial Performing Arts Center Showroom (5:30 PM reception, 6:30 PM showtime). The League of Conservation Voters cosponsored the event. Mr. Boulton said Rob Werner spearheaded the show by arranging for this film to be screened first at Dartmouth College, then in the Manchester area, and Keene would be the third showing in New Hampshire. There was a panel of experts at each show, so Mr. Boulton thought it promised to be a rich conversation.

He summarized the plot of the documentary about the turn in the H. W. Bush White House, when the elder campaigning Bush said, "those who think we're powerless to do anything about this greenhouse effect are forgetting about the White House effect." Then, Mr. Boulton said Bush's Chief of Staff, John Sununu, talked him out of it and into a different direction, which was a pivot point for U.S. and world history. The documentary is a historical perspective about that turning point of the White House away from the greenhouse effect in the late 1980s, when the climate change movement hit public consciousness. Mr. Boulton said it was highly acclaimed, and this was a chance to see it before it went to streaming services. Vice Chair Roth noted it would premiere on Netflix at the end of October 2025.

**7) Community Power Outreach Materials**

Ms. Fortson said two letters, which she passed around, would be going out to the community early in the first week of November. The first letter was about discontinued products and the second was about new supply products. Each letter addressed different demographics in Keene: (1) people who are being switched to a different option because their current product no longer exists, and (2) people looking to enroll. Ms. Fortson said everyone would probably start seeing more about this because the new rates would take effect with the first meter read of December. Vice Chair Roth asked if Eversource updated its rates and Ms. Fortson was unsure.

Councilor Lake asked if the Community Power Program website was updated on time with the schedule for the rollout plan. Ms. Fortson said yes, it listed the options that were ending and

starting. It also called out that the updated rates that would be good from the December 2025 to December 2027 meter reads. Chair Murphy asked if all that same information listed on the website would be in those letters going out to the community in November. Ms. Fortson said yes.

**8) Committee Budget Updates**

Ms. Fortson said as a newer Staff Liaison for the Committee, she was still learning the Budget, which is different than other City committees. She had been under the assumption that the ECC had a \$250.00 annual budget like many other committees. She was surprised to learn the ECC's Budget is actually \$850.00 per fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th).

To date in Fiscal Year 2026, the ECC incurred \$125.00 of expenses for the "Sun Day" event (stickers and solar charger) and approximately \$300 for the Clean Energy New Hampshire membership. So, Ms. Fortson said the Committee still had much more money to spend than anticipated. Everyone agreed it was good news.

**9) Work Group Report Outs**

**A) Outreach**

Dr. Koning reported that the Work Group did not meet physically, but coordinated a lot about the upcoming workshop. Dr. Koning and Ms. Maxfield discussed that the Work Group had not developed a meeting schedule and should probably touch base to determine a schedule and who would coordinate it. Dr. Leverage said the Work Group's first agenda item should be deciding what would follow the ButtonUp Workshop, noting the Committee could aim higher with more of a budget. He added that the ECC's article came out in the Monadnock Shopper News in early October, which was one of the Work Group's goals. He thought the first or second Wednesday of November would be the Outreach planning meeting. Chair Murphy agreed that the Budget news was liberating.

**B) Policy**

Councilor Lake reported that the Policy Work Group had a busy month. He started attending the monthly New Hampshire Energy Committee work group calls. He said it is essentially a way for many representatives from around the state, who are doing very similar things to the ECC, to get together; most months they discuss a specific topic. Councilor Lake's first month in attendance did not have a topic and they discussed things the committee was working on and provided updates regarding federal funding for solar projects. With a \$14 million solar project just approved in Keene and another New Hampshire community doing a much smaller one, Councilor Lake said there was a lot of confusion about timelines and deadlines. Overall, Councilor Lake thought it would be really helpful for Keene to be a part of that group and to talk with other communities. He forwarded Keene's Community Power Plan to an interested community, who wanted to look into it more, for example.

Councilor Lake also thanked Ms. Fortson for forwarding the Committee an email on the C-PACER webinar being hosted by Clean Energy NH. Councilor Lake explained that C-PACER is a program that has existed for some time, but not previously in New Hampshire; at this time, it is already in 35 other states. It is a funding mechanism for energy programs and resiliency. Councilor Lake said it is essentially a way to fund 100% of programs through a special assessment on the value of the property that is being either built or improved for one of these energy efficiency programs. He called it interesting, because if a municipality wants to implement it as a tool for organizations, that city must approve an ordinance to enable it. Councilor Lake thought the ECC should specifically discuss this during its November 2025 meeting and use the idea for a recommendation to City Council. He said that for C&S or other companies to use the weatherization programs, the City would have to allow them to do so.

Vice Chair Roth asked the C-PACER funding source. Councilor Lake said New Hampshire Business Finance Authority runs the program and has a list of organizations that do the financing. Chair Murphy said it is commercial lending; he attended the meeting with Councilor Lake. Councilor Lake said there were two main lenders at this time, for smaller and larger scale projects, but they were looking at bringing on more lenders.

Mr. Boulton asked if there are low interest rates or other reasons that make C-PACER attractive. Chair Murphy replied that it was not really clear. At one point, however, the Director of the Business Finance Authority did say that C-PACER is not a replacement for your financing. Chair Murphy said the meeting was not long enough to get into all the details and he wanted to see more information.

Chair Murphy wondered if C-PACER was something the Policy Work Group wanted to follow up on. Councilor Lake thought it should be on the Work Group's November agenda because they only got to briefly touch on it in October. The Work Group would discuss the webinar more and bring more information back for specific conversation at the November ECC meeting to decide if the Committee should write a letter to the City Council with a recommendation. Councilor Lake thought it looked promising as another tool without any direct drawbacks.

Councilor Lake also reported that the Work Group talked about the Sustainability Coordinator position and developed a few recommendations for potential changes to the draft job description. The Work Group hoped to see if Senior Planner, Mari Brunner, could meet in the coming weeks to discuss the recommendations, so the Work Group could present a more robust document to the Committee. The group discussed adding a direct point about tracking progress in the Energy Plan, which the ECC talked about in the past and was not exactly outlined. Another suggested including bullet points about aligning metrics within departments and with other cities and state agencies. Councilor Lake also mentioned some changes in the language around being a lot more strategic and long-term/forward looking; he said the way it was written seemed more about managing for today.

Regarding the draft Sustainability Coordinator job description, Mr. Boulton also mentioned Dr. Koning's insight to consider—given the ECC's mandate—ensuring the description focuses sufficiently on *energy* and *climate*, not merely on things like *environmental* and *sustainability*. While the latter are important and he thought a balance would be needed, Mr. Boulton did not want energy and climate to get lost within the broader job description. He thought that it should be a part of the broader dialogue with Ms. Brunner.

Chair Murphy felt like some of this was fast tracked—i.e., the job description—before the ECC had made its case for the Sustainability Coordinator position to the City Council. He thought it would be easy for the ECC to provide a lot of rationale and positive reasons for such a position. Still, he said there was another practical matter that everyone would have to wrestle with and that was the budget. At the October 2025 ECC meeting, Chair Murphy heard some discussion about three different potential funding sources, but he said some of them sounded speculative and unclear. For example, he recalled from the previous meeting that the Committee *maybe* thought it could get funds from private donors. So, Chair Murphy asked the Committee, in making a recommendation advocating for such a position to City Council, would the Committee have a responsibility in its due diligence to cover that? Chair Murphy personally thought the Committee would. He offered for the Committee to discuss at a future meeting.

Dr. Koning was involved with the earlier versions of this conversation, although not a member of this Work Group. Dr. Koning stated that it felt like the private donations were pretty well secured and people with those resources were interested. She said Zach Luse (former ECC member) felt confident he could raise donations from businesses. Mr. Boulton noted one thing Mr. Luse hoped for was a job description that he could give to businesses; so, Mr. Boulton called it a bit of a chicken and egg situation. Mr. Boulton suggested: (1) clarifying the job description to the liking of the ECC, Ms. Brunner, and the City Manager; (2) providing that description to Mr. Luse to see if it brings positive results with business donations; and (3) then present the position, with financial support, to the City Council. Chair Murphy said the job description could help the businesses rally behind the idea with funding.

In going through the description, Dr. Larmon said it seemed like there could be a large variance in what this position could be. So, he suggested making the description as clear as possible to ensure asking for the funding needed/wanted. For example, if it is a full-time position, ask for that; not maybe part-time or full-time. He spoke about the dangers of not having an air-tight plan of what the City really wants first before asking businesses for funding. When Dr. Larmon read the initial draft description, it did not feel air-tight to him, and he thought that it was this Committee's job to refine. Councilor Lake said the Work Group appreciated that feedback. Chair Murphy agreed that it had also been on his mind, and it sounded like some sequencing to get this process moving in the right order could help the cause.

As a next step, the Policy Work Group agreed to draft its vision of the job description before the November 2025 ECC meeting. Councilor Lake would try to arrange a meeting with Ms. Brunner in advance to have a good understanding of what needs to happen. Vice Chair Roth asked for the



timing of delivering the job description to City Council. Ms. Fortson thought by the Committee had until approximately the end of December, so she thought it was reasonable to revisit in November. Councilor Lake would be in touch with Ms. Fortson about his progress meeting with Ms. Brunner on the job description. Chair Murphy said this seemed like one of the priorities right now as a Committee and he appreciated all the enthusiasm and energy.

Councilor Lake noted that at this time, there were three Committee members on the Policy Work Group, with space for a few more. If anyone else wanted to join, he said to email him and he would send the meeting invite and ensure that there would not be a quorum of members present.

Ms. Fortson noted that correspondence to the City Council from Committees are typically written by the Chairs. Given this effort was a greater Committee priority/focus, Ms. Fortson wondered if either the Policy Work Group or the ECC as a whole would want to write and sign a letter, if appropriate. She said it would be a job description but would need to be accompanied by a letter with background information as to why the ECC is making the request. This did not need to be decided at this meeting. Chair Murphy appreciated the consideration. As Chair, he said he did not feel ownership of the letter. He thought it might be a strategic decision based on how things unfolded. Chair Murphy thought it would be best to revisit that question and how best to deliver the letter after the Work Group started the job description.

### **C) Resilience**

Dr. Russell reported that the Resilience Work Group met in October, and each member was asked to bring the priority items they thought the Group should be working on. He said it was a very robust discussion. There were a lot of climate related risks and factors on the list, but quite a bit of synergies between them. For example, drought is an item that connects to fire danger and also connects to food security issues. Dr. Russell said the Work Group decided to put everything on the list and assemble the City's relevant resources and plans that connect to those things. Members would also probably contact City staff, especially in Public Works, to get information from those plans. From there, Dr. Russell said the Work Group would begin to go through that list, decide the actionable items and priorities, and what is already happening in the City that the ECC can reinforce and what is not happening that people should be paying attention to.

### **10) New Business**

Dr. Leversee shared something he read about Uruguay, which uses approximately 98% renewable energy, with a very stable energy grid. He said the nation is very market-driven and the point was that the climate benefits were almost secondary because they are very dependent on fossil fuels, of which they have none; however, they are blessed with a lot of hydro energy, solar fills the gaps, with a little fossil fuel for peak demands. He said it was an interesting read.

Ms. Fortson shared exciting news that on October 27, 2025, the Planning Board would hear an application for the construction of a 406-panel ground-mounted, medium-scale solar array on a

vacant City parcel on Rose Lane (off of lower Main Street). She said the parcel used to be a part of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and is now simply fenced-in vacant fields. Keene Housing would be the recipient of the reduced energy prices through a net metering agreement. Ms. Fortson was excited to report this big step on another City parcel. Chair Murphy asked who the applicant was. Ms. Fortson said Revision Energy submitted the application, a private company would own the array, and then the City would sign on as the property owner. If approved, Chair Murphy asked if it would be the largest array in the City. Ms. Fortson was unsure. Discussion ensued about the array at the Keene Dillant-Hopkins Airport that is on Keene land in Swanzey but does not have to appear before any Keene entities. Mr. Boulton noted that it would be good to find out if this would be the largest array and to advertise it if so (i.e., Monadnock Shopper News article). Ms. Fortson noted that ECC members were welcome at the public Planning Board meeting if they were interested.

**11) Next Meeting: Monday, November 24, 2025 at 4:30 PM**

**12) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Murphy adjourned the meeting at 5:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Megan Fortson, Planner