

FINAL

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 17, 2024 - 3:30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL OR
REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM
LEBANONNH.GOV/LIVE**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sherry Boschert

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

1. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 3:31PM.

2. PREAMBLE

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *A MOTION was made by John Chafee to approve the September 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes as presented in the October 17, 2024 agenda packet. The MOTION was seconded by Thomas Benzel. Approved: 7:0.*

4. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Legislation/PUC Regulations/CPCNH Updates/LCP Updates

Mr. Below said that this week CPCNH will finalize their reply brief in the net metering docket.

Mr. Below, Mr. Chafee, and Mr. Mashal attended on behalf of the City of Lebanon a strategic planning workshop of the Community Power Coalition on September 30th, in New London, NH.

CPCNH will be rolling out a procurement plan illustrating what they would like to do if the State gets revised net metering rules as well as what they could do under other scenarios.

The Coalition will finalize their legislative platform after the election.

B. Landfill Gas to Energy Project

Valley News recently recognized the LFGTE project with photos on their front page.

Mr. Below stated that United States Senator Maggie Hassen is going to visit the site on Monday, and we'll be able to brief her on it.

Mr. Montgomery continues his work on the Direct Pay federal incentive application. He said that the DPW anticipates energy production starting around Thanksgiving after which time he will register the project for DP with the IRS.

Mr. Below is working on an updated financial analysis with a revised investment of the Direct Pay credit and will provide this to Mr. Montgomery once completed.

Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Below met with Rebecca Owens, Grant Manager, and a team with Lawyers for Good Government, with the primary purpose of discussing the investment tax credit versus the production tax credit options for the federal Direct Pay incentive. Mr. Below estimated the incentive as slightly less than \$1.6 million for the project.

Mr. Montgomery had a discussion today with Shawn Mulholland and Mr. Kilmer about renewable energy credits (RECs) and what to do with them. He will also be speaking with Mark Bollinger of CPCNH about their possible role in aggregating and/or buying the RECs. The current price is roughly \$39 per REC (megawatt hour). The City currently buys RECs indirectly through CPCNH to achieve the Clean 100 (100% renewable) option for our electricity.

Mr. Montgomery said that he would be talking with Liberty soon about meter requirements for the LFGTE project that they will need to ensure that the net metering requirement of 20% consumption (20% of total generation consumed behind the meter). Mr. Below recommended against having Liberty install a REC meter - that the City should install its own - and said that we might want to involve CPCNH in this.

James Mashal joined the meeting remotely at 3:40 PM.

C. Municipal Solar Update

Mr. Montgomery described his recent presentation to the City Council on the buyout for a Phase One solar project. Mr. Montgomery shared a spreadsheet summary of the CIP financial analysis of what he provided the Council. The bond rate increased in July 2024 and the purchase price has increased, but these numbers will still change again as the bond rates are anticipated to change again in 2025 and Mr. Montgomery is negotiating a lower purchase price with the seller. There is a financial advantage for the City to buy the solar arrays versus continuing with the Power Purchase Agreement and he shared the financial difference between different options.

D. Lebanon Energy Savings Program

Mr. Chaffee said that three weeks ago he, Mr. Rothe, and Mr. Montgomery attended a conference on energy justice hosted by the Irving Institute at Dartmouth College. The Energy Justice Clinic at the Vermont Law School is doing projects throughout the region and has expressed interest in doing a project with the City of Lebanon. Projects could include building energy upgrades for low-income housing in the area. VLS has identified many areas of funding, including one called Solar For All.

E. EV Subcommittee Report

Mr. Benzel said that he visited the airport with Richard Huntley and James Doyle of Liberty Utilities and has identified a preferable location for EV charging stations in the Avis rental car lot near the Terminal building. He said there were no updates on the Solaflect solar EV chargers and doesn't expect news until early November.

To move forward with the airport project, funding is needed.

Mr. Benzel said that the tour of downtown with Liberty to look for new EVCS locations has been postponed until November.

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

Mr. Rothe talked with Mayor McNamara who said that the City is looking for a local architect for this project. He and Mr. Chafee are trying to get another meeting with the Mayor to discuss the energy performance of the buildings. Drawings and the details are flexible. Mr. Kennelley and Mr. Benzel gave an update on the City's [Pattern Zoning regulations](#).

Mr. Chafee attended a webinar about the Home Rebate/Incentives program with the NH D.O.E. and thinks that those incentives will not be available until the Fall of 2025. The DOE is looking for contractors to administer these.

G. City Master Plan – Energy Chapter Update

Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Bromberg, Mr. Chafee, Mr. Rothe, and Associate Planner Catheryn Hembree met earlier this week and went through Section D on Principles and Policies after Mr. Chafee had revised the section to make sure the information is congruent. Mr. Montgomery plans to have a revision of the Energy Chapter of the Master Plan presented to the full LEAC body by the end of the year for their review and editing. They will continue to rework language in the chapter and include information on money saved over this last decade. It will then go before the Planning Board.

Ms. Hembree is creating a dedicated folder to act as a permanent repository of information on energy and facilities work related to and linked to in the Master Plan that will be safely stored and accessible in the future. The Plan has hyperlinks that connect directly to the cited documents.

H. Thermal Energy Networks – Update

Hartford is moving ahead with a TEN and is having a feasibility study done of a project in the downtown area which would include the Briggs Opera House and the Cartoon Building. They are working with Argon National Laboratory to undertake a feasibility study for the project. They are assessing whether to drill geoexchange boreholes beneath parking lots and under building footprints because land is so scarce in downtown WRJ.

I. Clean 100 Opt-Up Program

Mr. Montgomery said that it sounds like Hanover will be moving forward with the Rockefeller Center for Public Policy at Dartmouth on a marketing program to promote opting-up to greener electricity. He has let them know of the City's interest in participating with them on this pilot if the opportunity should arise.

J. Environmental Justice Task Force – No updates

5. ENERGY & FACILITIES MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Montgomery met with Whitney Smith, Vice President of Finance at Dartmouth, to discuss Direct Pay and the college's geosexchange project. They are challenged with Direct Pay as well. He expects that there will be a local or regional consortium of non-profit entities who will collaborate on implementing Direct Pay as they continue to learn more about this.

Mr. Montgomery has been tasked with developing a standard operation procedure (SOP) for maintaining the level 2 EV charging stations. This includes the development of a separate SOP called 'lock-out/tag-out' to turn off circuit breakers when electrical work is being done. This needs to take into consideration the current operating procedures and protocols from other departments within the City (e.g. Water, Wastewater, RAP, Solid Waste). Enphase now owns the Clipper Creek brand of EVCS and initially said that the units do not require maintenance, but then revised their statement and gave him maintenance procedures that include lock-out/tag-out.

Mr. Montgomery met with Professor Emily Monroe, Dartmouth Thayer School yesterday and they prepared an agreement regarding the expected deliverables for the e-bike charging station project. It will be presented to DPW management and Shawn Mulholland for approval.

The primary deliverable of this project is a report detailing the most feasible designs of e-bike chargers tentatively located at the Kilton Library and in downtown Lebanon (tunnel and in Colburn Park). The feasibility analysis will consider various factors, including:

- Survey of Lebanon ebike user preferences for e-bike charging stations (ex. locks, costs to charge and willingness to pay, demand for charging, bike storage, etc.)
- Literature review of best practices for e-bike charging infrastructure designs
- First level (conceptual) design of mechanical, electrical, and experimental systems informed by the aesthetics of the three different sites, including a preliminary cost estimate associated with each system.

Additional possible deliverables include lobbying for the eligibility of ebike charging equipment for Direct Pay, and a list of potential funding opportunities to pay for the construction of these e-bike charging stations.

Mr. Montgomery is in the process of doing safety inspections on all City buildings. There are approximately 68 buildings, and he will inspect most if not all, so this will take quite a while.

Regarding the Environment Justice clinic at Dartmouth, Mr. Montgomery noted several groups doing good work in the Northeast. For example, excellent work is being done through the Latino community in Holyoke, MA, which now has one of the greenest electricity supplies in the Northeast. In Maine there are several rural community energy organizations that are addressing energy poverty through low-income

housing energy retrofits. One program utilizes 120-kilowatt solar arrays with trackers that are located on farms. These provide farmers with additional income and benefit offtakers with savings on their electricity bills while allowing agriculture or grazing beneath the arrays.

Another key takeaway for Mr. Montgomery came from Angela Yang, Program Director at LISTEN, who talked about the relationship between the energy burden (paying one's electric bill) and homelessness. She said if a person cannot pay their electric bill they will lose their home quickly. When they eventually find other housing the utilities will not connect since they have a mark on their record. Rectifying this requires a large deposit, which these families usually do not have. Ms. Yang stated that the energy burden has really grown into a major factor contributing to homelessness in this area. Sarah Kelly of the Irving Institute is working on this in a concerted way with several people in Lebanon.

Rebecca Owens prepared information which Mr. Montgomery distributed to several LEAC members about a Community Partnership for Climate Resilience that Dartmouth has just started. They organize teams of students that will contribute to a project including research and other work, and Dartmouth will pitch up to \$7,500 in funding. It needs to be determined which projects the City could undertake with such assistance and the time it would take to supervise the projects. If this moves forward it would be in early 2025, possibly January through March.

The public EV charging 'Request For' has now reverted from a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) back to a Request for Proposals (RFP). DPW has decided to delay its issuance until it is known if the City has gotten any funding for EVCS from the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant. Sherry is making the argument to issue a separate RFP to go for the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district EVCS now because Shawn wants to spend TIF money this year. Some questions under consideration are whether we would get greater benefit from bundling all these charging stations together in one RFP, and if there is any harm in delaying the TIF district projects. Discussion continues.

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

7. UPCOMING EVENTS:

November 1, 2024, Local Energy Solutions (LES) Conference in Manchester, NH. The City has two membership registrations and Mr. Montgomery can pass them on to other LEAC members, since he may not attend. Mr. Below will be attending.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None

9. ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION was made by Tom Benzel to adjourn the meeting at 4:35PM. The motion was seconded by John Chafee and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Cinda Mersel, Recording Secretary