



ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE (ECC)

AGENDA

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

4:30 PM

City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Approval of Minutes** – March 25, 2026 & April 21, 2026
3. **Bicycle Pedestrian Plan Update** – Focus Group Activity
4. **Local Solar Success Stories**
 - a. Cedarcrest Ground-Mounted Solar Array, 91 Maple Ave
 - b. Keene Housing Authority
5. **Community Power Mailer** – Content Ideas
6. **Work Groups** – Organization, Leaders, & Membership
 - a. Policy (*Meets as needed*)
 - b. Resilience
 - c. Outreach
7. **Task Groups**
 - a. Communication Plan
 - b. Benchmarking Dashboard
8. **Staff Updates**
9. **New Business**
10. **Next Meeting:** June 24, 2026 at 4:30 pm

Link to ECC Google Drive Folder:

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

**City of Keene
New Hampshire**

ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

4:30 PM

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

Members Present:

Gordon Leverage, Chair
Maureen Nebenzahl, Vice Chair
Paul Roth
Steve Larmon
Timothy Murphy
Jake Pipp, Alternate (Voting)
Charles Redfern, Alternate (Voting)
Catherine Koning, Alternate (Voting)
Rowland Russell, Alternate (Voting)

Staff Present:

Megan Fortson, Planner
Paul Andrus, Community Development
Director (left early)
Don Lussier, Public Works Director (left early)
Kürt Blomquist, Emergency Management
Administrator (left early)

Members Not Present:

Councilor Bryan Lake
Annu Joshi Bargale
Clair Oursler
Lisa Maxfield
Matthew Boulton, Alternate

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Leverage called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

Mr. Pipp participated remotely from New Haven, Connecticut. He was calling alone.

2) Approval of Minutes – February 25, 2026

A motion by Dr. Koning to adopt the February 25, 2026 meeting minutes was duly seconded by Mr. Roth and the motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote. Mr. Pipp abstained.

3) Sustainability Coordinator Position Update – Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Chair Leverage welcomed Community Development Director Paul Andrus to speak about the Sustainability Coordinator Position on behalf of Senior Planner, Mari Brunner. Mr. Andrus provided the Committee with a high-level update on the position’s functionality after meeting with the City Manager about it a few times. Mr. Andrus said he and Ms. Brunner discussed the position in terms of addressing the universe of sustainability and all the things associated with it, and that

28 being a long-term process. They looked at all the resources and assets in the Community
29 Development Department and had conversations about the aspect of community contributions. He
30 said they have approval from the City Manager to move forward with a proposed position of
31 “Assistant Sustainability Planner”: full-time with benefits, within the Community Development
32 Department. Mr. Andrus explained that 50% of the position’s time would be focused on the
33 strategies, goals, and tasks that came out of the Climate Action Plan and overlap with the 2025
34 Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP). The other 50% of the position would be focused on
35 contributing as a professional Planner to the planning functions in the Community Development
36 Department; one of those functions being to help monitor the progress of the CMP as a whole and
37 develop techniques and strategies to work with the community and Council on monitoring and
38 updates. Mr. Andrus said that monitoring the CMP is something key for him, the Community
39 Development Department, and is on his work plan from the City Manager.

40
41 He thought it was important to highlight that 50% of the full-time job would be dedicated to
42 working on the sustainability initiatives associated with what the position was envisioned for. He
43 thought those pieces were still negotiable (i.e., what sustainability projects they will work on)
44 based on what makes sense and what should be prioritized. Mr. Andrus explained that the proposed
45 position would be presented to the City Council in May 2026 and ultimately in June through the
46 Budget process. The full-time position will be partly funded by a matching source, which are funds
47 that have been committed by local contributors and come from the Community Power Fund; the
48 remaining third will be funded by the City. Mr. Andrus said the position had reached the stage of
49 a job description and salary range being created by the City Manager and was moving forward for
50 approval from the City Council through the Budget process.

51
52 Mr. Redfern noted that he studied the sustainability coordinator position for the City a few years
53 prior based on a similar position in Portland, Maine. He said Portland was very cooperative in
54 providing information, job descriptions, and functions of the position. He wanted to know whether
55 that information was made available to the Community Development Director. Mr. Andrus said
56 yes, Maine is a great example. Mr. Andrus noted that City staff were proceeding tactfully with this
57 proposal to get a foothold on the subject matter and to ensure it will successful moving forward
58 over the next few years. He said the position needs to be sustainable. So, he said the next step
59 would be going into the Budget process, which he said is challenging.

60
61 Dr. Russell said some of what Mr. Redfern referenced in the past research was tracking the City’s
62 cost savings as a result of having this position. Dr. Russell thought that it would be an excellent
63 metric for the person hired to track: every time a result of their work saves the City money, it
64 should be documented, because then it helps to justify having the position itself. He thought that
65 in one of the cities they looked at, the position more than paid for itself with those savings. Mr.
66 Andrus said that it would be key for the City to get some measurable wins out of this position and
67 continue to tell the story.

68
69 Dr. Koning asked when the job description would be available to the public. Mr. Andrus deferred
70 to Emergency Management Administrator Kürt Blomquist, who explained the Budget process in
71 May. The first step would be Committee Members attending the Council meeting and saying they
72 want the position. Then, there will be a Public Hearing in early June, and the Council will
73 ultimately vote on the Budget at their last meeting in June. Mr. Blomquist said that if the position

74 is approved by Council and the Committee anticipates an HR process, then the job posting
75 probably would not be live until September or October. Discussion ensued about how realistic it
76 would be for the advertisement to go live based on Mr. Blomquist's experience, noting there had
77 been lot of input from people in this group and City staff to ensure they would be able to hit the
78 ground running. He thought something that would make the story stronger for City Council would
79 be the support for other things that the Community Development Department does; for example,
80 they support at least eight City committees and there would be overlap with the CMP. So, Mr.
81 Blomquist said they were trying to get the green light as quickly as possible.

82
83 Dr. Koning spoke about being a part of the group who had been fundraising and she believed all
84 the donors were identified. She said they needed to know the mechanism of donation and when
85 the donors would be able to see a job description. Mr. Andrus said City staff had talked about what
86 those things might be in terms of a memorandum of understanding or some other
87 commitment/agreement; although they were not reinventing something, he said they were still
88 working through those details. Mr. Andrus was not yet sure when his process would overlap with
89 Dr. Koning's and when materials would become public.

90
91 Mr. Murphy called this really great news. He knew this position had been talked about for quite a
92 while and was sorry Senior Planner Mari Brunner was not present because she had a lot to do with
93 it happening. Mr. Murphy talked about one of the aspects Mr. Andrus described that really
94 resonated with him. Mr. Murphy recognized the challenge with generating funds and having
95 taxpayer funds recur year after year if the position is to justify itself. However, he said Mr. Andrus
96 described a work scope spanning some monitoring of the Climate Plan, the Master Plan, and more.
97 Mr. Murphy said that it seemed to align with what this Committee discussed about the position
98 and how to define sustainability; it crosses into many other aspects and areas, such as land use and
99 economics. He called it pervasive and not the first thing anybody might think of. Mr. Murphy was
100 really excited about the possibilities. Mr. Andrus agreed and added that when that time comes for
101 the public Budget meetings, he said it would be appropriate for the Committee to come and show
102 support. City staff would ensure the Committee knows the dates in advance. In the meantime, Ms.
103 Brunner would be available to answer questions about the process.

104
105 Mr. Redfern wondered if the Committee should write a letter of support for the Assistant
106 Sustainability Planner position. If so, he said the Committee would need to see the job description
107 before it goes to City Council, so the ECC's letter can be included in the Council's packet with the
108 position recommendation. Mr. Redfern also wondered if Mr. Andrus had the job description and
109 material from AmeriCorps in Portland, Maine. Mr. Andrus thought Ms. Brunner might, as Portland
110 was one of their sources. Mr. Redfern said that was an important example to him because of the
111 cost savings Dr. Russell discussed, so Mr. Redfern suggested sharing that extremely important
112 information with the Council. He said he would be looking for this Committee to have a packet as
113 a sort of practice run for the City Council presentation. Mr. Andrus said absolutely, calling that a
114 great idea. He discussed a very brief presentation he provided for the Planning Board on March
115 23, 2026, on the importance of tracking the performance of the new CMP. Mr. Andrus noted how
116 it is more challenging to pinpoint those cost savings because there are many moving elements to
117 measure within the Master Plan, so they have to pick the elements to measure strategically. He
118 thought the goal was to be strategic about this Assistant Sustainability Planner position.

119

120 Mr. Roth agreed with Mr. Redfern that this position is the fruits of this Committee’s labor all the
121 way back to Peter Hansel and whomever else came before. So, Mr. Roth emphasized how
122 important this topic is to the Committee. He offered any help in the effort, whether it be
123 emphasizing the Energy & Climate Committee’s legacy and history, and progress that had been
124 made as a City—he said Keene is head and shoulders above most any other community in New
125 Hampshire. Mr. Andrus agreed, noting that the things the City was contemplating 20 years ago
126 were ahead of some of the places he worked before he moved here, which is pretty impressive. So,
127 he thought it made sense for the City to be talking about a position like this at this stage, calling it
128 the right fit with what the community has been working toward for a while.

129
130 Chair Leverage said when he looked at the early sustainability planning documents, he found two
131 overarching goals: (1) establishing a community power program, and (2) establishing a
132 sustainability coordinator position. So, he said this would be accomplishing the second of those
133 milestones for the City. Mr. Andrus hoped the Council would see this as a win for them, stating
134 that it would not cost much, and City staff would try to make that case. Mr. Andrus thanked the
135 ECC for its time.

136
137 **4) Climate Resilience Presentation – Kürt Blomquist, Emergency Management**
138 **Administrator & Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer**
139

140 Chair Leverage welcomed Emergency Management Administrator, Kürt Blomquist, and Public
141 Works Director, Don Lussier. Dr. Russell explained that this presentation came out of the ECC’s
142 Resilience Work Group, which wanted to involve City staff in discussing two overarching
143 questions with the whole Committee:

- 144 1. When it comes to climate resilience and climate issues that the City and region might be
145 having, what do Public Works staff see as priorities, and what work are they trying to
146 schedule or hoping to do?
- 147 2. How could this Committee help City staff in doing that work?

148
149 Mr. Lussier said this would be more of a discussion than a presentation. He thought the simple
150 answer to the first question was that the top priority with respect to climate change for Public
151 Works is stormwater and flood management. He said that is where Public Works’ domain and
152 scope of practice really intersect most directly with climate resiliency. Mr. Blomquist, part-time
153 Emergency Management Administrator and retired Public Works Director, replied that these are
154 not the Department’s priorities, it is really about what the community’s priorities are. In December
155 2025, the City completed an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan that is available on its website. The
156 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is required if you expect to receive FEMA funding in the future—
157 from disaster relief funding to hazard mitigation programs.

158
159 The HMP identifies the vulnerabilities or threats that the community sees and then looks at what
160 actions the community can take to minimize or prevent loss of life and damage to property as it
161 moves forward. Mr. Blomquist said the number one thing people are most concerned about within
162 the community is flooding. He discussed how water comes down through the middle of five
163 watersheds into the City limits and the City’s Ashuelot River is slow draining. So, that was the
164 number one threat and community concern mentioned. Mr. Blomquist also mentioned concerns
165 about hazards like severe weather in general (e.g., windstorms, etc.), extreme temperatures newer

166 to New England, wildfires, and higher frequency droughts (he mentioned the drought tracker; this
167 was a moderately dry period). Mr. Blomquist also cited the manmade community concerns in the
168 HMP, such as cyber threats, urban fires, and hazardous materials (transport and stationary; four
169 state highways coming together locally). Mr. Blomquist recommended looking through the HMP.
170 Ms. Fortson said she would send the link to the whole Committee.

171
172 Mr. Blomquist explained how the HMP goes on to identify things the City can do to prevent these
173 hazards, ranging from increasing volume within Public Works stormwater systems to training the
174 public about managing extreme weather events. He commented on how 72-hour response and
175 recovery in an emergency might be a thing of the past, and people should be prepared to manage
176 for 5 to 10 days on their own in some instances. The HMP includes approximately five pages of
177 ongoing City activities (e.g., building code updates, maintenance) that departments are doing on a
178 regular basis, which all continue to build back into the Budget. For example, why does the City
179 clean stormwater systems? It is a part of the mitigation planning to help minimize future hazards.

180
181 Mr. Redfern asked if any of the City's dams were concerning at this time. Mr. Lussier said no, he
182 the City had done a pretty remarkable job over the prior decade of rehabbing and upgrading all of
183 its dams, not only the water supply dams; in part because of regulatory requirements, but the City
184 spent a lot to upgrade those dams. Mr. Lussier explained that both of the City's water supply dams
185 are classified as high hazard by New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES)
186 and therefore meet stricter regulatory requirements. So, they both had to be upgraded to a higher
187 regulatory threshold, meaning designed and certified to be maintained in such a state that they
188 could pass or retain 2-1/2 times the 100-year flood event (i.e., a 500-year or equivalent flood). For
189 example, he referred to the little bit of concrete armoring exposed under the grass on the
190 downstream face of the Robin Hood dam; basically, the whole dam is designed to become a
191 spillway in the event of a catastrophic event without damaging the dam.

192
193 Mr. Blomquist thought one thing to keep in mind from a resilience standpoint would be the water
194 supply aspect. As Mr. Lussier mentioned, NHDES upgraded the supply dams from a resilience
195 perspective to protect them from failing, but no capacity was added at this point. Mr. Blomquist
196 called the City of Keene lucky to have two water sources: four groundwater access wells plus the
197 two reservoirs. On the topic of more droughts and high temperatures, he said the community's
198 future water supply would be impacted by these issues. He explained one of the things that the
199 City had implemented from the HMP is the Public Works Department's Water Shortage
200 Emergency Conservation Plan. So, if necessary, the Public Works Director or Assistant Public
201 Works Director / Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager could come back to talk about that plan
202 and what would trigger activities for the community to conserve water. Mr. Blomquist said that in
203 the long term, if Keene continues to see the droughts lasting as long as they have, there would be
204 effects particularly for groundwater sources not recovering as quickly as they used to.

205
206 Mr. Roth noted that it would be helpful to see the City's HMP because Cheshire Medical Center
207 just completed one too, so the two entities are on the same page. Mr. Blomquist said that hopefully
208 they used the same threat agreements, but he thought it was great that the hospital completed a
209 plan as well. Mr. Roth appreciated the Public Works Department's hard work and working hand
210 in hand at the hospital. He said to Dr. Russell's point, the Committee wants to complement the
211 Public Works Department's hard work and do as much as possible to further its mission, which is

212 the community's mission and the ECC's mission. Mr. Roth appreciated the Public Works
213 Department's hard work and thanked Mr. Lussier and Mr. Blomquist for coming to the meeting.
214

215 Dr. Russell asked the guests what kinds of things keep them up at night that have not received
216 enough attention; they had shared big picture things they were doing, and Dr. Russell wanted to
217 know about the risks, threats, and gaps they wished they could do something about. Mr. Lussier
218 said he had talked about it ad nauseam, but the scariest bit of infrastructure that the City has is the
219 Martell Court Pump Station and the approximately two-mile-long pipe that connects it to the
220 Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). He said that if anything were to ever happen to that, the
221 City would have no way of getting wastewater to the WWTP. Mr. Lussier called the Martell Court
222 Pump Station the beating heart of the system because if it stops, the City has 90 minutes to get that
223 system operational before it is discharging raw sewage into the Ashuelot River. It does not stop
224 and effectively can never be taken offline for maintenance and repair; it always has to be running.
225

226 Dr. Russell asked how old the pump station is. The Public Works Director said it went online in
227 1985. Mr. Lussier said there is obviously a lot of preventive, routine daily maintenance. A few
228 years before this, a valve failed and was leaking untreated waste into the WWTP and the City was
229 unable to fix it because they could not take the pump station offline. The best they could do was
230 limit the amount of leaking until a bypass could be built; that bypass contract is going forward
231 during summer 2026. The City is building a system to bypass around the Pump Station with rented
232 pumps to allow for work to occur within the Pump Station. Mr. Lussier said there is no way to turn
233 that Pump Station off without the bypass. There is no backup or redundancy in the system. He said
234 it is the same case for the one, 30-inch pipe that extends two miles to the WWTP: if there were a
235 catastrophic failure on that pipe, there would be no redundant pipe to use.
236

237 Dr. Koning said her question was going to be about redundancy and she was sure the answer was
238 about money but asked whether there was consideration of a plan. She added that it seems like
239 Martell Court sits kind of low, so if there were a big flooding event, then the pump would be
240 flooded. The Public Works Director mentioned that the Martell Court Pump Station has flood
241 measurements, so they can put stop logs at the doors to keep water out and there is a sump pump
242 in it to pump water out. Still, Mr. Lussier agreed that it is right in the floodplain, which is typical
243 because pump stations are always at the lowest point. However, he said it is definitely a
244 vulnerability, mentioning likely needing to access the Pump Station by boat during a flood. So, the
245 Public Works Director said that is probably the biggest thought that keeps him up at night.
246 Regarding the question about redundancy, Mr. Lussier said that when the WWTP and Martell
247 Court Pump Station were first built, the City originally designed them with two parallel 24-inch
248 pipes and the decision at the time was to save money on one larger pipe.
249

250 Mr. Blomquist replied to Dr. Russell's question. Mr. Blomquist does not think the community,
251 region, and state are prepared for extreme heat. He said the City of Keene does not have a cooling
252 center because all the large buildings were built to stay warm, not with cooling. Most of the big
253 church halls do not have air conditioning as some people expect and the majority of them do not
254 have backup generation. At this point, he said the City only has the Keene Parks and Recreation
255 Department, where a reasonable temperature can be maintained in the large spaces. Mr. Blomquist
256 said extreme heat would continue and noted that during a long-term utility outage, solar
257 transmission systems also go down; he mentioned the case of Puerto Rico. He said for the past

258 several years, ISO New England—the region’s utility—had been issuing the potential for rolling
259 brownouts because the transmission is under capacity, coming from the Albany area in particular.
260 So, Mr. Blomquist thought the low capacity was probably from a combination of high heat, high
261 demand, and all the electrification for systems. He added that another concern is for the
262 transmission of things in and out of the area over the next decade, calling it a major impact because
263 there could be incidences that the City is not prepared to be able to manage. Lastly, the Emergency
264 Management Administrator said the City is not prepared to deal with another infectious disease
265 outbreak, which he said would occur, it is just a question of when and what.

266
267 Mr. Roth asked if the City has the right-of-way to put a redundant pipe between the WWTP and
268 Martell Court Pump Station. Mr. Lussier said they would follow parallel to the existing pipeline.

269
270 Carolyn Sweet of Keene Housing asked what the City is doing to enable solar batteries, noting
271 Keene Housing is installing a lot of solar and would like to move into batteries. She said batteries
272 were still enabled through some of the grant funding sources and she expected them to come back
273 online. Ms. Sweet asked what the City would be doing to make solar batteries possible in
274 multifamily residences and in community centers. She said Keene Housing had explored the idea
275 and has cooling community rooms that are generator powered and could be brought onto their
276 solar units if they could get batteries at all their new sites for development. Mr. Blomquist said
277 that was a question for the Fire Department and Code Enforcement, primarily because of the
278 standards to allow a lithium battery of a certain size next to residential property, etc.

279
280 He said New Hampshire has not really done as much with those as other states. He knew there was
281 some review for the batteries at the WWTP: one of the options with the solar field was to have a
282 battery and to use the overage to charge the Plant. At that time, Mr. Blomquist said the cost–benefit
283 ratio was not there. Eversource looked at putting a large cell in the Westmoreland area because
284 they have issues with transmission constantly going down. It was an estimated \$4.2 million project,
285 but again the cost–benefit ratio exceeded it. If the City were to truly look at resiliency, Mr.
286 Blomquist mentioned having some type of backup to store excess energy but again said a lot of
287 those things had gone away, although we would see again in a few years.

288
289 Dr. Russell noted City staff had shared a number of issues and the Resilience Work Group had
290 brainstormed a rather extensive list (e.g., food security, impact of invasive species, climate, climate
291 driven invasives, other climate driven things). He noted the ECC also has the Outreach Work
292 Group that deals with communications and asked what help this Committee could provide in
293 addressing some of those things. Dr. Russell obviously thought there were some public education
294 things the ECC could do be doing but asked what other help the staff may need. Mr. Lussier
295 recalled mentioning that the nexus for Public Works with resiliency is all about stormwater. He
296 discussed the need for more landform stormwater runoff solutions but the problem with those
297 solutions (i.e., some green infrastructure projects, like infiltration strips) from the City’s
298 perspective is they work great but are much more maintenance intensive than just putting a pipe
299 in the ground; the City is constrained by what it can actually maintain.

300
301 Mr. Lussier said that where groups like the ECC and service organizations like The Rotary could
302 really help out would be by supporting those green infrastructure initiatives: adopting rain gardens
303 and taking on the some of the manual labor. Mr. Blomquist discussed how when it comes to

304 stormwater, education might be needed for private property owners about how the runoff from
305 their driveways and properties and out into storm drains is their responsibility. There could be
306 ways to educate on mitigating the impacts of that runoff, such as sump pumps to the storm drains
307 that might require more labor from the property owner. In terms of Emergency Management, Mr.
308 Blomquist suggested educating the populace about preparing when building a house, preparing for
309 heat and long-term utility loss, and for flooding and water threats. He said he had back-to-back
310 ideas for education because the City does not have the resources for any good, consistent
311 educational programs. So, he was looking to the Committee to be that that consistent educational
312 arm over time.

313
314 Mr. Lussier suggested one way the Committee could move the ball getting people doing more on
315 their private properties to manage stormwater better would be through Stormwater Utilities under
316 the NHDES; a few cities had studied it, but none ever set one up. The idea of a Stormwater Utility
317 is that a property owner pays to discharge stormwater from their property, just like paying to
318 discharge sewage into the City's sewer system. It incentivizes keeping the stormwater on your
319 property (i.e., to infiltrate or manage). Mr. Blomquist noted that there was political opposition once
320 the plan for Stormwater Utilities was ready to go in Manchester, New Hampshire, and it did not
321 happen.

322
323 Mr. Murphy appreciated this conversation and hoped it would continue. Dr. Russell asked the
324 Public Works Department to think of the ECC and the Resilience Work Group as resources. Mr.
325 Roth wondered whether the Committee could solicit some of this information from the Public
326 Works Department for the ECC's upcoming tabling events and Ms. Fortson said she would help
327 to coordinate.

328

329 **5) Clean Energy NH Municipal Membership Renewal**

330
331 Ms. Fortson explained that the Committee needed to vote if it wanted to renew its current Clean
332 Energy NH Municipal Membership. The membership is \$300 and Ms. Fortson reported that there
333 was \$850.00 in the ECC Budget at this time; the Budget would expire on June 30, 2026.

334
335 A motion by Mr. Murphy to renew the Keene Energy & Climate Committee's Clean Energy NH
336 Municipal Membership for \$300.00 was duly seconded by Vice Chair Nebenzahl. The motion
337 carried unanimously on a roll call vote of 8-0. Mr. Pipp abstained.

338
339 **6) Expiration of the Keene Energy Plan Host Website - Transfer of Documents to City**
340 **Website**

341
342 Ms. Fortson reminded the Committee that the Keene Energy Plan website (KeeneEnergyPlan.com)
343 would be expiring soon. If Committee members wanted any specific documents or information
344 transferred onto the City website, they should e-mail the links and/or snippets to Ms. Fortson. Vice
345 Chair Nebenzahl asked the deadline and Ms. Fortson said mid-to-end of April because it would
346 expire in May. Dr. Koning thought that most of the information was going to be transferred or it
347 would just go away. Ms. Fortson was unsure whether it would all be re-posted on the City website
348 though, it would be on file with the Community Development Department. Ms. Fortson said she
349 would double-check. Committee members could send her a Word document or email with the links

350 and important resources they would like re-posted on the City website’s various webpages,
351 whether the ECC’s webpage, the “Going Solar in Keene” webpage, or other locations on the City
352 website.

353
354 Mr. Redfern mentioned the solar array at the Keene Dillant-Hopkins Airport as an Agenda item
355 for the April 2026 meeting. He said there would be 100% renewable energy for Keene if the City
356 chooses to participate in the 5 MW project, with a \$20 million budget for the bond and a \$14.5
357 million project cost. He said those in charge were looking for participation from the communities
358 who would be benefiting from the solar farm and some County Commissioners think that Keene
359 should pay a greater share than the other communities, which confused Mr. Redfern. He said it
360 was in the City Manager’s hands to negotiate now, but he wanted to better understand the issues.
361 Ms. Fortson offered to inquire about the status of that particular substantial renewable project
362 before the next meeting and update the Committee. She was unsure whether it would result in the
363 City Manager needing a letter of support from this Committee.

364
365 **7) Spring Retreat Draft Agenda Review - Tuesday, April 21st from 9AM–12PM in the**
366 **City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room**
367

368 Chair Leversee requested feedback from the Committee on the proposed Spring Retreat Agenda
369 that he drafted with Vice Chair Nebenzahl and Ms. Fortson. Like today’s meeting Agenda, Mr.
370 Murphy thought the draft Retreat Agenda was packed, but he was glad to see the time prompts to
371 try to keep things moving; he thought it could be an effective tool. That said, he thought there was
372 a lot on there and wondered if it would be feasible to cover it all effectively. Dr. Koning agreed,
373 stating it seemed ambitious. She wondered if the “Looking Back” and “Looking Ahead” would
374 naturally go together in terms of the Committee’s goals; does the Committee vaguely know
375 whether it met any of them, and what should it be working on? She suggested less looking back
376 and more looking ahead. Vice Chair Nebenzahl thinks it is a little tough to know where you are
377 going unless you look back. She agreed it would be a lot of material to cover in three hours but
378 thought looking back would also be essential.

379
380 Dr. Koning suggested doing the look back before the retreat, noting how much is available on the
381 website. Ms. Fortson noted that it was a draft agenda, but she personally thought it would be
382 important to have the look back component to provide a framework for where the Committee has
383 come from and where it is right now. She said the look ahead could be whittled down as
384 Collaborative Partnership Opportunities or Project Tracking and Benchmarking, both of which she
385 thought could potentially be discussion items at future meetings or assigned to different Work
386 Groups. Historically, Ms. Fortson said the retreat has really been about gauging how the ECC is
387 doing, whether things are working, if the focus group of each Work Group still serves the
388 Committee in the way needed, whether any Work Groups need to change topics or the number of
389 Work Groups. Ms. Fortson thought it could be less about exploring these specific topics and more
390 about how the Committee wants to structurally function over the course of the next year.

391
392 Vice Chair Nebenzahl said she suggested Project Tracking and Benchmarking so every so many
393 months (e.g., three or four), the Committee looks at what whether it is accomplishing what it sets
394 out to achieve. She wants to track whether things happen and if not, how the Committee will get
395 there. Dr. Russell suggested this Agenda Item not be front loaded with a presentation for the whole

396 hour and more so that the Committee could take something from the past and look at how it
397 leverages the future. He hoped for more interaction on the topic.

398
399 Mr. Murphy wondered if the “Potential Presenters / Meeting Attendees” on the Agenda were to
400 have invited guests to speak at the retreat. Ms. Fortson said no, for the Committee to brainstorm
401 potential future guest speakers at ECC meetings. Dr. Koning asked if someone would be
402 facilitating each different Retreat session. Ms. Fortson said no, Chair Leverage would lead the
403 Retreat like a regular Committee meeting, and it would be open, less like a presentation. Some
404 Committee members expressed that they did not realize it would be less formal. Ms. Fortson
405 welcomed suggestions for how to structure the Retreat.

406
407 Dr. Russell asked about two Retreat Agenda items: “2.a. Looking Back – Established Goals and
408 Guiding Principles” and “3.b. Looking Ahead – Goals and Objectives.” He thought it would be
409 helpful to outline what the goals have been and what the Committee thinks should be added to
410 those. Dr. Koning agreed about integrating Retreat Agenda items 2 and 3 a little more. Dr. Russell
411 also wondered whether the Committee has the right Work Groups. Vice Chair Nebenzahl said she
412 was also concerned about the Work Groups overlapping. She thought the Committee should
413 establish clear definitions of what each Work Group is, which she did not feel existed at this time.
414 Dr. Koning also wondered if the groups could each be focused on a topic or project as opposed to
415 more general discussions (i.e., unsure where they are going).

416
417 Chair Leverage and Dr. Koning spoke on WKBK Radio the prior weekend about the ECC. It
418 caused Chair Leverage to review the Committee’s Charge and he was reminded of its three main
419 goals: (1) Monitor and advocate for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, (2) promote energy
420 conservation and efficiency, as well as the use and production of renewable energy, and (3)
421 increase awareness of and resilience to the expected impacts of a changing climate. That is the
422 Committee’s big picture, but the Chair heard members expressing a stronger goal for alternative
423 energy adoption, getting information, and determining what the Committee’s role is in helping to
424 get there. Are there things the Committee can be working on independent of things that come to
425 the Committee’s Agenda (e.g., C-PACER and Earth Fest) and then how are those projects tracked
426 quarterly toward the Committee’s goals? Regarding Outreach, Chair Leverage thought the public
427 was probably really eager to hear how the City is preparing for climate impact, how it is doing in
428 terms of energy and alternative energy, and more.

429
430 Chair Leverage’s broad ideas for the retreat: look at where the Committee has been, where it is
431 going, and how to measure its progress. Mr. Murphy thought that was great and thought those
432 three items could be a good orientation at the beginning of the retreat to stay focused on the
433 Committee’s Charge. Mr. Murphy also suggested using the timeframes listed on the retreat agenda
434 as suggestions to keep the discussions moving. Ms. Fortson agreed that the current agenda
435 structure was only a draft and suggestion. Vice Chair Nebenzahl also agreed that everything could
436 flow how members want it to, but timeframes could help guide things.

437
438 Mr. Roth talked about how both items 2.b. and 2.c. roll into the Project Tracking and
439 Benchmarking, stating you cannot know where you are going unless you know where you have
440 been—that is the foundation. He said if the Committee is lacking anything in the past, that it would

441 be a project for the new Assistant Sustainability Planner. Other Committee Members agreed. Dr.
442 Russell thought Agenda Items 2 and 3 were really well integrated in that way.

443
444 Mr. Redfern thought the Assistant Sustainability Planner’s job description should include them
445 attending ECC meetings. Ms. Fortson was unsure whether that would be the case for all meetings,
446 but she would share the suggestion. Mr. Redfern said it made sense in his opinion. Dr. Russell
447 recommended that it could at least be a standing agenda item for them to attend the ECC meetings
448 for the first 10 minutes, for example, and hopefully they are able. Chair Leversee suggested
449 crossing that bridge when the time comes. Ms. Fortson appreciated the feedback to streamline the
450 Retreat Agenda.

451
452 **8) Community Power Mailer – Content Ideas**

453
454 To be covered at the next meeting.

455
456 **9) Earth Month Events:**

457 **A) Budget for Outreach & Public Engagement Materials**

458
459 There were no comments.

460
461 **B) Keene State College Earth Day Celebration – Friday, April 17, 2026 from**
462 **12:00 PM–3:00 PM at Oya Hill**

463
464 There were no comments.

465
466 **C) 2026 Monadnock Region Earth Festival – Saturday, April 25th from 11:00**
467 **AM–3:00 PM at the Monadnock Food Co-op**

468
469 Both Chair Leversee and Dr. Larmon volunteered for the ECC table. Ms. Fortson needed someone
470 to pick up the table and tent from the Community Development Department. Chair Leversee said
471 he was familiar with the process, and Dr. Larmon offered to help him.

472
473 **10) Work Group Report-Outs**

474 **A) Policy**

475
476 The Policy Work Group had not met since the last Committee meeting.

477
478 **B) Resilience**

479
480 No comments.

481
482 **C) Outreach**

483
484 Chair Leversee and Dr. Koning had talked about the Earth Day events.

485
486 **11) Staff Updates**

487 **A) SB538 Letter of Support - Request from City Council**
488

489 Ms. Fortson reported that the City Council would be signing the letter in support of SB 538, so it
490 was with the City Manager and Mayor’s office to be handled.

491
492 **B) C-PACER**
493

494 Ms. Fortson confirmed that the City Council approved directing the City Manager to direct staff
495 to write a C-PACER Ordinance that would be introduced to City Council and the Joint Planning
496 Board & Planning, Licenses and Development Committee in the coming months.

497
498 **12) New Business**
499

500 Dr. Russell said the foods assessment work and food security work (i.e. – the “Monadnock Region
501 Food System Assessment”) he was doing with the Southwest Region Planning Commission could
502 now be found on their website in draft form, so he would share the link via Ms. Fortson.

503
504 The Committee thanked Dr. Russell for arranging today’s guests. If Committee Members have
505 ideas for other guest speakers, email Chair Lerversee and Ms. Fortson.

506
507 **13) Next Meeting: April 22, 2026 at 4:30 PM**
508

509 The Committee agreed to cancel its regular April 22, 2026 monthly meeting in lieu of its April 21st
510 Spring Retreat at 8:00 AM.

511
512 **14) Adjournment**
513

514 There being no further business, Chair Lerversee adjourned the meeting at 5:43 PM.

515
516 Respectfully submitted by,
517 Katie Kibler, Minute Taker

518
519 Reviewed and edited by,
520 Megan A. Fortson – AICP, Planner

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

9:00 AM

2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

Gordon Leverage, Chair
Maureen Nebenzahl, Vice Chair
Councilor Bryan Lake
Lisa Maxfield
Paul Roth
Steve Larmon
Timothy Murphy
Jake Pipp, Alternate
Charles Redfern, Alternate
Catherine Koning, Alternate
Rowland Russell, Alternate (Voting)
Matthew Boulton, Alternate

Staff Present:

Megan Fortson, Planner
Emily Duseau, Planning Technician

Members Not Present:

Annu Joshi Bargale
Clair Oursler

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice Chair Nebenzahl called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Roll call was performed and Dr. Russell was invited to join the meeting as a voting member.

2) Sustainability Coordinator Position – Letter of Support & Budget Info

Megan Fortson, Planner, explained the budgeting related to the proposed creation of a full-time Sustainability Coordinator position. She noted that Community Development Staff are hoping that the Committee will authorize Chair Leverage to write a letter of support for the position that can be shared with the Finance, Organization, & Personnel (FOP) Committee ahead of the Community Development Department’s budget discussion at the May 12th FOP meeting.

Vice Chair Nebenzahl made a motion to authorize Chair Leverage to write a letter of support in favor of the proposed Sustainability Coordinator position. Dr. Larmon seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

3) 2026 Earth Day Outreach Materials – Reimbursement

28 Ms. Fortson explained that Planning Staff have had purchased paint markers and rocks to use at
29 the April 17th Earth Day Event at Keene State College as well as the Earth Fest Event in Railroad
30 Square on April 25th. City Staff are hoping the Committee would be willing to put \$100 of their
31 budget towards covering the cost of these materials.

32
33 A motion to expend \$100 of the ECC's budget on outreach materials for Earth Day events was
34 made by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Dr. Larmon. The motion passed unanimously.
35

36 Councilor Lake and Mr. Roth arrived at 9:25 am.

37

38 **4) 2025 Master Plan – Presentation & Guided Discussion**

39

40 Ms. Fortson and Emily Duseau, Planning Technician, provided the Energy & Climate Committee
41 members with a brief presentation about the 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan. Following the
42 presentation, members discussed their goals for the upcoming year related to the Master Plan.
43

44

44 **5) Sustainable Energy Plan – Presentation & Guided Discussion**

45

46 Ms. Fortson and Ms. Duseau then provided the Committee members with a brief presentation
47 concerning the Sustainable Energy Plan adopted by the City in 2021. Following the presentation,
48 discussion ensued amongst members about how this plan could be used to inform the Committee's
49 future work.

50

51 Mr. Redfern left the meeting at 10:47 am.

52

53 **6) Work Group Discussion – Structure & Responsibilities**

54

55 Chair Leversee explained that the final portion of the retreat would be focused on discussing the
56 Committee's current workgroups and evaluating whether policy, resilience, and outreach were still
57 the right overarching topics for the Committee to focus on over the course of the next year.
58 Discussion ensued about this topic. ECC members decided that for the coming year, the work
59 groups would remain the same; however, two new projects related to creating a communication
60 plan and benchmarking metrics for a dashboard would be a focus for the group.
61

61

62 **7) Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at 4:30 pm**

63

64 **8) Adjournment**

65

66 There being no further business, Chair Leversee adjourned the meeting at 12:00 PM.

67

68 Respectfully submitted by,
69 Megan A. Fortson, AICP – Planner

70

71 Reviewed and edited by,
72 Emily Duseau – Planning Technician