CITY OF CONCORD

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CONCORD ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CEEAC)

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

July 22, 2026 @ 6:00PM

Council Chambers

37 Green Street - Concord, NH 03301

Attendees:

Committee Members: Chair Rob Werner, Councilor Mark Davie, Councilor Michele Horne, Nick Babladelis, Allen Desbiens, Chuck Willing, Miriah King, Elise Foerster, Thomas Kolling

Student Representatives: Ben Poole

Absent Members: Jeffrey Evans, Gerald Eaton, Mark Fagan

Staff Present: Beth Fenstermacher, PLA, LEED AP, Director of Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives; UNH Sustainability Fellow Danielle Melius

The meeting was called to order by Chair Werner at 6:00 pm.

1. **Adoption of Minutes**
   A motion was made by Mr. Willing and duly seconded by Mr. Kolling to adopt the minutes of May 27, 2026, as written. The motion to adopt passed unanimously by voice vote, with Councilor Davie and Mr. Babladelis abstaining.

2. **Municipal Project Updates**
   West Portsmouth Street Solar Project (Lodestar)
   Chair Werner reported that the project will be connected to the grid in mid-August and a dedication event is tentatively scheduled for the week of August 17th. He will send out more information as it becomes available.

   Solar Project at Landfill (Kearsarge Solar)
   US Senator Maggie Hassan visit – Chair Werner provided a summary of the Senator's site visit in early July.

   Dedication Ceremony - Ms. Fenstermacher reported that the project is on track to be complete early Fall, and suggests holding off on planning an event until the final completion date is more definitive.

3. **C-PACER Update**
   Ms. Fenstermacher reported that the July Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee (FPAC) was cancelled. City staff will provide a report to FPAC at their next regularly scheduled meeting, and it will go back to the full City Council from there. There was discussion about recent legislation that revised the C-PACER adoption process; however, it may only be applicable for smaller municipalities. Ms. Fenstermacher will reach out to Clean Energy NH for clarification.

4. **COMMUNITY POWER**
   Mr. Willing distributed and reviewed his "Community Power Report to CEEAC" dated July 22, 2026. This report is attached. The new rates for August 1 through January 31, 2027 were announced. The CPCNH default rate is 15.344 cents vs. 14.348 cents/kwh for the default Unitil rate. In Eversource territory, the CPCNH rate is 14.949 cents/kwh vs. the Eversource default rate of 14.009 cents. Additional information around the rate setting is in the attached report, along with CPCNH staffing updates and projects.

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The committee discussed how the utilities (i.e. Unitil, Eversource) are currently under-collection under the direction of the PUC. It is unclear when this will start to impact the utility rates in order for the utilities to make up for the under-collections. CPCNH has had higher rates recently, but in the future may be able to beat the utility prices again in the future because of the under-collections on the utility side. CPCNH currently has $2.3million in reserves, and is projected to have around $4-5million at the end of this rate period.

Mr. Willing indicated that 2 communities have left CPCNH, 1 community is starting the process to leave. However, there is one community ready to launch with several more communities in the pipeline to join.

Councilor Horne reported that she has heard from constituents about the rising costs. She asked if a trigger was established during the adoption process that the City would leave once a certain rate was reached. Members discussed that this was not addressed in the adoption process. In addition, the City has financial obligations to meet for the first 3 years, and it would not be economically prudent to consider leaving until that obligation is met.

5. Weatherize Concord

Ms. Foerster provided a status update on the Weatherize Concord campaign that is being coordinated with Resilient Buildings Group (RBG) and representatives from Unitil and Liberty Utilities. The goal of the campaign is to have 100 homes enrolled in NHSaves by December of this year. Currently, RBG is processing 56 leads, with 29 homes qualifying to date. There are several upcoming events that the group is considering for pop-ups: National Night Out, Sunflower Festival, Arnie's pop-up, Freedom Village Resident Owned Community. More information will be sent to the committee if these events are confirmed.

6. POLICY AND PROJECT UPDATES

a) UNH Sustainability Fellow Institute Update

UNH Fellow Danielle Melius presented her work completed to date for the Citywide tree assessment. She queried what information the committee would find to be most valuable. She will be creating a dashboard for people to view the mapped information, including: tree canopy changes over time, heat island changes over time, impervious surfaces, areas subject to flooding. The information will be able to be viewed on a city-wide level or Ward specific. She will present her final project to the City Council on August 10th.

7. New Business/Announcements

Chair Werner asked how the committee would like to work on updating the Strategic Action Plan. It was decided that the August meeting would be dedicated fully to working on the plan.

8. Next meeting:

The next meeting will be a Strategic Action Plan Worksession, August 26th at 6pm

9. Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Babladelis and duly seconded by Mr. Willing. The motion passed by unanimously voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Fenstermacher, Director of Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives

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Community Power Report to CEEAC (July 22, 2026)

Here are the final utility and CPCNH electricity supply rates for the Fall 2026 (7/1/26-1/31/27) rate period:

	Utility Rates (cents/kwh)	CPCNH Rates (cents/kwh)
Eversource territory	14.009	14.949
Unitil territory	14.348	15.344
Liberty territory	15.835	14.729
NHEC territory	13.968	14.970

The utility supply rates will be higher in the Fall 2026 rate period than in the Spring 2026 rate period. CPCNH's rates remain higher than the utility rates in Eversource and Unitil territory, but the differential is smaller than it was in the Spring 2026 rate period, less than 1 cent/kwh in each case. CPCNH's rate in Liberty's territory is about a cent/kwh lower than Liberty's rate. There are a number of reasons for these generally high rates and for rate differentials:

- Wholesale electricity prices are high because of several factors – including New England's reliance on natural gas, high natural gas prices and conflict in the Middle East affecting oil and LNG prices. High wholesale electricity prices put upward pressure on the rates of all utilities and CPCNH.
- ISO New England introduced a Day Ahead Ancillary Services Initiative (DASI) market in March 2025 replacing earlier mechanisms to price ancillary services. All of the utilities and CPCNH estimated DASI costs based on ISO-NE projections. Those projections underestimated actual DASI costs, especially during the cold snap in January. CPCNH is estimating those costs more conservatively now.
- Eversource, Unitil and Liberty have been undercharging their costs because of how the PUC requires them to set rates (backward-looking proxy prices for 50% of their power). This has caused the utilities to under-collect their costs in the last 2-3 rate periods. This problem was exacerbated by the cold snap this past winter. They will charge for those under-collections with interest in the future and are starting to do so in the current rate period. Each utility still has past under-collections that they are rolling over at the direction of the PUC.
- CPCNH is still in the process of recovering from its undercharges in the winter of 2024-25 (also exacerbated by the cold snap this winter) and rebuilding its Joint Reserves and has been incorporating larger contributions to Joint Reserves into its rates. Beyond that, CPCNH's rates have reflected its actual (high) costs more accurately than the utilities' rates have reflected their actual (high) costs in the last several rate periods.

CPCNH expects to end the current rate period with a positive Joint Reserve balance, having built up the reserves through the current high rates. CPCNH needs to keep building Joint Reserves in order to perform optimally but is in a much-improved position compared to last winter and earlier.

CPCNH's Audited Financial Statements for 2025 have been finalized and issued.

CPCNH has hired a Director of Finance, Rachida Mahrouda, who started in June, and a Director of Power Operations, Bill Bullock, who will start in August. This is the first time either position has been filled. These hires will greatly improve CPCNH's capabilities in two critical areas.

The Poverty Plains solar project in Warner is largely constructed. It is expected to begin operation in August or September, after interconnection is completed. When operational, it will supply net metering credits to a number of communities in Eversource territory and supply RECs to CPCNH.

Among current CPCNH projects and programs: (1) CPCNH buys RECs from individual home solar facilities (get in touch with CPCNH if interested), and (2) CPCNH is piloting a PEAK SHAVE program, alerting participants when events of elevated electricity demand are expected and reminding them to reduce their electricity consumption if they can (get in touch with CPCNH if interested). CPCNH is also investigating a potential 100% national RECs energy product – more on that in coming meetings.