

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

October 23, 2023

MEMORIAL BUILDING

4:30 P.M.

*The following are to be considered draft minutes only until approved by the Board at their next meeting.*

Selectmen Present: Poul Heilmann, Chair; Amy Lewis, Vice Chair

Others: State Representative Hope Damon, Jack Kutner, Royal Monty, Don Hill, Andrew Hatch, Jo-Ellen Courtney, Theresa Quinn, Samantha Morris, Steven Dzubak, Kevin Lee

**Scheduled Appointments:**

Steve Dzubak - Energy Committee – Community Power talk with CPCNH Outreach Coordinator:

Andrew Hatch, CPCNH Outreach Coordinator, presented information on community power to the board and invited the Town of Springfield to join the coalition. Mr. Hatch provided packets of information to the Board and audience. Mr. Hatch stated that Enfield, amongst another twelve communities, had already launched community power earlier this year. The latest town to join is Dover and currently, they are working to enroll customers in Cheshire County under the new county model.

Community Power launched this year, but this has been on the back of a lot of work over many years. RSA 53-E was adopted in 2019 and that has allowed community power to be offered to the towns and cities of New Hampshire. What it does is allow a variety of vehicles to adopt community power. The Community Power Coalition of NH is a non-profit, joint powers agreement. What the joint-powers agreement does is invite and allow the towns to have a delegate at the table as this conversation continues and to avail the town of the resources of CPCNH to move forward in the process of adopting community power.

The principle of community power is that it is in the hands of the community to define exactly what it needs; this is not a one-size-fits-all all. What it does is allow communities to purchase power on behalf of that community. The utility will continue to be the companies who provide the billing, poles, wires, transmission, etc.; those will continue to be maintained by the utility. From a customer perspective very little will change, other than a line item on their electric bill explaining the power is now being provided by Springfield Community Power. All of this is an optional opportunity; at any point and time, a customer can opt out if they choose. The compelling reason for doing this is the CPC can offer electricity at a lower cost than the current utility provider. By the end of this year, they anticipate a total of over ten million dollars in savings for those residents. The CPC now has 85,000 customers enrolled across the state which is just over 25% of the population.

The phase the CPCNH might be considering for Springfield would be the third launch, anticipated to be in the mid to late summer of 2024. A warrant article would be required to adopt community power and a vote at the town meeting to authorize the Board of Selectmen to act on

behalf of the town. That vote does not automatically start the process of moving forward, it just authorizes the Selectboard to be able to act on behalf of the community. Community Power is offering all cities, towns, and counties default electricity provision under the RSA. Customers can switch back to utility default or take another third-party supplier at any time. Community Power must be paid from the revenues received from the participating customers; there is no burden on the town. More importantly, the joint powers agreement prevents any form of liability for the communities for anything that may happen with community power. There will never be any liability that the town will carry.

Poul asked how it is possible for the CPC to obtain lower rates. Mr. Hatch explained in the 90s NH was the first state to adopt deregulation of the utilities. So, today we have all been able to buy power from a third-party supplier. The intention of that law was to make the default power the backstop, not what everyone uses. And competitive supply was going to be the way most people procured power. Most people have never moved to a third-party supplier, over 90% of any community's power is still provided by your electricity providers in town. Those deregulated utilities don't make any money out of procuring and passing along that power; their responsibility is that two days a year they call up and procure power at that prevailing rate on that day. That is what happened last year in December and why rates went up so dramatically. Because of all these external challenges in the global markets, they were not protected from that and the rates went very high. What CPC does, is they buy power on an ongoing basis; they buy short and long-term contracts. That's the reason why it's more competitive.

If Springfield becomes part of the launch of community power, clear notification is part of the regulations. CPC must reach out to all customers at least thirty days before the program launches, explaining what is happening. Customers can opt out of the program or opt up to higher levels of renewable power. If they choose to do nothing, they are automatically enrolled in community power and their next bill will reflect that. The CPC currently tracks to the six-month change of rates. The rates are required to be publicly announced by the utility; Eversource should make a rate announcement in early December.

Jo-Ellen Courtney, of Enfield Energy, explained that one other difference between the utilities is the utilities go out twice a year, but when they publish their rates they have to be approved by the PUC (Public Utilities Commission) and there is a time window and that time window locks them into that price. With CPCNH, they don't have to go through that process, they can just approve it through their committee. If Springfield were to adopt community power the Board will have a lot of local control about where this goes. But if you just chose to work with the coalition and work their rates the community will benefit from those rates. Currently the coalitions rate is 10.9 and Eversource is 12.58.

One of the choices of the town committee would be how to incorporate the electric co-op customers. Most communities so far have not automatically enrolled them and left it up to the individual to opt-in to this program. This would all be explained to customers during the

required notification process. Net metering is an unfortunate wrinkle that is being resolved. The utilities were not prepared for the launch of community power, they did not have the means to provide the data to give to CPCNH in order to meaningfully bring all net-metering customers in as an automatic enrollment. Don Hill explained that net metering is if you've got solar panels and/or a windmill then you've got a contract with the power company. Mr. Hatch explained customers can opt-in, opt-up or opt-out at the [communitypowernh.gov](http://communitypowernh.gov) website or call into the call center and the only thing you would need is your account number. Mr. Hatch will work with the Energy Committee to develop all the paperwork and to discuss these potential decisions to make.

As a non-profit, the money that is generated by this procurement model is going to either flow the savings to the customers and the piece not passed on to them is built up in reserves. As the reserve grows the organization becomes more of a bankable entity. The CPC targets are to get to 60-day reserves and then 120-day reserves. Once there are 120 days the CPC will be an entity that is the most bankable of all and can procure power at the best rates.

Amy asked where the oversight of the reserve is kept. Risk management, audit, and finance are involved in oversight of the reserves and how those reserves are administered. In the rules of engagement in the JPA, risk management must contract with an independent third party to review all these practices and report on them. Amy also asked about the option to opt-in, is that available for commercial accounts as well. Mr. Hatch explained that it is available to small businesses that are metered in kilowatt hours, like residential customers.

Mr. Hatch is asking the town to consider adopting the joint powers agreement (JPA). The JPA is a commitment to join the coalition, not launch community power. The only thing adopting the agreement does is get the Board into the group. Joining community power is up to the Board to determine with the help of their energy committee. Mr. Hatch, along with his colleagues Henry Herndon and Jo-Ellen and/or others would be available to attend the public hearing to answer questions.

Poul stated part of the reason the Energy Committee was established was so they could figure out the workings and pitching of it and progress from there. The Board will put it on the committee's shoulders to convince us as residents that this is the right thing to do. Mr. Hatch provided the committee a plan that can be adapted for Springfield. A digital copy of the JPA can be provided to be shared with attorney Johnston. Mr. Hatch also provided a template warrant article for the town to use. Mr. Hatch suggested one public hearing in November and then maybe the second in the new year.

Poul's thought on it currently is saving money is good. Looking at it as a resident, when he first heard of this, he was worried about repair services if the power goes out. The more Poul has been educated on community power the more comfortable he has gotten with it. Don Hill expressed another side of participating in community power. Utilities are controlled by the PUC,

the co-op is owned by the people; If some members of the co-op pay less some members are going to pay more. The ones paying more will be the people on the net metering who can't get out of it. Savings somewhere is always more money somewhere else.

Steve Dzubak requested the Board forward the JPA to attorney Johnston for review. Tamara will forward that along. If or when signed the Board will be able to appoint two people to the membership of the coalition. The Board thanks the representatives for their time.

Public Comment - Jack Kutner, a Newbury resident, appeared before our Board to inform them he has started a community group that encompasses mostly Newbury, some of Sunapee into New London and a couple of Springfield residents. The group is focused on the towns rationing up their protection efforts of the shared watershed. The group was able to get New London, Newbury, and Sunapee to agree to send one Selectboard member each to participate in a group they call the Lake Sunapee Tri-Town Watershed Initiative. The is a non-binding group that meets once a month to talk about best practices and how the towns can work better together to protect the watershed. Jack is here today to invite Springfield to join the initiative. The group meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 9am.

Royal Monty asked what that state's involvement in this is. Jack explained there are rules and then enforcement of rules. If you can get the state involved after there is already a problem, it can be relatively effective. If you are expecting them to be out and about enforcing watershed requirements, you are dreaming. Their enforcement staff has been cut drastically. Jack stated when you call DES, they have the most responsive, caring, and motivated people in the world, there just aren't enough of them. The Board will discuss this and determine if there is a member that would have the time to be able to attend meetings. Hope asked who else was involved in the group. The group consists of Jack Kutner, three Selectboard members, the executive director from LSPA, the head of the watershed committee at LSPA. Those are the permanent people who meet each month and each month they bring in functional expertise so there is a discussion of what to do and how to do it. Jack thanked the Board for their time.

**Zoning/Health Officer:**

**REPORT from ZONING COORDINATOR -- Board of Selectmen – Monday, October 23, 2023**

**Application for Zoning Permit – APPROVED**

1. Call, Brian, 2687 Route 4A, application for a covered porch attached to rear of house, 16' x 40' Application complete, fee paid, meets all zoning requirements.
2. Ossa-Concha, 115 Woodcrest Rd, application for a 10' x 20' fabric shelter next to existing garage. Location of fabric shelter approved by ZBA as a Special Exception on a non-conforming lot. Zoning Permit application complete, fee paid, meets all zoning requirements.

3. Aucoin/Ruppel, 15 Sandy Beach Road (private road) for a hot tub (i) within the shoreland conservation district and (ii) within the side yard setback requirement. Approved by Special Exception on 9/5/23 Permit application complete, "after the fact" fee paid. Meets all zoning requirements.

Application for Permit – In hand, being held.

1. Cloutier, Patrick, Main Street Map 23, Lot 578-216, Application for detached ADU withdrawn, new application for house and detached garage. Application no longer includes living quarters above garage. Health Officer granted local approval of revised septic plan. Items needed for zoning permit approval, 1) signed application, 2) building plans for house, 3) State approval of septic plan & 4) the "after the fact" application fee. Applicant notified of same.
2. Marc McCalmont, 228 Oak Hill Road, Zoning Permit application for a ground-mounted PV solar panel installation. Mr. McCalmont instructed: "Don't approve this application just more incompetence! Let's see if the next company can get it correct." Awaiting further communication from applicant. Will contact applicant for status report.

**REPORT from HEALTH OFFICER -- Board of Selectmen – Tuesday, October 23, 2023.**

Application for Local Septic System Construction Permit – APPROVED

1. Cloutier, Parick Main St, septic disposal system plan held pending revision to remove detached ADU and associated "notes". The applicant's septic system designer has complied with requirements for local approval. Pending DES subsurface division approval is needed to issue Zoning Permit for construction of house.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tim Bray  
Zoning Coordinator / Heath Officer

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Poul made a motion to accept the Zoning Coordinator report and the Health Officer report as written. The motion was seconded by Amy. Poul and Amy voted in favor of the motion.

**Minutes of October 10, 2023:**

Pg. 2:

*Don Hill appeared as a Buildings and Grounds Committee representative. Don, one of the ~~frontmen~~ co-chairs of this team named everyone on the committee;*

*At 4:47 p.m. Poul made a motion to enter non-public session per RSA 91-A:3(II)(c). The motion was seconded by Jeremiah. By roll call vote Poul voted aye, Jeremiah voted aye.*

*For the non-public session, the audience was asked to step out of the Protectworth Room.*

*Poul made a motion to exit non-public session at 4:53 p.m. The motion was seconded by Jeremiah. By roll call vote Poul voted aye, Jeremiah voted aye. Poul made a motion to seal the minutes. The motion was seconded by Jeremiah. By roll call vote Poul voted aye, and Jeremiah voted aye.*

*The audience was invited back into the Protectworth Room for the remainder of the public meeting.*

Pg. 5:

*Highway Dept. PT/FT – Poul stated we do need a third person **for the winter**; we have not received applications since posting the advertisement.*

*g. The idea is what we can do now, but build it into the budget for next year to make it more of a ~~source~~ **resource**.*

Pg. 6:

*e. Conservation Committee – No updates in Amy's absence. Tamara informed the Board that Tim **Fraser** sent his resignation as well as a letter stating the Conservation Commission unanimously voted to nominate Martin Beam as a member of the commission.*

Poul made a motion to accept the minutes of October 10, 2023 as amended. The motion was seconded by Amy. Poul and Amy voted in favor of the motion.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

- a. Vacation Policy – This is coming soon.
- b. RFP – Energy Committee – The final draft has been received by the Board. Poul noted that dates need to be changed in the RFP. It was explained to the audience members that this RFP is for putting solar panels on the roof of the Highway/Fire Department building. Don Hill pointed out the Buildings Committee is looking at the roof. It was explained that the building would go through a structural analysis by an engineer. The installer normally evaluates the condition of the roof and determines if any repairs are needed before the installation. This can be clearly articulated in the RFP. The question of cost varies depending on which proposal, if any, the Board accepts. Steven Dzubak will make the requested changes and send the RFP back to the Board for their review.

Amy asked if we could do a brief Q&A as a webpage and have the bid documents already loaded so they can just go to the webpage read the information of what we are looking for as well as the package which would have submittal deadlines. This might help keep phone traffic out of the office. Tamara will work on this.

The point of contact for questions on this subject will be directed to Steve Dzubak through the Energy Committee email and Tamara will be the point of contact for the final submission.

- c. Pest Control – Tamara will be scheduling an appointment with JP Pest Control. She should have some figures to share by the next Board meeting.
- d. Website- After a preliminary meeting with David a quote has been received for the restructuring and hosting of the town website. The cost will be \$7200 which will cover the remainder of 2023 along with 2024. The annual hosting fee will be \$750 compared to the current \$2500. Poul made a motion to sign the contract. The motion was seconded by Amy. Poul and Amy voted in favor of the motion.
- e. FEMA – Tamara met with a group of FEMA reps on Thursday morning. This was an informational meeting. We now have an avenue to potentially get some money back for the storm damage.
- f. Auction – Poul will work with Tim Hayes, Road Agent, on a list of items he would like to put up for auction. Once the list is complete Tamara will work on setting up the next auction.
- g. Meeting House door closure – Poul stated we need to find someone to fix the door at the meetinghouse. The slow-closing door hinge has broken off the side door. Tamara will look into getting someone over to fix that, hoping it just needs to be screwed back into the door.
- h. Part-time HD – We have not gotten any responses. Poul will be talking with Tim Hayes about developing a plan B.
- i. Tamara informed the Board that Select Shepherds did appeal the denial. Attorney Johnston found out about the appeal on Friday, it was submitted on October 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm. Attorney Johnston's assistant will be contacting Tamara and will help pull together whatever they need.

**New Business:**

- a. FD Bylaws – Amy will forward the bylaws to attorney Johnston for her to review.
- b. CIP – The next meeting is on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Amy will not be able to attend but will make sure they have what they need from the fire department before the meeting. Poul will sit down with Tim Hayes to get the information from the highway department.
- c. Budget Status – After a review of the most recent budget things are looking good. The first budget meeting is on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Jill will provide an updated budget report to be reviewed before the Selectboard's second November meeting.
- d. Phones – Tamara reported after a day of going back and forth between the office and the highway department the phones are now fixed.
- e. Medical Insurance – Poul asked Amy to review the information on medical insurance for 2024 to be discussed at the next meeting. Healthtrust rates are increasing 15.6% in 2024.

**Board and Department Updates:**

- a. Agricultural Commission – Not represented.
- b. Buildings/Grounds – Not represented.
- c. Cemetery – Not represented.

- d. Conservation Commission – There have been some leadership changes. Brooks Weathers has stepped in for Tim Fraser. Tim Fraser is staying on as an alternate and Martin Bean is a full member.
- e. Energy Committee – No further updates.
- f. Fire Department – We've got the bylaws. Ian is away this week so Amy will connect with a couple of the other members to get something together for next week. Their admin. meeting is in about three weeks.
- g. Highway Department – Not represented.
- h. Library – The library trustees will meet Wednesday October 25<sup>th</sup>.
- i. Planning Board – The Board met last Thursday and approved a voluntary merger and a subdivision. There is a 100-year flood plan available through the State. Tamara will look into printing a large map of it so if questions come up regarding this again the information will be in the office.
- j. Police Department – They have been working on their budget and information for the CIP.
- k. Recreation Committee – Not represented.
- l. ZBA – Update given during unfinished business.
- m. Tamara will be planning to get the plates for the new highway truck on Wednesday.

**Correspondence:**

Letter of resignation to the Board of Selectmen from Jeremiah Crosby effective immediately.

**Signatures:**

None.

**Miscellaneous:**

Royal Monty asked the Board the best way to present a suggestion to the Board on a permitting issue that he is concerned about. The Board recommended Royal contact Tim Bray, our zoning coordinator, as he might be able to provide some clarity on the issue. If it's decided it's something more significant then Royal could come before the Board of Selectmen with his concerns.

Poul asked about the note that was sent out earlier on county taxes; is it just a notification that they need to be paid? Tamara stated that is what our bill will be next year.

Poul state we need to get copies of the EMP. Ian will be providing us with three or four hard copies of the Emergency Management Plan.

At 6:19 p.m. Poul made a motion to enter non-public session per RSA 91-A:3(II)(a). The motion was seconded by Amy. By roll call vote Poul voted aye, Amy voted aye.



Poul made a motion to exit non-public session at 6:34 p.m. The motion was seconded by Amy. By roll call vote Poul voted aye, Amy voted aye. Poul made a motion to seal the minutes. The motion was seconded by Amy. By roll call vote Poul voted aye, and Amy voted aye.

Poul made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Amy. Poul and Amy voted in favor of the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Jill Hastings

Deputy Administrative Assistant