



Town of Amherst, NH
Energy Committee and Public Hearing Draft Meeting
Minutes
Tuesday, December 5 at 6PM
Johnson Meeting Room
Amherst Town Library
14 Main Street, Amherst NH

In attendance: Mercedes Olster, Zach Olster, Bill Stoughton (ex-officio), Susan Deschenes, Martin Rowley, and Ryan Poulsen from Standard Power and members of the public

Call to Order - Mercedes called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Motion to Open the Public Hearing - Mercedes moved to open the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Susan and passed unanimously.

Public Hearing Begins

Presentation about Community Power by Ryan Poulsen of Standard Power

- Purpose of Community Power - RSA 53 E:1 signed in August of 2021. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) finalized rules in October of 2022. Reduce electric costs, provide reliable service, secure energy supplies and offer more renewable energy options.
- What is Community Power - Provides energy supply, Eversource is still the delivery agent for the power. Offers rate stability, with longer term contracts (usually 12 to 36 months), unlike Eversource, which changes rates every six months.
- Supports Local Renewable Energy projects
- More Benefits - local control, consumer protection, energy planning, supports development of innovative local renewable energy programs, education and awareness
- Program goals - rate relief for customers, provide stable rates, long-term savings on electricity for customers
- Amherst Community Survey - 166 responses, 166 homes and 0 businesses. 99% have done something for efficiency; 94% have installed LED light bulbs; 80% have invested in energy efficient appliances.
- Program options - Amherst Basic (lowest rate, same renewables as Eversource); Amherst Default (5-10% more renewable energy); Amherst 50% renewable; Amherst 100% renewable.

- By state law, Community Power is an opt-out program.
- Those with competitive suppliers (not Eversource) are eligible and can opt in when their contract with the competitive supplier ends.
- Choices for four levels of renewable energy with different rates.
- Electric assistance customers keep full benefits.
- No cost to the municipal budget.
- Individuals and businesses can opt out at any time and opt back in at any time.

Questions from the members of the public

- From a person who has solar energy, will net metering customers be opted in by default? - Net metering customers won't be opted in to the program by default. Standard Power will ask net metering customers to call them, so they can advise the customer on whether to stay with Eversource or whether Community Power will be less expensive for them.
- Will it require a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote or majority vote on the warrant article at Town Meeting? A majority is required.
- Who would send a letter if you're not paying your bill? That's Eversource, because the bill comes from Eversource; they are the delivery company, Community Power would be the supplier, and a single bill comes from Eversource.
- Is there a different rate for business? No, same rate for residents and businesses. Large businesses will most likely have contracts with other energy providers, however.
- What if every resident of the town opts out of community power? The energy supply companies that sell power to Standard Power take that risk. It has never happened, however.
- Can I choose a different power provider than Eversource or Community Power? Yes, you can opt out of Community Power and get your power from an alternative supplier.
- What if I want to buy power that's generated locally? Power purchased for Community Power is created within the ISO New England grid.
- Why can Community Power provide a lower rate? Standard Power doesn't add on additional costs. Also, they're not buying power, as required by law for Eversource) at the two times per year that are the worst times of the year to purchase power. during a 3-day window in December and June.
- How does community power know which customers have net metering or have an alternative power supplier? Eversource provides data to Community Power about their energy supply customers, including net metering customers. Only the energy supply customers who are not net metering customers will automatically be opted in. People who use other energy suppliers won't be opted in because Eversource won't provide information about them. New Eversource customers will be opted in to Community Power after the first billing cycle.
- Is there a time-of-use option that offers different rates for different times of the day? Standard Power is looking at this for the future.

- Eversource does have a time-of-use rate on their delivery portion. Ryan will find out whether a customer can continue to have this rate when they move to Community Power.
- Attendee asked whether the “default” rate can be set to the Basic rate rather than the rate with 5-10% additional renewables, to give people the absolutely lowest electric rate by default. The committee has discussed this and the decision doesn’t need to be made until the energy is purchased and rates for the different levels of renewables are set.
- Will residents know rates and launch date before town meeting? No, by law, this is not possible. The purchasing of power happens after a town approves a warrant article, so rates and contract duration are determined at that time. If approved at the March town meeting, it could most likely launch in June of 2024.
- How many options will town residents have? At least four. The default, the basic, 50% renewable and 100% renewable.
- What percentage of the existing towns have stayed at default, which has 5-10% more renewable energy than what Eversource is required to provide by law? Very few opted down, a few opted up. Majority stayed at the default rate.
- 1/10 of a cent per kilowatt hour is the fee to Standard Power.
- Is this an opt-in or an opt-out program? It’s an opt-out program.
- If my contract with another power supplier ends, will I be automatically opted in to Community Power? Ryan will investigate and we will post the answer on the Amherst Energy Committee’s page on the Town of Amherst website.
- 100 million KWH/year is the best buying power. Larger than that usually don’t get you better rates. This is why Standard Power groups towns together to reach that 100 million KWH sweet spot before purchasing power.
- What data will be shared with Community Power? The data that Eversource has about customers is shared with Community Power. There’s an attachment to the Community Power plan that outlines the data privacy policy.
- Will customers who opt out and opt back in pay a higher rate at opt-in? This is in the plan because energy suppliers require this language in the contract. This usually applies to large businesses, but won’t be a factor for residents.

Motion to Close the Public Hearing - Mercedes moved to close the public hearing. Martin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public Hearing Ends

Adjournment - Mercedes moved to adjourn at 7:21pm. Susan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.