ADOPTED

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 **4:30 PM** **2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall**

Members Present:
Gordon Leversee, Chair
Maureen Nebenzahl, Vice Chair
Councilor Bryan Lake
Steven Larmon (Arrived at 4:42 pm)
Timothy Murphy
Matthew Boulton, Alternate (Voting)
Rowland Russell, Alternate (Voting)
Jacob Pipp, Alternate (Voting)
Catherine Koning, Alternate (Voting)

Staff Present:
Megan Fortson, Planner & Deputy Zoning Administrator

Members Not Present:
Annu Joshi Bargale
Lisa Maxfield
Paul Roth

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Leversee called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM. Roll call was conducted and Alternate committee members including Mr. Matthew Boulton, Mr. Rowland Russel, Mr. Jacob Pipp, and Dr. Catherine Koning were invited to participate in the meeting as voting members.

Dr. Steven Larmon arrived at 4:42 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes – August 26, 2026

Mr. Pipp made a motion to adopt the August 26, 2026 Energy & Climate Committee (ECC) meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Lake and was approved unanimously.

3. Monadnock Clean Energy Fair Recap

Chair Leversee provided a recap of the Monadnock Clean Energy Fair, which was held Saturday, September 19th at the Keene Rec Center. He said that the event went well and the ECC table was set up inside of the Rec Center. A solar energy survey was handed out to people attending the

event and a total of 24 responses were received. Another dozen people stopped by the booth to discuss solar. Respondents were entered into a raffle for a solar battery charger.

Chair Leversee said that he tallied the responses from the survey, which yielded the following results:

- 6 respondents were current solar users; 12 said that they would consider utilizing solar in the future
- Reasons for not currently using solar included questions about the actual long-term savings and the up-front cost
- Motivations for people currently using solar included environmental concerns as well as cost-savings on utility bills
- 23 out of the 24 survey respondents owned single-family homes and 1 rented a single-family home
- Most respondents stated that they receive information about solar from installation companies and friends/family
- The most beneficial information that could be provided for homeowners considering solar are tax incentives, information about upfront costs/savings, and installation/maintenance information

Mr. Matt Boulton mentioned that ReVision Energy now offers a financing program where customers can pay for their solar installation over time, thereby lowering the upfront costs for homeowners. Chair Leversee stated that he also spoke to event attendees who have an interest in balcony solar, although this type of product requires the installation of special outlets. He said that individuals he spoke to would be more inclined to invest in solar if there were cost savings opportunities versus just based on hearing the success stories of others who have installed it. Mr. Boulton also mentioned PREP, the Peterborough Renewable Energy Project. He stated that the Committee may want to keep an eye on this initiative to see if they have an interest in creating something similar in the future.

4. <u>2026 Local Energy Solutions Conference</u> – Thursday, November 12, 2026 from 9:00 AM–4:00 PM in Manchester, NH

Ms. Fortson stated that the 2026 Local Energy Solutions Conference hosted by Clean Energy NH is scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2026 from 9am-4pm at the DoubleTree Hotel in Manchester. Three ECC members including Jake Pipp, Catherine Koning, and Matt Boulton expressed an interest in attending. Ms. Fortson said that she would send out an email to see if any other ECC members not present at the meeting were interested in attending. She said that the Committee is granted two free tickets as part of their annual Clean Energy NH membership; however, the group could make a motion to spend money from the Committee's on purchasing additional tickets.

5. <u>Community Power Plan Updates</u> – Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee Meeting on Thursday, September 24, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Ms. Fortson reminded Committee members that the Finance, Organization, & Personnel (FOP) Committee would be discussing the proposed updates to the Community Power Plan at their next meeting on Thursday, September 24th. She said that the group would make a recommendation back to Council regarding whether they should adopt the updated plan, so she recommends that ECC members attend to speak in favor of the proposed changes, if possible. Chair Leversee confirmed that he was planning to attend.

6. Community Power Mailer

Ms. Fortson stated that she added this as a standing item to the meeting agenda. She was unsure if she would be the one working on the mailer or if it would be the Assistant Sustainability Planner once they've been hired; however, she said that City Staff would be working on this in the background and provide updates to the ECC as they become available.

7. Clean Energy Team Proclamation

Dr. Catherine Koning stated that she spoke to former members of the Clean Energy Team about the possibility of receiving a proclamation. The general consensus was that they would be amenable to a proclamation if it would help publicize the City's clean energy goals. She explained that they felt the proclamation could be coupled with other notable changes, such as having the new Assistant Sustainability Planner begin their time with the City. Dr. Koning stated that maybe an event could be held at the new Monadnock Conservancy building on Ashuelot St.

Ms. Fortson added that another option would be to include the Clean Energy Team, Monadnock Sustainability Hub, the ECC, and other local sustainability organizations in an Earth Month Proclamation in April 2027. Rowland Russell stated that the Committee should look into getting a tour of the new Conservancy Building at a future meeting. Ms. Fortson said that she could look into this and Dr. Larmon said that he was a former member of the Board and could contact folks at the Conservancy as well.

8. Work Groups

a. Policy *(Meets as needed)*

There was no discussion regarding the Policy Work Group.

b. Resilience

Dr. Russell said that the Resilience Work Group had met and focused primarily on discussing heating and cooling centers. He explained that they are looking to obtain a copy of the Emergency Management Plan from 2018 and are still in the information-gathering phase of their efforts. He stated that based on their research and conversations so far, there seems to be an increased need for overnight cooling centers. Dr. Larmon stated that in his research, he has found that Nashua seems to have the best program for heating centers, one of which was set up in a vacant school. He stated that he also wants to see what is in the Emergency Management Plan from 2018. He's also curious about the liability that comes with creating a heating/cooling center, especially for those individuals who are unhoused. At this point, they are trying to

identify potential barriers and concerns. Chair Leversee said that he likes the idea of trying to bring cooling to people in their homes. Mr. Tim Murphy clarified that the work group was trying to focus on emergency situations versus make sure that people have regular access to heating/cooling in their home.

Dr. Russell went on to state that he would also like to explore flood storage loss that may have occurred in the City over time due to development. He stated that the airport has lost flood storage and he is curious if any previous studies have been done of available flood storage capacity in the City. Has there been a loss regionally?

c. Outreach

Dr. Koning said that the Outreach Work Group had not met this month.

9. Monthly Communication Topics

The group discussed the potential of distributing the survey results collected at the Clean Energy Fair as part of a future communication. Members also discussed including links to available resources including but not limited to NH Saves and the Monadnock Sustainability Hub. They discussed the potential for these communications to be sent out monthly. Mr. Murphy thought it would be prudent for the Committee to brainstorm a list of topics and Dr. Koning proposed using the Local Energy Solutions Conference as a topic. Chair Leversee said that conference attendees could provide the Committee with a report-out that could be shared.

10. Staff Updates

Ms. Fortson explained that the regular minute taker, Katie Kibler, had accepted a full-time position with a new employer. While she would still work as a minute-taker for the City for the higher-profile boards, such as City Council, she would no longer be able to serve as the minute-taker for the ECC. Moving forward, Ms. Fortson explained that she would be the minute taker for the Committee until a replacement was found.

11. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

12. Next Meeting: October 28, 2026 at 4:30 PM

13. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Leversee adjourned the meeting at 5:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Megan A. Fortson, AICP – Planner & Deputy Zoning Administrator

Reviewed and edited by,
Corinne Chaisson, Administrative Assistant