



TOWN OF HUDSON

Sustainability Committee

PUBLIC HEARING



Debra Putnam, Chair Sustainability Brett Gagnon, Selectmen Liaison

Town Hall, 12 School, Hudson, New Hampshire 03051 • Tel: 603-886-6018 • Fax: 603-594 1143

January 17, 2023 – 7PM

Hudson Town Hall - 12 School St., Hudson, NH 03051

Community Development (Buxton) Meeting Room

1. Call to Order: 7:00pm

2. **Present:** Craig Putnam, Kate Messner, Paul Inderbitzen and Debra Putnam with sixteen residents in attendance.

3. Introduction and Pledge of Allegiance – Debra Putnam, Chair

The Hudson Electric Aggregation Committee is a subcommittee of the Sustainability Committee. This Public Hearing is the second of two held in compliance with RSA 53-E as set by the New Hampshire State Legislature.

This Hearing will be conducted by Craig Putnam and Kate Messner of the Hudson Electric Aggregation Committee.

The Public Input and Question & Answer session that follows the presentation will be managed by the Hudson Town Moderator - Paul Inderbitzen.

4. Presentation by Craig Putnam and Kate Messner - HEAC

AGENDA

1. What is Community Power?
2. Your Electric Bill: Supply & Delivery Charges
3. The Electric Aggregation Plan
4. “Opt-out” vs. “Opt-in”
5. Warrant Article
6. Questions & Discussion

The complete PowerPoint presentation is available to all residents through the Hudson Town Website. Go to the Hudson Town website, then to the Sustainability Committee, then to HEAC and click on the blue rectangle that includes “Presentations”. There is a duplicate set on the Public Hearings page.

5. Questions & Answers: At this point in the evening Moderator, Mr. Paul Inderbitzen invited the residents present (16) to ask questions and comment on the information presented. Mr. Inderbitzen explained that HCTV is recording. He further noted that the video can be viewed through the HCTV website should residents wish to prior to the Deliberative Session.

Seven registered voters plus one individual came forward with questions and comments.

1. **Bonnie Schommer, 171 Robinson Rd.:** Ms. Schommer asked, “What are the risks?”, Will Eversource still respond if she lost power or would Eversource favor the customers that use Eversource? Craig and Kate jointly responded. They went into detail about the fact that with Hudson Community Power while it becomes the provider of electricity, Eversource still issues the bills and is completely responsible for the maintenance and repair of power lines and infrastructure. Craig noted that per Public Utilities Commission (PUC) laws Eversource is not allowed to give lesser service to those who have an alternative energy supplier.
2. **Brian Driscoll, 11 Speare Rd.:** Mr. Driscoll asked what the incentive is for Eversource to work with you? Craig explained that Eversource is required by laws set by the PUC to work with alternative energy suppliers – Community Power entities all over NH. The PUC has posted a full list of the companies that have been formally approved as alternative energy suppliers in NH on their website. Eversource still gets paid to handle the delivery side of each electric bill – to maintain the infrastructure – lines, poles, etc. Mr. Driscoll asked about the rates the Town currently pays on its Power Aggregation Contract and would Hudson Community Power be able to get the same or better rate. The Town and separately the SAU81 have had contracts with alternative energy suppliers for years. These contracts have saved money. The format of Community Power Aggregation is a bit different as there is no time limited contract. Craig did not have the data specific to the Town and SAU81 per kwh rates they are paying. Craig did note that it is conceivable that if Hudson Community Power was to have a lower rate than the Town and/or the SAU 81 had with their respective contracts that they could potentially chose Hudson Community Power for their alternative electricity supplier.
3. **John Burke, 2 Hilltop Dr.:** Mr. Burke asked a question while sitting in the audience, i.e. not while at a microphone so a full report of what he asked could not be generated. The minutes of the discussion that ensued were generated by those at a microphone. Craig responded that should Hudson go forward with Community Power Aggregation then, in the future, such projects as a large solar array on a capped landfill would be more affordable to the taxpayers of Hudson. Craig noted that it would be “down the road” and complicated...so he offered to have a more in-depth conversation with Mr. Burke at another time.
4. **Donna Boucher, 8 Windham Rd.:** Ms. Boucher essentially asked what would the workload would be on the BOS. Craig noted that the passage of the Warrant Article would only be a first step. Then through a long process an energy provider partner would have to be identified amongst the approved (by the PUC) for profit and the one non-profit -CPCNH. Craig noted that extensive due diligence would need to be done as the “partner” would be doing the work of negotiating the best available electric rates and providing customer service support. The HEAC would present information, proposals, and contracts to the BOS. The BOS would make the final decision as to which entity to partner with. Debra Putnam explained about the past presentations made by companies (two for profit and CPCNH, a nonprofit) to the Sustainability Committee. Each of these companies will be presenting at one of the upcoming Sustainability Committee meetings: one in March, one in April and one in May. Craig went on to explain the progress made by the PUC in recent months regarding important legislation. He also noted that some towns are considered to be “Wave 1” and will be “going live” this spring. Hudson would be a “Wave 2” town not “going live” until the spring of 2024. Kate explained the fact that very sophisticated computer modeling is done by the energy aggregators. Craig explained that the Power Procurement Partners are allowed to purchase power as they determine it is advantageous to do so. He noted that Eversource can only purchase power during two 10day time frames each year. Debra explained that during a presentation by a for-profit power procurement company the company representatives noted that their company had purchased power shortly after the beginning of COVID when energy prices had dropped markedly. A Community Power Procurement company...a power aggregator...has that flexibility to take advantage of marked drops in the cost of electricity.

5. **Brian Driscoll, 11 Speare Rd:** Mr. Driscoll returned to the podium with additional questions. Mr. Driscoll asked for clarification regarding which entity would Community Power work with. Would Hudson Community Power negotiate with Eversource? Craig stated that there would be no advantage in doing so. Hudson Community Power would be looking for the best company to partner with for energy procurement...best rate and service package. Kate explained that the Energy Procurement company (Energy Aggregator) would develop a “portfolio” of many energy sources.
6. **Beverly Belus, 5 Rega Ave.:** Ms. Belus asked: “How can we get the word out about this?” She noted that there needs to be better outreach. Mr. Inderbitzen noted that we no longer have a community newspaper. He noted that there is information posted on the Town website and on Facebook. Debra reviewed postings to four Facebook pages. Craig explained postings to a number of organizations in Hudson. The Office Hours at Rodgers Memorial Library were explained in that residents can go to the Library’s Events calendar...and look for Office Hours in Study Room 2. Craig noted the Get Tech Smart episode on Community Power. Ms. Belus expressed concern that information gets out to “the common folk” in Hudson who do not watch TV or go on Facebook. Mr. Inderbitzen explained the importance of the Deliberative Sessions – Town and, separately, the School. If one can not attend they can watch them on HCTV. There is information available on the Town Website- HEAC webpages and HCTV – both Public Hearings and past Sustainability Committee meetings.
7. **Nancy Sudsbury, 18 Windham Rd.:** Ms. Sudsbury asked whether the electricity rate, should it be through Hudson Community Power, change monthly? Craig explained that if with Hudson Community Power “you” would be notified 30 days in advance of any upcoming rate change. You would then have a choice to stay with Hudson Community Power or switch to another energy service provider or switch back to Eversource. The goal would be to work with an Energy Aggregator company that would be able to offer a steady rate with perhaps changes twice a year. The test will be with the Wave 1 towns. Hudson will be able to learn much from their experiences over the course of the year before Hudson would go live.
8. **Bob Macaraeg, 35 Sousa Blvd.:** Mr. Macaraeg asked whether Eversource could raise their rates to those who have a different energy supplier. Craig explained that Eversource, by law, can not make any money on the supply side of their bills. Eversource makes money on the “distribution” side of their bills. Further, the PUC controls what, if any, increases Eversource is allowed to make on the distribution side of the bills. Mr. Inderbitzen noted that Eversource is not losing any money when people change to a different energy supplier. They, Eversource, make all their money from the distribution side. Mr. Inderbitzen further clarified that Eversource can not just raise the distribution side of the bill unless approved by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).
9. **Nicholas Tominelli, Demery Rd.** (not currently a registered voter or listed at address given): Mr. Tominelli asked whether there is a threshold for the number of customers in Hudson that need to participate in order for community power to work. Craig stated that it is a good question but one that he does not have an answer to. Craig noted that looking at a variety of sources of information the range of participation that is viable, that an energy supply company would be interested in working with would be closer to 85% of homes/businesses versus 15%. Debra explained that the OptIn option has been available for over 20 years in NH and never “got off the ground.” The Sustainability Committee is bringing the OptOut version of Community Power to the Hudson residents to offer them the option of making the decision (vote) as to whether they want Community Power to be an option available to them when dealing with their energy bills.

Closing Statements and Comments:

Mr. Inderbitzen thanked all for coming out. He noted the Deliberative Sessions coming up and then the Town Voting on March 14. Debra thanked all who attended the Public Hearing. Mr. Putnam encouraged all to attend the Deliberative Sessions and “Please come out and Vote!”

Adjourned: Town Moderator, Mr. Inderbitzen closed the hearing at 8:26pm.

Debra Putnam

Hudson Sustainability Committee, Chair

January 26, 2023