

Cheshire Community Power Update

On August 2, the Dublin Select Board and Energy Committee held a public hearing to discuss Cheshire County's Community Power Plan, known as Cheshire Community Power. Speakers included Cheshire County Commissioner Terry Clark and Henry Herndon, consultant to the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH). Henry provided an overview and handout (now posted on the Energy Committee page of the Town website). Dublin residents asked many helpful questions about how the program will work.

On August 14, the Select Board considered the question whether to opt-in to Cheshire Community Power. The Board voted unanimously to join Cheshire Community Power to provide default supply service on an opt-out basis to retail electricity customers within Dublin's boundaries, pursuant to RSA 53-E:6(1). The timing of the Board's vote will enable eligible Dublin residents to participate in the initial launch of Cheshire Community Power. Eversource will continue to deliver electricity using their poles and wires, provide billing services, and ensure reliability.

The public hearing and Select Board vote follow a year-long process of research and education into community power. At Town Meeting in March 2023, there was broad support for a warrant article on the question whether there is community support to consider opting into the Cheshire County Community Power Plan for electricity supply for residential, business and municipal use, in accordance with the provisions of RSA 53-E:6. In May, Cheshire County announced its intention to launch Cheshire Community Power this fall. This month's hearing and Select Board vote are in follow up on the warrant article.

Cheshire County is partnering with CPCNH, a non-profit power supplier which is pooling community purchasing power. Harrisville and Peterborough are purchasing energy from CPCNH under the terms of their own community power plans. Nelson has joined Dublin in opting into Cheshire Community Power. Other neighboring communities including Hancock and Marlborough have also adopted community power plans.

As this goes to press, the Town is awaiting further information about the customer notification and enrollment process. Below are some key points:

- At least 30 days before program launch, all electric customers will be mailed notifications including the initial fixed rates for Community Power service compared with Eversource. There will be several electricity rate choices including a basic rate (cheapest) and rates that reflect a higher sourcing of renewable energy.

- Participation in Cheshire Community Power is voluntary. Customers can choose to opt-out and to stay with Eversource for electricity supply, or shop for another market option. Most current Eversource default electricity supply customers will be automatically enrolled unless they choose to opt out; customers wishing to opt out may call 1-866-603-POWR or email info@CommunityPowerNH.gov or visit www.CommunityPowerNH.gov.
- Customers already getting their power from a third-party supplier will remain with their supplier unless they choose to opt-in to Community Power. Customers should review the terms of their third-party supply contract if they are considering switching to Community Power.
- Eversource will continue to deliver electricity using their poles and wires, provide billing services, and ensure reliability.

As more details about Cheshire Community Power become available, updates will be posted on the Town website and in future issues of the Advocate.