

Town of Dublin Energy Committee Meeting
Wednesday, June 28, 2023
7 PM at Town Hall, ground floor

In attendance:

In person: James Finnegan, Blake Minckler, Susan Peters (Select Board), Tim Stillman, and John Kondos (Clean Energy NH).

Community Power.

Susan provided an update on the May 24 meeting hosted by Cheshire County concerning their Community Power Plan. Henry Herndon, consultant to the Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH), explained how the Plan will work. The County and participating communities will source their electricity supply through an aggregate buying program with CPCNH. There will be no change to how electricity is distributed. Henry explained that the first programs will launch as early as September 20, 2023 (or shortly after). So long as a town has joined and been accepted by Cheshire County at least 30 days in advance of the launch/enrollment date, the Town may participate in the initial launch. Towns are committing to a three-year contract, but individual customers may choose to opt out at any time. In communities that opt in, current Eversource customers could begin receiving their electricity supply through the County Plan as early as September 20 unless they choose to opt out or source electricity through their own solar panels. Businesses and residents currently enrolled with third party energy suppliers would not be automatically enrolled, but may choose to opt in.

At the May 24 meeting, Henry introduced Brian Callnan, CPCNH's new CEO, who comes from a career managing energy portfolios for public power entities including NH Electric Co-op and Vermont Public Power Supply Authority. The County Commissioners were also present, as were representatives from several towns including Chesterfield, Dublin, Fitzwilliam, Nelson, Roxbury, Sullivan, Surry, and Winchester. On May 31, the Nelson Select Board voted to opt into the County Plan, and Nelson plans to be included in the initial launch of Cheshire Community Power.

On June 26, the Dublin Select Board agreed to schedule a public hearing in early August, with Wednesday, August 2 (7 pm) now set for the hearing. To make the earliest possible launch, Dublin would need to join with the County prior to August 21. Once a town joins Cheshire Community Power, CPCNH is authorized to launch the town, but there are processes such as: (1) obtaining electricity usage data and mailing lists from Eversource and other utilities; (2) authorizing additional power purchases if needed; and (3) cleaning the data sets and ordering enrollment letters to be printed and mailed. Once the letters are mailed, a public information session must be held within 15 days. Customers can start being enrolled at least 30 days after the letters are mailed.

Municipal Solar. Discussion followed about possible municipal solar sites in Dublin. John explained some of the factors to consider and shared a list he has prepared with Municipal Solar Project Process Steps (see attached). Factors include:

- sun exposure and shading analysis
- rooflines and age of roof shingles (for roof installations)
- proximity to three phase power (important for big systems over 100 KW; under 100 KW, conventional single phase power is sufficient)
- existing electrical panels and the need for possible upgrades to install solar
- economies of scale (bigger system means lower cost per KW)
- visibility and buy-in from neighbors
- individual sites can have positives and negatives

John discussed a few projects he is working on in neighboring towns. Harrisville has put out a RFP for three possible municipal solar sites, including the town barn, town sand shed, and a rocky site that would need work. Winchester is looking into installing a solar array on a brownfields site.

John recommends screening sites and then beginning to rank them. He can help with a first review, and suggests Greg Blake (South Pack Solar) to help with a more detailed analysis of shading and other considerations. It would be desirable to choose the best site or best two sites, and then consider putting out an RFP for one or two sites. There may be grant funding available to help cover some costs, and it is helpful to be ready for when a grant opportunity comes along. The Federal Inflation Reduction Act offers credits to cover a percentage of the costs, and State grants may also be available.

It was felt there are three possible municipal sites in Dublin worth exploring on a preliminary basis at this time: the capped landfill behind the Transfer Station, the Town Highway Barn property, and the Fire Station roof. For landfills, a different ground structure is needed than for traditional ground arrays, and there is an additional 10% Federal credit applying to brownfields sites.

Site visits were scheduled for Wednesday, July 12 beginning at 4 pm at the Transfer Station (to view the capped landfill), to be followed by stops at the Town Highway Barn and Town Hall.

March 22 and April 26, 2023 minutes

On motion made by Blake and seconded by James, the minutes of the March 22 and April 26 meetings were approved.

Action items:

1. **Municipal Solar Site Visits on July 12.** Susan will arrange for notices to be posted.
2. **Community Power Public Hearing on Wednesday, August 2 at 7 pm.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan W. Peters