

**Town of Boscawen  
ENERGY COMMITTEE  
Boscawen Municipal Complex  
FINAL MEETING MINUTES  
Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 @ 9:00 a.m.**

**Members Present:** Edward J. Cherian, Jr – Chair, Charles Niebling – Vice Chair, Gary Tillman & Nate Preisendorfer

**Guests:** Henry Herndon – Director of Member Services at Community Power Coalition of NH, Barbara Randall – Resident, Linda & Joel White – Residents

**Staff Present:** Kellee Jo Easler – Planning and Community Development Director & Katie Phelps – Town Administrator

---

Chair Cherian opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Chair Cherian completed roll call.

**Minutes:**

**Mr. Tillman motioned to accept the 8/15/23 draft minutes as presented. Seconded by Vice Chair Niebling. All in favor. None opposed.**

**New Business:**

*Public Hearing:* Vice Chair Niebling explained that the purpose of this Public Hearing was to invite comment from the residents of the Town of Boscawen on the proposed draft Electric Aggregation Plan (EAP). The Community Power Program was enabled by legislation that passed in 2021 and signed by Governor Sununu. He said essentially Community Power allows towns, cities, and counties to become their own electricity supplier and provide default service to customers in their community who are currently served by one of the regulated utilities or by the Co-op and/or in some cases have competitive suppliers. This piece of legislation has made possible the formation of a coalition, called the Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH). CPCNH currently has participation from 38 communities. Mr. Herndon said that the number will increase to 40 or 41 by next week. The purpose of this collaboration is primarily to go to market with real negotiating leverage to purchase electricity supply as inexpensively as possible. After two rounds of procurement, the expectation that the electricity supply would be less expensive than regulated utility electricity has been proven. The first round of procurement was approximately 30% less than Eversource and Unutil rates, and the second was around 12% or 15% less. The Energy Committee presented the concept to the Select Board and introduced the concept. They asked the SB first to create an Electric Aggregation Committee (EAC). The SB chose to designate the Energy Committee as the EAC. And secondly, to formally join the Coalition as a member in the program, not as a participant which would require an affirmative vote at Town Meeting. On December 15, 2022 the SB voted unanimously to enter into the Coalition's Joint Powers Agreement. The

Coalition's Board of Directors voted to welcome the Town of Boscawen as a member on January 31, 2023. Since then, the EAC has attended CPCNH meetings first as a Board member, and now as a regular member. The law requires the town to adopt a plan, and then to present that plan for approval at Town Meeting. Provided at the Public Hearing was a copy of the draft EAP, where many of the details are statute and must be in the plan. Also provided was an FAQ and a 2-page summary. The law also requires the EAC hold two Public Informational Sessions to receive public comment on the EAP. The second will be Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Boscawen **Energy Committee** will meet on **Saturday, September 23, 2023 after 9:00 AM** at the Boscawen Municipal Complex, 116 North Main St, during a **regular meeting** of the committee, to hear the proposal for establishing the Community Power Program along with joining the coalition. A public hearing will follow. The Committee will present the draft Boscawen Community Power Electric Aggregation Plan, solicit public input in the planning process and will provide opportunity for the public to comment during public hearings and provide input into the development of that Plan.

### **Chair Cherian opened the Public Hearing at 9:16 a.m.**

Mr. Herndon, Director of Member Services at CPCNH, said the Coalition actively serves 12 city and town Community Power Programs across the state and 75,000 electric customers. The City of Dover will come online as the 13<sup>th</sup> community in November, bringing the customers up to about 90,000. In 2024, two dozen towns including Boscawen will be going to Town Meeting to bring their programs online. There are a couple of different motivators for towns. One of the universal motivators is lowering electric bills. Mr. Herndon said the relevant legislation is RSA 53-E, which was modified a couple of times over the last few years with strong bipartisan support and this was really focused on the legislature's desire to encourage voluntary, cost effective, innovative solutions to local needs. Any municipality may become the default electricity provider for their residents and businesses. The utility company will always own the grid, deliver the power, make sure the lights stay on, and maintain the poles and wires. The change is where the power is sourced from. Some benefits for customers beyond rate savings could be more choices, clean energy options, and opportunities for expanding net metering. Importantly, the plan is explicit that this will only launch if it initially offers a rate that is lower than Eversource or Unitil's electric supply rate. Vice Chair Niebling wanted to emphasize that when the EAC sought input from the SB on Boscawen's interest in participation, their sole emphasize was saving rate payers money. That is the primary objective. From a bill perspective, the only difference for a customer would be the supply line item would change to read "Boscawen Community Power". Mrs. Randall asked if the local control would determine whether renewable energy will be used. Mr. Herndon said there are a couple of ways to integrate local sources of power into the portfolio. A town could enter a project contract or net meter. What the Coalition does is manage the procurement of electricity on a portfolio basis for all towns. The Coalition does not dictate to any member town how much renewable power they can buy or from where. Mr. Herndon then spoke about the acceptance process. Customers if/when the town passes Town Meeting and SB approves the contracts, all customers would be notified, and subsequently automatically enrolled if Unitil or Eversource is their current supplier. Third party supply customers will not be affected but will be notified. There are also no tax dollars associated with these programs because a very small portion of the monies the customer pays on the electric bill for energy supply pays for the cost of the program. 30 days

before the launch, all customers will get a letter in the mail with the rates compared to the utility company, along with the customer service contact information. Any customer can choose to opt out at any time. Mr. White asked if this program requires a minimum percentage of electricity users to participate. Mr. Herndon said the opt-out nature of the program achieves that threshold. Currently the opt-out rates for the 75,000 customers are less than 1%. Mr. Preisendorfer asked what the process would be if a municipality wanted to leave the Coalition. Mr. Herndon said after Town Meeting, in order to launch the program, there will be a cost sharing agreement and a member service contract that the SB would have to approve and execute. Within the agreements are termination language. Those agreements have a 36-month rolling term, it is not a term for a specific rate, it is a term for taking service from CPCNH. The rates are set by the Board of Directors. There may be a waiting period before the program can be terminated. The portion of the reserve fund associated with the Town of Boscawen would be returned. There's one other option for termination, the town could forfeit their portion of the reserve to pay for any of the costs that would be shifted. Chair Cherian asked if all meters in town would be opted-in including municipal, commercial, and industrial. Mr. Herndon said the largest commercial/industrial class is not automatically served. Chair Cherian asked if they could serve them. Mr. Herndon said they need to adjust some policies before that can be done. Mrs. Randall asked what the negatives are if any. Vice Chair Niebling said some customers may not like an opt-out model versus opt-in. Mr. White asked if participating in this program would affect how power outages are resolved. Mr. Herndon said the utilities would not deprioritize anyone.

#### **Chair Cherian closed the Public Hearing at 10:07 a.m.**

LED Street Lights: Chair Cherian said switching to LED lights would cost a lot of money and would not save any until the tariff changes. The town would have to pay for the new lights and Unitil will charge the same amount even though the LED lights would use 1/10 of the power that sodium vapor lights use. Vice Chair Niebling asked who makes the decision about where streetlights go. PCD Director Easler will find out. Chair Cherian asked to keep this topic on the agenda for November and he will do some research.

Municipal Guide to EV Charging Stations: PCD Director Easler told the Committee about a Municipal Guide to EV Charging Stations, provided by Strafford Regional Planning Commission, which she heard about during her bimonthly Community Economic Development call. She said there may be a lot of opportunities for grants.

#### **Other Business:**

2023 NH Energy Summit: Chair Cherian said he attended the NH Energy Summit on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and Brian Callnan, CEO of CPCNH was a guest speaker. He said they currently procure 3.8 million MW/hours in 2022. They provide default service for about 67% of residential customers in their area. They expect their next procurement to drop by about 1 million MW/hours because of a migration to CPCNH. Mr. Callnan expects that this year coming up they will become the second largest load serving entity in the state. The reason that the energy rates are so high is because the utility companies go to market for 6 months at a time. There was a new law passed that will allow them to enter into long-term Power Purchase Agreements. Chair Cherian said CPCNH was now

up to over 25% of the population of the state. He said net metering was a topic of discussion during the Q&A. Discussion ensued.

*Newsvine Advertisement:* Mr. Tillman asked if it would be possible to get an ad in the Newsvine before the November Public Hearing. The Committee decided to take the 2-page informational summary, turn the text black and white, and print it out on colored paper as an insert to the Newsvine. Vice Chair Niebling said the deadline is usually the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Chair Cherian or Vice Chair Niebling will deliver the finished product to Editor Dee Blake once printing is complete.

**Mr. Tillman motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Vice Chair Niebling. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Next Meeting & Public Hearing:** November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, @ 6:00 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.*