

## CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 11, 2024, 7-8:30pm

Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

**PRESENT:** in person: CEC members: Joanna Sharf, Richard Thompson, Nancy Wightman, Everett Cass, Mike Belanger. Via Zoom: Bill Schmidt; PEC members via Zoom: Evan Oxenham, Ron Eberhardt, Bob Jordan, Nick Cohen.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mike made a motion to accept the February 13, 2024 minutes. Richard seconded and all approved.

**NHSAVES BUTTON UP WORKSHOP.** Will take place virtually on April 16<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:00 PM. Ted Stiles, BPI Building Analyst at NHSaves, will present. The committee discussed promotion for the event, and Joanna will post on Connect Cornish and the Cornish website, Steve Ladd will send out to his email list, and Evan will post on Next Door and Facebook. Physical posters will be placed in Cornish by Richard (Mike will print 9 color copies) and in Plainfield by Evan. Committee members were encouraged to register and attend.

**COMMUNITY POWER.** The Committee discussed the recent CPCNH new member candidates forum. Joanna highlighted major takeaways: full transparency, minimal legal risk, and no financial burden for participants. The issue of automatic opt-in was raised, but concerns and resistance have been minimal. Ron Eberhardt pointed out that automatic opt-in is the same for the major utilities. Evan explained that it is legally stipulated that no funding for CPCNH comes from towns – all expenses are covered by the electricity rates. It was clarified that the utilities will continue to maintain the lines. Joanna indicated that she would like to engage the Cornish Select Board again to sign the Joint Powers Agreement (which protects the Town from liability) and thereby allow the matter to be brought for a vote at the 2025 Town Meeting. The process normally takes about a year because it involves drafting an Electric Aggregation Plan and holding public hearings. The Select Board has been briefed on the program since 2020, but has taken a “wait and see” approach to date. Mike suggested that the new member candidates webinar materials should be put on the Energy Committee website.

**INFLATION REDUCTION ACT (IRA) UPDATES:** Josh Elliott, Director of the Division of Policy and Programs at the NH Department of Energy, has agreed to meet with the Committee via Zoom on April 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss NH implementation of the IRA. Joanna encouraged Committee members to prepare questions, with an emphasis on where NH is in its process and workforce issues. The Committee will also seek to learn more details about the upcoming IRA incentives for clean energy projects, appliances, retroactive rebates & eligibility requirements.

**WINDPOWER FORUM:** Richard has arranged for a tour of the Lempster wind farm on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM. Ken Diley from Groton Wind will lead the tour. The Committee discussed opening

the tour to more than just the two energy committees – Richard will find out if there is a limit on the number of attendees. A forum on wind power is still planned for September.

**SOLAR POWERED LIGHTS FOR NEW LIBRARY BANNER:** The Committee discussed options, and it was agreed that Joanna would follow up with Colleen O’Neill to see what might be a practical solution. The issue of using donated funds for this project was discussed, but no decision was made.

**ENERGY AUDIT FOR TOWN OFFICES:** Two estimates have been received from Earthshare Construction and Quality Insulation for sealing and partially insulating the Town Offices. These estimates have been provided to the Selectboard. Mike reached out to Rich Burns of Shakes to Shingles to see if we could get a third estimate, but that company is too busy; general consensus is that two estimates will suffice. Concerns were raised about structural work needed for the building, but the Select Board is aware of these issues and is discussing them. Once the Selectboard approves one of the estimates, we can approach Eversource to see how much of the project costs the utility will fund.

**PORTFOLIO MANAGER:** Joanna has login information from Zack but little data has been entered into the Portfolio Manager software, and to do so is complicated. The Committee discussed ways in which to create useful graphs and charts from the existing spreadsheets. It was suggested that Myron might be helpful on this, and Joanna was going to follow up.

**OTHER ISSUES:** Richard will provide a Treasurer’s Report at the next meeting. We will also need to elect Committee officers for one-year terms at the next meeting.

**NEXT MEETING:** April 8, 7 PM at the Town Offices.