

FINAL



**LEBANON ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(LEAC)**

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2024 - 3:30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL OR
REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM
LEBANONNH.GOV/LIVE**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Devin Wilkie (Alternate Council Representative)

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

1. Chair Bromberg called the meeting to order at 3:00PM

2. PREAMBLE:

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *A MOTION was made by Chair Bromberg to approve the August 15, 2024, Meeting Minutes as presented in the September 19, 2024, agenda packet and amended.*

No one seconded.

The MOTION was approved 8-0.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

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

Mr. Below said the hearings were held for the net metering docket and he thinks his testimony representing CPCNH went well. He has until early October to conduct briefings and to prepare to reply to briefings. The Commission will make a decision most likely after the presidential election.

There will be a strategic planning session of the Community Power Coalition in New London on Sept. 30th, 5:30-7:30 PM in Whipple Hall. Mr. Below will get the members of this committee the details of that meeting. He encouraged all the Lebanon Energy Advisory Committee members to attend.

The Regulatory & Legislative Affairs Committee of CPCNH has been working on refreshing the legislative platform to further comprehensive legislation that would enable community power aggregators to be off-takers of renewable electricity for projects that are under 5 megawatts. This is a parallel track to the PUC's net metering rules re-write so that CPCNH achieves these measures with both regulatory and legislative perspectives. Getting credit for avoided transmission costs remains a key component of the CPCNH platform.

Mr. Below believes that there should be strong bipartisan support for some of what CPCNH is arguing for. CPCNH is continuing to work with other stakeholders so that there is a coordinated front, and the efforts are aimed at expanding net metering in the 1-5 megawatts range, which is currently constrained.

CPCNH is one of the largest single suppliers of energy in the state with 63 member communities currently, and Mr. Below anticipates that this will continue to grow. Several other communities (20+) are preparing to launch their own programs this November, including the city of Concord. CPCNH is meeting with Sullivan County, and they will be joining next. Several towns in Merrimack County will launch through the County on an “opt out” basis. They will act as an advisory board to the county such as providing input regarding selecting rate options. This is another way to get more entities involved.

Within the next year, CPCNH could become the largest single supplier of electricity in the state of New Hampshire. CPCNH is hiring several staff to allow for the anticipated continued growth.

The first National Community Power Conference will be held in DC the 2nd week of October with several CPCNH people attending. Mr. Below will be speaking on a panel ‘Infrastructure Challenges and CCAs’ Role in Creating a Resilient and Reliable Grid’. He and this group will also combine this with a lobby day to meet with several government agencies to help increase awareness about the work that CPCNH and similar groups are doing.

Chair Bromberg welcomed Clare Shanahan of the *Valley News* to the meeting at 3:53PM (remote). Chair Bromberg also commented on how remarkable the work is that CPCNH has done in just one year.

Mr. Below and CPCNH met with Unitil; they are a leader in deploying more advanced metering and the energy data platform. CPCNH will be collaborating with them on a limited pilot project where 35 customers will have smart metering devices installed. The idea is to engage all possible stakeholders and increase awareness as well as gauge interest from local potential customers. The short-term goal is to have 15 accounts (homeowners) use a three-part time-of-use electricity rate under a three-year grant that Lebanon helped to write to the National Science Foundation in 2019 with Dr. Amro Farid of Dartmouth. Lebanon is not able to participate in this pilot project because Liberty does not have the capacity at this stage to take on such pilot projects.

CPCNH plans to meet with the new governor, after the election to establish a relationship and to make her aware of this constituency.

B. Landfill Gas to Energy Project

Mr. Montgomery said that the project is scheduled to start production before Thanksgiving. The proposal to the City Manager is to start with regular net metering because the system will be under 1 MW and will have close to 20% of load behind the same meter. The system will be evaluated over its first few months of production and then it will be decided whether to switch to group net metering. Mr. Montgomery has asked the NH DOE if there is a penalty if the plant does not meet the 20% threshold and is awaiting an answer. Once he hears back, he will draft a memo and make his recommendation to the City Manager, Shaun Mulholland.

The IRS has not yet opened the portal for electronic filing for the federal Direct Pay incentive so there can be no preregistering or filing for 2024 Direct Pay projects until this happens. Also, the project must be complete and producing before filing. At this time, Mr. Montgomery and the City’s Grants Manager Rebecca Owens are continuing with their due diligence and are working with an advisory law firm (Lawyers for Good Government) and other technical advisors to learn all they can about the rules for Direct Pay. Mr. Montgomery said this law team has been excellent to work with.

Additionally, Mr. Montgomery and Rebecca are meeting next week with Whitney in the Finance Department with Dartmouth. Since both the City of Lebanon and Dartmouth are at the cutting edge of applying for Direct Pay, they are collaborating, comparing notes, talking about accounting and learning all they can about the direct pay incentives process. Dartmouth is in the process of implementing a \$500,000,000 geoexchange heating and cooling project (e.g. \$150M Direct Pay incentives from the federal government).

Additionally, Mr. Montgomery and Ms. Owens are meeting with an accounting firm that is going to be helping the City with the filing process for Direct Pay with the IRS, to learn about their experience and role since this process is so new and untested.

C. Municipal Solar Update

No update. This is on hold awaiting a cost/benefit analysis that cannot be performed until the NH PUC issues new net metering rules which aren't expected until November at the earliest.

D. Lebanon Energy Savings Program

Mr. Chaffee said that Mark Goodwin, GIS Coordinator, completed a spreadsheet representing all the single housing units in Lebanon, comparing census data, tax assessor data, and the City's GIS data. Mr. Goodwin wants to be accurate and be able to use this for 911 purposes as well as other applications, so has spent countless hours working on this information. Mr. Chaffee will provide energy use index (EUI) data to plug into this spreadsheet as well. Mr. Goodwin will then compile this same information for multi-family units in Lebanon.

Currently there are no plans to use the Seed software.

Mr. Chaffee, Mr. Rothe, Mr. Kenelly, and Mr. Mashal are embarking on market research to include discussions with heat pump installers, landlords to see what a sufficient incentive for them would be to participate in the program, homeowners to see what would motivate them, as well as low-income residents, to see if there is any feasibility for a program to install heat pumps.

E. EV Subcommittee Report

Ms. Boschert was not yet in attendance, so Mr. Montgomery provided an update. She is still promoting the Upper Valley EV Expo coming up in New London. We did not get the CFI grant Round 1 re-application; it was turned down for a second time. The deadline for the Round CFI grant 2 just passed and all City sites were included in it. Statewide through the DOT, they are applying for \$15M. It does not include any level one chargers (ebike charges or level one solar charges) as these were not allowed in this round. This was a federal level decision to exclude these.

We did get the Airport added as an extra site with much work by Mr. Benzel, Airport Director Carl Gross, and team members.

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

Mr. Benzel said we are getting new architects, but he has limited details. Mr. Kennelly attended a planning zone presentation last night, but the plans currently only have the aesthetics, not enough yet to perform heat load calculations.

Ms. Sherry Boschert arrived remotely at 4:17 PM. Ms. Clare Shanahan left the meeting (virtual) at 4:19PM.

G. City Master Plan – Energy Chapter Update

Mr. Montgomery had a meeting 2 weeks ago with the Subcommittee of LEAC, including Ms. Boschert, Mr. Chaffee, Mr. Rothe, Mr. Bromberg, and Katherine Hembry and they went through section C that Mr. Chaffee had completed a first pass on. Mr. Montgomery has taken on doing a first pass of section D and has handed this off to the rest of the subcommittee for them to review. They will have this finalized next week and possibly get to section E at that meeting. The plan is to continue to go through each section and have Chapter 13 completely updated by year end. They will then present it to the entire LEAC team to review and comment.

H. Thermal Energy Networks – Update

Chair Bromberg had a preliminary meeting with the Mayor in attendance. They are homing in on key areas of Lebanon where thermal energy networks show some promise. Mr. Montgomery and the Vermont Community Thermal Networks attended. The mayor asked several pertinent questions and VCTN addressed his concerns in a succinct way.

The Mayor brought up Spencer Street as a potential location for a TEN where there are sewer lines as well as ball fields which could have potential for boreholes for ground source heat pumps. The Mayor said there is construction happening soon at 20 Spencer St. and that the builder is receptive to working with LEAC on a project like this, and suggested LEAC reach out to him. There are possible sources of heat at this site from sewer lines that run under Spencer St. in addition to land for geexchange boreholes. Some other sites with possible potential are:

- Downtown area back behind the Taylor St parking lots as there are large sewer lines in that area.
- Airport Industrial Park, Novo Nordisk has a huge thermal footprint and large rooftop chillers for cooling.
- West Lebanon - Mr. Montgomery wonders if the City could work quickly enough to get the infrastructure for a TEN in place during the Main Street redevelopment, which is happening over the next year or two.

Mr. Montgomery has not been tasked with this project yet, but rather has been working to support Mr. Bromberg.

Hartford is moving ahead with the Briggs Opera House and a TEN for that entire block. They are getting expert technical assistance from Argon National Labs for the project.

I. Clean 100 Opt-Up Program: No update

J. Environmental Justice Task Force : No Update

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Emily Monroe from Dartmouth College

Ms. Monroe presented two projects for Dartmouth engineering capstone projects from the list provided her by Mr. Montgomery. Mr. Montgomery presented both options to management, and they have decided to focus on designing ebike charging stations. Ms. Monroe will present it to the Dartmouth Capstone students this week and we will see if any students want to participate in the design of City ebike charging stations.

6. ENERGY & FACILITIES MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Montgomery will be attending the Regional Environmental Justice Symposium at Dartmouth next Friday and Saturday.

Mr. Montgomery is researching Plugzio as it is a slow level 2 EV charging option that runs on 110V, costs about \$400 per EV charging station, and might be a good option for e-bike charging stations. It is unclear yet whether Lebanon needs to charge users for e-bike charging. He has also alerted Plugzio to the City's pending EV charging RFQ and anticipates they will submit a proposal for the airport at a minimum.

Mr. Montgomery has been tasked with doing a set of videos for City energy initiatives, is working with Ms. Boschert on this, and has drafted a script for "solar in the City". Some other videos will cover:

- community power
- streetlights
- energy efficiency

He and Ms. Boschert are working on the RFQ, and it has been submitted to management for their review and then it will go before City Council for their review.

Mr. Montgomery encouraged members to communicate if they think of any other locations in town that would be good for other e-bike charging stations.

7. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: No members of the public spoke

8. UPCOMING EVENTS:

Monday, September 30th, 5:30PM – 7:30PM

CPCNH Strategic Planning Session

Whipple Memorial Town Hall, 25 Seamans Rd, New London, NH 03257

Mr. Below offered to have committee members ride with him. This is the Community Power Coalition's meeting to work on having their first strategic plan and part of this will be for stakeholders to have some engagement. It will be a facilitated meeting.

Mr. Montgomery provided the following information about two other important meetings:

- **Funding the Future: Green Financing Solutions for EV Charging Stations, Oct 14, 2024,** 2:00 PM Eastern Time (Electrification Coalition)
- **Looking Ahead: State of the EVSE Market & Projections, Oct 17, 2024,** 1:00 PM Eastern Time (Electrification Coalition)

He asked LEAC members to contact him and he will provide more details on how one can attend (virtual, in person- address, etc.).

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None

10. ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION was made by James Mashal to adjourn the meeting at 4:47pm. The motion was seconded by Tom Benzel.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting for – Chair Bromberg, Mr. Below, Mr. Chaffee, Mr. Kennelly, Mr. Stearns, Mr. Rothe.

Abstained: Ms. Boschert (remote)

****The vote on the motion was approved (6-0).***

Respectfully submitted,

Cinda Mersel, Recording Secretary