



**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH**  
**MEETING NOTES**  
**Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee**  
**Wednesday, January 25, 2023**

1. Roll call – In person: Councilor John Tabor, chair; Council Kate Cook, Kevin Charette, Ben D’Antonio, Allison Tanner, Tom Rooney, Peter Somssich, Peter Britz, Stephanie Seacord, recording secretary. Absent: Peter Rice
2. Councilor Tabor recapped the Jan 18 meeting with discussion following

Councilor: PEAC learned that is beneficial for Portsmouth to launch PCP earlier (June) than the previously anticipated fall launch because of the significant spread between the retail and wholesale markets in the Spring creates large headroom between the utility default rate. This headroom allows for rate relief and the ability to maximize surplus financial reserves. Launching in fall is not recommended due to the current and expected market conditions and the seasonal dynamics of the NH energy market. Waiting until spring 2024 also precludes Portsmouth customers from receiving 10 months of rate advantages over the default. Launching in June also sustains the momentum of growing public awareness, including from the survey and the Feb 2 and 9 public hearings. (see January 18, 2023 minutes for more information)

Kevin commented that pursuing approval of the EAP now is not very different from the previous timeline. Once PEAC includes any information gleaned from the two public sessions, the EAP can go to the City Council on Feb 13 and to the PUC on or around Feb 10 for its 60-day review (estimated approval around Apr 10), thus allowing for the 45-day advance notice to launch and the 30-day resident notification window for a potential launch in June. This schedule gives Portsmouth customers experience with the program before the rate changes in August, tied to the utility default rate change calendar.

Peter S expressed concern that the accelerated time frame might cause public confusion – the sense that we rushed things. Kevin noted PEAC has between Feb and Jun for public awareness and education and that Portsmouth will benefit from the publicity surrounding the first wave (including neighboring Rye, Durham and Exeter) and CPCNH communication plan supported by CleanEnergy NH. Councilor Tabor included PDF of Seacoast wave 1 publicity plans in the meeting packet. Kevin noted there are also updated FAQs for use by PEAC.

Kevin presented new information from the CPCNH on Jan 25 suggests that wave 1 communities may not launch until mid-April instead of Apr 1 because CPCNH has not yet received detail customer data from all the wave 1 utilities which Ascend Analytics needs to support procurement. Wave 1 communities would then be sending their customer notification letters in mid-Mar (30 days before launch) based on this schedule. CPCNH has always targeted an April/May launch window but was aiming for as early as possible to take advantage of the current beneficial energy markets.

**Allison offered the motion, seconded by Peter S, that “The Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee complete the EAP and submit it to the PUC and Council on a timeline to launch in June.” The vote was unanimous.**

Tom commented that Portsmouth will have just 2 months to watch the roll-out of wave 1, rather than 6-8 months. Kevin commented that Portsmouth can withdraw/hold right up until after the PUC approves the EAP and the CPCNH Risk Management Committee meets to authorize energy procurement on Portsmouth’s behalf. This is approximately mid April on the current schedule. Ben asked for confirmation that by signing the Member Services agreement and procurement begins, it commits the Portsmouth CPA to a 3 years term. Kevin confirmed the term is 3 years; however, there are provisions with the Cost Sharing Agreement that allow a member community to terminate sooner (off ramps) subject to certain financial terms based on the timing, status of the CPAs financial reserves, etc.

Councilor Cook asked if the City of Portsmouth legal team has reviewed the EAP and CPCNH contracts. Councilor Tabor will be briefing the City Attorney. Peter B is finalizing the EAP [completed Jan 27] – which will be posted to the meeting materials on the City website by Jan 31.

Henry H and Kevin are finalizing the PowerPoint presentation.

Feb 2 hearing agenda (45 minutes presentation/45 minutes Q&A):  
Councilor Tabor, welcome, introduce Kevin as member of CPCNH and then Henry  
Henry H powerpoint presentation on CPCNH and PCP opportunity  
Allison, powerpoint presentation summarizing survey results  
Q&A – give and take answers on the spot

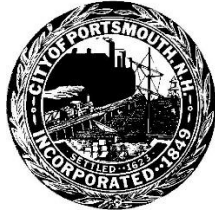
Ben: the object is public education and issues/questions that require editing EAP.  
Councilor Tabor: not going through EAP at hearing – PEAC will take what we hear and apply to the EAP.

Will relocate the hearing into Council Chambers if Conf Room A capacity (40) is reached.

Hearings (and survey) are being publicized in the City Newsletter, press release, Councilor Tabor’s op-ed and across City social media channels. Will send a reminder on 2/2 and 2/9 hearings to the emails collected from survey participants.

Meeting adjourned at 5:58 pm





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1. Roll call – In person: Councilor John Tabor, chair; Council Kate Cook, Kevin Charette, Ben D’Antonio, Allison Tanner, Peter Rice, Peter Britz, Stephanie Seacord, recording secretary. By zoom: Samuel Golding. Absent: Tom Rooney, Peter Somssich.
2. Update on CPCNH launch windows - Committee and Samuel Golding of CPCNH

CPCNH advice, based on the historical patterns of the seasonal NH electric energy markets, suggests that Fall is not a good time to launch a Community Power Aggregate, especially in Year One, because:

- a. The consumer would not benefit as much from the projected CPCNH electric rate given the smaller headroom (if any) between the utility default rate and the wholesale market which would be counterproductive to encouraging residents to support Portsmouth Community Power and its other benefits.
- b. the new CPA (i.e. Portsmouth) would not be able to sufficiently (if at all) contribute to CPCNH reserves during the start-up period and would then be in a catch-up mode in 2024. In fact, the delta between the utility default rate and the market rates during the fall/winter months might cause Portsmouth to need to draw down additional credit to ensure rate relief and liquidity to cover the Portsmouth CPA’s new operating losses during the winter.
- c. CPCNH early startup fixed costs would be borne by a smaller number of wave one members that launch in the Spring of 2023.

Benefits:

- a. Apr-Jun is the strongest time to launch to earn the benefits of Community Power given the spread between the retail and wholesale electric energy markets. In addition to providing rate relief the CPA can contribute to financial reserves which are important to the financial stability of CPCNH and its members
- b. Portsmouth consumers get 10 months of rate savings they would not realize if Portsmouth launched in spring 2024. More green rates options would also be available to residents sooner.

Per Sam Golding, lead technical consultant for CPCNH: Portsmouth could implement in June, or take the most conservative course and wait until Spring 2024.

3. Discussion

Kevin noted the EAP preparation and public hearing timeline for a go-live in June is not significantly different than the schedule we were on. While the PEAC was focusing on a Fall implementation, we always intended to get the EAP filed with the PUC early in 2023 should there be an opportunity for a ‘rolling’ CPCNH go live prior to the Fall. June would be the earliest the Portsmouth CPA could launch. Once CPA holds public hearings the EAP can be submitted to the PUC who has 60 days to approve the document followed by a 45 day advance notice of intent to launch the CPA along with resident notifications 30 days prior to launch. All of this results in a potential June go live.

Q. How would Portsmouth's 'go-live' in June – with a 2 months' shorter window to contribute to reserves -- impact CPCNH cash flow?

A. There would be an impact, but still allow Portsmouth to contribute to the reserves between June and October.

Ben commented that the Eversource rate pattern is a proxy for CPCNH and actual portfolio risk management must look at variable costs guided by daily alerts and monthly actuals.

If Portsmouth launches in June, residents will be on CPCNH rate for 2 months until rates reset in August. This schedule is tied to the 2x per year utility default service rate calendar. CPCNH has every expectation that its August – January rate will continue to be below the utility rate. Also with a June implementation, PEAC will still have 2 months to observe the 'wave 1' member communities experience with mailed notifications, enrollment, opt-outs, customer service, billing, etc.

Allison expressed concern that the accelerated timetable might not be enough for sufficient public awareness and might open the city to accusations of 'trying to pull something over.' Peter R. agreed that a perception that the City was forcing something could have a material impact on PCP's success.

Kevin noted that PCP will receive the advantage of CPCNH outreach and publicity on behalf of the 'wave 1' communities. And, it would also be advantageous to build on the public education and community engagement momentum that is building now, instead of suspending progress for a year. Need to focus on all the right reasons: green energy and stability not only lower rates.

Chairman Tabor suggested that PEAC proceed with preparing the EAP for PUC and parallel Council review. The only change is the public hearings need to move to Feb 2 and the Feb 9 to be included in the EAP which allows the plan to be filed with the PUC by Feb 10, which in turn supports a potential June implementation.

The Chair asked each member what s/he thought and there was a clear majority to launch in June. After further discussion there was full agreement to proceed with readying the EAP, watch the April wave 1 experience and see what the rates look like for a June launch.

4. Public Comment – None.

Adjourned at 6:10 pm.