

FINAL

**LEBANON ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS OR
REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM
THURSDAY JULY 18, 2024, 3:30PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Henry Bromberg (Chair), Jon Chaffee (Vice Chair), Clifton Below (City Council Rep.), Sherry Boschert (REMOTE), Tom Benzel, James Mashal, Patrick Kennelly (Planning Board Rep.), Bill Stearns (Alt)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Woody Rothe, Devin Wilkie (Alt. Council Rep.)

STAFF PRESENT: Tad Montgomery (Energy & Facilities Manager), Rebecca Owens (Senior Planner)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bromberg called the meeting to order at 3:32pm. Ms. Boschert said she is attending remotely due to health concerns in her family. Mr. Montgomery reviewed the City's meeting in-person and REMOTE attendance policies and procedures.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 20, 2024

A MOTION was made by Mr. Chaffee to approve the June 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes. The Motion was seconded by James Mashal.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting For – Mr. Stearns, Mr. Kennelly, Mr. Below, Mr. Benzel, Mr. Mashal, Mr. Chaffee, Mr. Bromberg, Ms. Boschert

Voting Against – None

***The MOTION was approved (8-0).**

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Legislation/PUC Regulations/CPCNH Updates/ LCP updates; CPCNH Publicity Campaign

Mr. Below noted that new CPCNH rates starting August 1st have been established. He said Eversource filed testimony shortly before its distribution rate case that there are \$6.5 million in under-recovered funds from the prior periods from its large C&I customers. He said Eversource said if they are unable to recover those funds from that group, it would raise the rates by 5 cents per kilowatt hour for the next month. He said Eversource attributed the loss to community power aggregations and the migration to competitive suppliers and proposed that the charges to recover the funds be made to all distribution customers. Mr. Below said the PUC did not question the assertion that the loss was caused by community power aggregations and

directed Eversource to propose to recover the costs through the stranded cost recovery charge. Mr. Below said he is preparing a motion for rehearing of this decision.

He said the CPCNH's Board of Directors did not meet last month, the first such break since the pandemic.

B. Landfill Gas to Energy Updates

Mr. Montgomery said the project team has been digging trenches and laying conduit. He said he spoke with Jeremy Smith at Waldron Engineering, which is managing the project, about how to help the City to receive federal Direct Pay incentives.

C. Municipal Solar Updates

No update.

D. Lebanon Energy Savings Project

Mr. Jason Staples, UNH Sustainability Institute's fellow, gave a presentation on his initial assessment of the potential impacts of weatherization and heating system upgrades in the city of Lebanon. The presentation covered the following points:

- the age of the buildings and infrastructure of the City
- the types of heating systems used in the City
- the interest/concerns of citizens in upgrading/replacing these systems
- overview of the database he developed and the data it provides

He noted that the data showed that about 20% of the people in the City use propane/ natural gas. Mr. Below said that is odd because there are no natural gas utilities in Lebanon and asked Mr. Staples to check the source of the data.

Mr. Staples said the four major household fuels being used are natural gas, propane, oil and electricity. He calculated that the 15,000 citizens in Lebanon produce about two metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) per person per year. He said that falls within the standard baseline for a United States citizen, but he said it can be reduced.

He said they have received some responses to the survey they sent out and are waiting to receive more responses.

He made the following additional points:

- Utility costs for rental units are typically lower than homeowner-controlled households
- Heat pumps and natural gas have lower emissions per capita than oil
- Modern weatherization increases energy efficiency by about 5-10%

Mr. Chaffee noted that there are 248 fewer families/households in Lebanon that are making below 80% of the median income than there were five years ago. He also said quite a few rental households have moved away from oil heat in the last five years toward propane and electricity, and homeowner households have moved away from oil to wood heat.

[At 4:10pm, Mr. Kennelly left the meeting.]

Ms. Owens noted that she and GIS Coordinator Mark Goodwin have asked building software managers to ensure that data is received by the City more accurately so building permits that are issued can be labeled as whether they include heat pumps or solar or electric vehicle charging or home battery storage.

Mr. Mashal noted that the cost to upgrade from a non-forced air system to a heat pump system is quite high. He suggested something should be added to the survey to take into account the cost to upgrade.

E. EV Subcommittee Report: Grant Applications; Public Charging Stations; Public Outreach/Education

TIF District EV Chargers

Ms. Boschert said that she presented a proposal to the City Council to purchase a free-standing solar EV charging station with Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) funds. She said the City Council gave its unanimous support to make the purchase.

Mr. Benzel said Solaflect is continuing to seek an improved software solution to provide uninterrupted EV charging even on cloudy days. He suggested that the City hold off buying the Solaflect charging stations until a solution is found, which will provide the impetus the company needs to get that done.

CFI Grant Reapplication

Ms. Boschert said the NH Dept. of Environmental Services (DES) reached out when they were submitting grants for federal assistance for EV charging throughout the state. She said there is now a round two of the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure grant being offered by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation. She said the City was asked to submit worksheets with very site-specific information and letters of support for each site. She said the deadline for the worksheets is August 1, 2024. She said she would gather information by the end of next week.

F. Energy Efficiency Standards as part of City's Affordable Housing Initiative

No update

G. City Master Plan - Energy Chapter Update

Chair Bromberg said he, Mr. Rothe, Mr. Chafee, and Ms. Boschert will meet to continue writing the Energy Chapter (13) of the Master Plan, specifically Sections C, E, and F.

H. Thermal Energy Network Update

Mr. Montgomery said a public workshop with Vermont Community Thermal Networks has been planned for September 11, 2024 from 2:00pm – 4:00pm at the Kilton Library. A preparatory meeting is scheduled for August 23 at 2:00pm. He asked LEAC members to attend and, if a quorum is achieved, it can be made into a special meeting.

He said he is researching a grant for technical assistance from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. He said the Town of Hartford, VT has received a similar grant.

I. Clean 100 Opt-Up Program

Mr. Montgomery said that The Clean 100 decals have been made and are being installed on municipal building entrances. Mr. Montgomery said he has given a briefing to the City Clerk's office about how to speak with residents about this program. He said the Clerk's office asked him for a brochure or pamphlet about the program that they could give to interested residents. He said a brochure was developed by Andrew Hatch of CPCNH and he asked CPCNH for an electronic file of it so it can be reproduced in Lebanon. The group discussed ways the decal can be publicized and distributed to residents. Ms. Boschert said she would like to see a cost-benefit analysis of greenhouse gas reductions from residents opting up versus the benefits of other programs or initiatives such as encouraging the use of heat pumps or getting people to use electric vehicles.

J. Planning Department Priority – Update on Energy Building Codes

Chair Bromberg said a new Building Code official has been hired in the Planning Department who will be looking into the City's building codes and how to improve them.

K. Environmental Justice Task Force Update

Mr. Chaffee said the Task Force continues to seek and develop ways to involve residents who do not normally involve themselves in the policy-making process to take a more active role in the City.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. CPCNH Report or Presentation

Chair Bromberg noted this report was given earlier in the meeting.

B. PRESENTATION BY EMILY MONROE, DIRECTOR OF THE DARTMOUTH COLLEGE COOK ENGINEERING DESIGN CENTER

Mr. Montgomery said Ms. Monroe runs a capstone program at the Thayer School of Engineering and contacted him regarding potential projects in the City of Lebanon for students. He said he would set up a meeting with her Tuesday or Wednesday of next week and invited LEAC members to attend.

5. ENERGY & FACILITIES MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Montgomery discussed the following:

- Regarding the double billing that occurred with Liberty Utilities related to the streetlights, he said Liberty reports that they have under-billed for the streetlights to date, so the double-billing is moot.
- He said the municipal electricity consumption for 2023 was 3,691,351 kilowatt hours consumed from Liberty last year. He said solar production totaled 888,272 kilowatt hours, or about 19.4%.

- He has worked with Ms. Boschert to draft a workplace charging policy. He said he is waiting for data that will show the new costs for electricity beginning next month.
- He has been working with Rebecca Owens to write a grant application for the NH D.O.E. Municipal Solar grant for solar to be added to the new fire station building in Lebanon. He asked Mr. Below to write a letter of support on behalf of CPCNH, and Mayor MacNamara for one from the City Council.
- He said Fire Chief Wheatley has been invited to come to the next EV subcommittee meeting to talk about EV Chargers and battery storage.

6. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - No members of the public spoke.

7. UPCOMING EVENTS

- Building Science and Beer event at Salt hill Pub in Lebanon occurs on Thursdays at the same time that LEAC meets. Upcoming topics include:
 - Dana Clauson, Town of Hartford, on VT Energy Codes
 - Bruce Bennett, GDS Associates, on NH Energy Codes & Energy Star
 - Peter Schneider, Efficiency VT, on Home Electrification & Zero Energy Modular
 - Financing High Performance and Energy Projects
- Drive Electric Upper Valley will be in New London on the last Sunday in September, 12:00pm – 4:00pm.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

8. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by James Mashal to adjourn the meeting at 5:13pm. The Motion was seconded by Tom Benzel.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting For – Mr. Stearns, Mr. Below, Mr. Benzel, Mr. Mashal, Mr. Chaffee, Mr. Bromberg, Ms. Boschert

Voting Against – None

****The MOTION was approved (7-0).***

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paula Roux
Recording Secretary