

DRAFT

LEBANON ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Remote Via Microsoft Teams

[LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://lebanonnh.gov/Live)

Thursday, August 15, 2024

3:30 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Henry Bromberg (Chair), Clifton Below, Thomas Benzel, Sherry Boschert (remote), Jonathan Chaffee, Patrick Kennelly, James Mashal (remote), Bill Stearns, Woody Rothe

MEMBERS ABSENT: Devin Wilkie, City Council Alternate

STAFF PRESENT: Tad Montgomery (Energy & Facilities Manager), Cinda Mersel (Recording Secretary, remote)

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Bromberg called the meeting to order at 3:35PM

2. **PREAMBLE:** Mr. Montgomery informed the public of how they can attend these live LEAC meetings, either in person or virtually. If they choose to speak, the citizen must state their name, ward (particularly if in Lebanon) or town that they live in. Virtual participants can simply unmute themselves if they want to speak; they do not need to raise their hand.

Tad Montgomery read a statement from the previous LEAC Recording Secretary Paula Roux: “Tad, please thank the LEAC group for me - I have certainly enjoyed learning about the very important work this team is doing. The City is incredibly fortunate to have such dedicated people who want to make it so much better.”

Jon Chaffee arrived at 3:36PM. James Mashal joined remotely at 3:37PM.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Bromberg *MOVED* to approve the July 18, 2024, Minutes as presented in the August 18, 2024, agenda packet and amended.

Seconded by Mr. Rothe.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Below to approve the July 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rothe.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Voting Against: None

**The MOTION was approved 9-0.*

4. OLD BUSINESS:

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

Regarding the Stranded Cost Recovery Docket before the NH Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Mr. Below noted that the motion for rehearing was refiled along with the NRG companies (competitive suppliers like Direct Energy) doing business in New Hampshire, but the PUC denied the motion because they have not decided anything yet, and made it clear there would be a new order of notice which is the opportunity to intervene in a case before they consider that issue.

Next week are the hearings on net metering. Mr. Below said that the Community Power Coalition (CPCNH) is not supporting the settlement as proposed because the current proposal would be locked in for another twenty years and does not contain a temporal pricing component or credit for avoided transmission costs, which he said could contain as much value as bulk generation in a few years. Mr. Below described the different stances of CPCNH, Clean Energy New Hampshire (CENH), the NH Dept. of Energy, Consumer Advocate's office, and the utilities on the Net Metering docket.

Mr. Below said that Clean Energy New Hampshire ended up feeling that they did not want the State to go backwards on the value of net metering, and they were concerned about this possibility, so they felt like the status quo is better than any negative change. So, it will be the Department of Energy and CPCNH arguing that at least Liberty and Unitil customers be allowed credit for energy generation at the high value times of 3-8PM.

Mr. Below said that the other major issue that CPCNH is arguing is that battery storage should be enabled to be part of net metering so that projects that get developed can design for solar plus storage, which is the trend. Even with solar tracker projects, such as those being done in California and in the Southwest, battery storage is enabled in net metering so that energy can be stored up when power is inexpensive and discharged in the evenings when it's a lot more valuable.

Mr. Below said that CPCNH has hired additional legal counsel, attorney Amy Mancelli. She is with an environmental firm and came recommended by another committee member. She has experience in the energy industry having been lead counsel in opposing the Northern Pass Transmission System and so she has already had a lot of experience with Eversource being on the other side of the table. She has also sat on the Consumer Advocates Advisory Council.

One other thing that Mr. Below noted is that CPCNH has been doing outreach to the gubernatorial candidates on both sides of the ticket, so that candidates are familiar with the Community Power Coalition and to let them know about the work these committees are doing. Their first meeting was with candidate Joyce Craig, and in her platform, she has taken a strong stance on community power aggregation and that communities should be able to use those to offset their load. CPCNH is planning to meet with the other candidates after the primary. CPCNH does not take any position with any candidates, but rather tries to inform them of the work that is being done. "We want them to know that we are a resource and a partner for doing good things for our communities, such as the substantial savings achieved in our first 16 months of operation" Mr. Below said.

B. Landfill Gas to Energy Project

Mr. Montgomery said that the construction is going well and the due date to start producing is now October, which is ahead of schedule. He has spent time reviewing about the Liberty tariff section on group net metering and there is a statement that the utility needs to be informed at least 120 days before production begins. Mr. Montgomery is checking to confirm that this has been done through the interconnect application. Liberty is aware of the plan to start producing.

Mr. Montgomery has reached out to Tim Ball, CFO of SAU 88, to see if the Supervisory Union is interested in being the primary group member (elsewhere known as “oftaker”) for the landfill gas project, but he has not heard back from Mr. Ball yet. There is no cost to SAU, so it was agreed that Mr. Montgomery will connect Tim Ball with Mr. Below.

Mr. Mashal agreed to bring up this subject to the SAU 88’s Superintendent in a meeting they both are attending next week in West Lebanon.

Mr. Below suggested to put all the City electric accounts on the landfill gas group. Mr. Montgomery will put as many accounts on as he can. He will also be approaching the Lebanon Housing Project, since they are a municipal entity, to see if they would be interested in being a member of the Landfill gas-to-electricity’s group net meter.

Mr. Montgomery is continuing to research and prepare to apply for The federal Direct Pay incentive for the project

Mr. Montgomery asked Mr. Below if a separate net metering meter has been installed for electricity generation at the landfill yet. Mr. Below said that it is in the design plan but did not know if it has been installed yet.

C. Municipal Solar Update

Mr. Montgomery is meeting with a landowner, Alan Fields tomorrow, who has offered for a solar farm to be installed on 27 acres of his land to benefit the City of Lebanon. Solar projects of between one and five megawatts can only have metering hosts that are municipalities.

Mr. Montgomery said that the Phase 3 Solar Project is on hold, while the net metering rate structuring rules get resolved. Mr. Below will provide updates after the issues are ordered and will inform Mr. Montgomery so that he can proceed with the RFP.

D. Lebanon Energy Savings Program

Mr. Chafee said that on Monday, Jason Staples promised to deliver a spreadsheet listing all the individual residents with units of the city and applying to each unit a generic emissions factor, so that when all is added/summed, LEAC will have an estimation of the total energy use and emissions of Lebanon’s residential sector. LEAC can use that spreadsheet to pull out residences that heat with gas, oil, electricity, and can even pull out homeowners by income, using the home value as a proxy for their income. It is unknown yet if LEAC will get a spreadsheet that itemizes individual rental units. LEAC is not getting the seed software that National Renewable Energy Laboratories developed. This would be useful because LEAC could then pull out and initiate contacts with subsets of the data and log the contacts and replies in

the process of working with residential landlords or homeowners. For future projects, LEAC needs to have management software like this that will log the process of our contacting people and helping to transition to heat pumps.

LEAC applied for EPA funds for incentives for low-income residents to install heat pumps but did not get that money. But NH, as part of a consortium application for five states, did get \$450M for heat pumps incentives, but NH probably won't get a fifth of that. One portion of the grant is called the innovation portion and that would allow the City to vie for funds for this kind of incentive program in the future. Perhaps in 2025 it would be possible to apply through New Hampshire for money for the kind of project we envision.

Besides incentives, another part of this in hiring a so-called 'Energy Navigator' to work with households to help them project what the cost would be of a heat pump, including federal tax credits and state home electrification rebates, which Mr. Chaffee anticipates will become available in late 2024 and 2025.

Mr. Chaffee ended by saying they need more people on the Lebanon Energy Savings subcommittee. A specific need is with software experience in anticipation of inheriting this database that has been developed this summer. Mr. Kennelly discussed the possibility of a family member helping who is experienced with databases. Mr. Mashal said he would be happy to support this whenever he is needed.

E. EV Subcommittee Report

Ms. Boschert reported that the Fire Chief came and spoke with the Subcommittee at the last meeting about the planning of the new station, and about the EVs and EV charging stations. The Subcommittee is filling out grant applications and RFPs, and one of the potential sites for a fast-charging station is right next door to the downtown fire station at 2 Mascoma Street. The Subcommittee wondered if there is any way they needed to coordinate the infrastructure for the EV chargers at the fire station and 2 Mascoma Street now rather than later. The answer seems to be no for now.

The City's draft workplace charging program policy is almost a reality and could be finalized in September. This will allow Lebanon employees to use existing City level II chargers to charge their commute vehicles. They would pay for the electricity, but it would allow people who cannot charge at home to charge at work.

Ms. Boschert said that the City has several opportunities for EV charging infrastructure grants. Federal CFI Round 1 grant that we applied for last year got turned down in January. But we are rated "highly recommend" and we were invited to resubmit for additional round one money that has been made available. We have not heard from them yet, but we are hoping to hear soon, before August 28th, because that is when people who are applying for round two of CFI grants are applying, and the State of New Hampshire is applying for \$15M, and they have invited us to include our proposed sites in that proposal, so we have been working to get them all the information they need, and letters of the court, etc., to include those sites plus a new site with level II chargers at the airport, thanks to Mr. Benzel's work with the Airport Director. Meanwhile there is a possibility of using the Tax Increment Financing funds for the downtown district but they were going to put out an RFP just for stations where they thought they would use the funds, but because the State CFI application really emphasis "shovel ready" projects, we are rethinking to issue an RFP for proposals to put charging stations at all these sites we are talking about, CFI, TIF, and everything in between. This way she said they can get real world estimates on prices so that

by the time they announce round two CFI funding, if we didn't get round one, the City could have a contractor to work with on installations.

Rebecca Owens is putting a lot of effort in to helping them, both Mr. Montgomery and Ms. Boschert conveyed.

The Solar e-bike charging stations - see the EFM report below.

They are also talking about reaching out to the School Board to try once again to get them to apply for grants for electric school buses. There are two board members on an environmental task force, so they want to reach out to these two, when any person on the committee has the time to pursue this.

F. Energy Efficiency Standards of the City's Staff Housing Initiative

Mr. Benzel said they are still waiting on information from the City but that what has happened recently is that the pattern zoning architect has submitted numerous designs and the City has a site that allows people to choose their favorite, to winnow these designs down to one. But they still do not have energy use estimates for any of these designs and that is the concern.

Mr. Rothe will be reaching out to two people in charge to learn more.

G. City Master Plan – Energy Chapter Update

Mr. Chaffee said they have had one meeting and he offered to rewrite a part of Section 13 but has not been able to gain access to the SharePoint file until recently. He did a short rewrite of that section and plans to move on to the next section.

Their meeting is set for early September, and at that meeting they will peruse the work Mr. Chaffee has completed so far.

H. Thermal Energy Networks – Update

Mr. Montgomery stated that there are two meetings that are planned, a big workshop open to the public on September 11th at the Kilton Library, 2:00-4:00PM. Prior to that there will be a planning meeting to be held on August 23, 2024, at 2:00PM. Both are co-organized by the Vermont Thermal Energy Network. He encouraged all committee members to attend this planning session.

Novo Nordisk is involved. Richard Otis is a facility engineer for Novo, and he is interested in helping with this initiative. He is also helping Hartford Energy Commission with the development of a thermal energy network.

Mr. Montgomery's next step will be to apply to Argon National Labs for technical assistance, but he wants to wait until we have specific projects so that he can get feasibility studies done for one or more of these.

I. Clean 100 Opt-Up Program

Mr. Montgomery said that the Clean 100 window decals are now available at the City Clerk's office and the Clerk's Staff have been briefed on the program. There are no numbers on participation yet; it has been a low-profile rollout so far.

J. Environmental Justice Task Force – Update

Mr. Chaffee said they inserted two questions into the questionnaire that is going to be administered to unhoused people on August 20th. The questions have to do with environmental impacts on homelessness.

Mr. Montgomery added that he was invited to a Dartmouth environmental justice regional meeting by Professor Sarah Kelly who teaches at the Irving Institute, September 27&28, 2024. He thinks it is open to all committee members. Mr. Chaffee will be on a panel there as well.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Emily Monroe from Dartmouth College

Mr. Bromberg and Mr. Montgomery met with Dr. Emily Monroe who is head of the capstone program at Dartmouth's Thayer School of Engineering that has 130 undergraduate students looking for capstone projects. They had good conversation, and she said she needs sponsoring organizations to commit to two hours to each student each week. They discussed several potential projects. She thinks there are students that would be interested in the e-bike project, perhaps with design, or fundraising that Mr. Montgomery is working on and they are in discussions about how to explore this further.

6. ENERGY & FACILITIES MANAGER REPORT

The City is now signed up with C-Power for Liberty's demand response program, which offers another layer of demand response curtailment. Revenue is estimated to be about \$20,000 per year, if they curtail on all called events for the year.

Jessie Pollard is Chair of the Hartford Energy Commission and works for a large solar development company. He has offered to give a tour of a GMP substation sometime soon. He has said that LEAC members can attend this.

USDOE contacted Mr. Montgomery and Rebecca Owens about their better climate challenge. They are setting up a program to help municipalities achieve their goals for greenhouse gas reduction. He is working with Ms. Owens to see if it is something that they want to sign up for. He thinks the tech support would be great, especially around converting all their buildings off fossil fuels.

Building Science and Beer is a study and discussion group founded by Ethan Cole of EarthShare Construction. He has asked for Mr. Montgomery to give a presentation about all the things that Lebanon is doing to that relate to energy and buildings at their November event. It will be on the same date as the November LEAC meeting.

Senator Shaheen's office contacted the City Manager and is coming next Tuesday to talk with City Staff about energy and transportation issues. The Mayor will also come along with Ms. Boschert who will talk about EV development. Others will talk about projects that the City Manager wants to apply for funding on.

Mr. Montgomery has a friend that does grant writing for a company called SkipTech.com which makes flow batteries with hydrogen bromine. He says these batteries are half as efficient as a lithium-ion battery but cost 1/10th as much to manufacture. There is possibly an infinite number of cycles that can be obtained from these batteries with no degradation. They are being designed to be stationary.

Mr. Montgomery is meeting at two sites on Monday with the City Engineer Brian Vincent and City Electrician Ted Makalinaw about e-bikes. Afterwards there will be a meeting with the City Manager and other stakeholders of the project to make final design decisions.

7. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Lebanon Thermal Energy Network Workshop (tentative): September 11, 2024, Kilton Library – Community Room, 2-4 PM.

8. UPCOMING EVENTS:

Regional Environment Justice Colloquium, Dartmouth College on September 27th and 28th.

Upper Valley EV EXPO being held on Sunday, September 29th, at the New London Historical Village, from Noon to 4PM. For more information, visit: **UVEVEXPO.org**

Next Thursday Mr. Bromberg will be at the Farmers Market on the Green, across from City Hall, from 4-7PM. He will talk with and answer questions for people in our community. Please join him.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

None

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Benzel MOVED for adjournment.

Seconded by Mr. Chaffee

Roll Call Vote:

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

Voting Against: None

The Vote on the Motion was approved 9-0

***The meeting was adjourned at 4:50PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Cinda Mersel

Recording Secretary