Town of Swanzey, NH
Swanzey Energy Commission
Meeting Minutes for August 11, 2025

Note: Draft minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by the Committee. Review and approval of minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled committee meeting.

Call to Order—The meeting of the Swanzey Energy Commission was called to order at 2:08 pm by Chair Audette. Present: Bob Audette, Barbara Skuly, Cheri Domina, Steve Russell. Also present: Town Administrator Lori Rautiola. Nick Paul, Director of Legislative Affairs, and Chris Skoglund, Director of Energy Transition for Clean Energy NH via Zoom.

Minutes

Skuly suggested a change to July 14 minutes: "Northeast Sealing has been recommended." Eversource did not make the recommendation. Skuly made a motion to approve the July 14 minutes as amended. Russell seconded. All in favor. Approved.

Business

Revision's Airport Solar Array—Audette said he went to the Zoning Board discussion of the airport project, where Revision presented the project. Keene would be the primary user—any extra power has to go to another municipality or nonprofit. A pilot testified at the meeting that he was concerned about the glare and other things. Revision will have to return to address his concerns. A solar ordinance would help address those issues.

Solar Ordinance—Skuly asked if anyone is communicating with SolSmart; we haven't heard from Stephon Mehu. Is the ordinance ready to go to the town planner? SolSmart has looked at it and we felt no updates were needed at this time; would like Adam Paquette's support.

Audette made a motion to present the ordinance as it exists to Paquette and ask him to take it to the Planning Board. Russell seconded. All in favor—motion approved.

Municipal Building Audits—Skuly said Northeast Sealing will come Sept. 30 to look at Whitcomb Hall, Carpenter Home and Stratton Library and give estimates for needed work. She will be there to watch. Then we will submit to Eversource and seek additional funding. Skuly has been looking for sources for matching funds. Town Administrator Lori Rautiola suggested we could use capital reserve funds, but that would need to go on the warrant to be voted on. Estimates for work by Margaret were $7,000 for Whitcomb Hall and $28,700 for the Carpenter Home.

Clean Energy NH Discussion—Nick Paul, Director of Legislative Affairs, and Chris Skoglund, Director of Energy Transition joined us via Zoom. Said they were talking to municipal and business members of CENH to gather information; NH legislators are putting in their priorities for bills for 2026 in the next month, and they wanted to know what our priorities were. Audette discussed our current work, and Rautiola mentioned work on the solar array at the Wastewater Treatment Plant has started. Items discussed included:

- Net metering needs to be more beneficial.

- Russell mentioned the Mt. Caesar Library couldn't get a smart meter.
- There are limits on who can use the power from Revision's proposed array at the airport.
- Eversource is behind on connections and not very responsive. The Solar Garden project failed because the cost for connection doubled, due to Eversource line issues. Skoglund said that interconnection standards are being developed to move projects faster. In other states, state funds pay for interconnection costs. Here, Eversource has to charge ratepayers with no state help. There are PUC rules on what costs Eversource can recover in their distribution rates, and interconnection can't be included. Legislators and PUC members need to be more supportive to solve these issues.
- Our message: We need energy freedom. The demand for energy is growing, and either we make new electrons or make things more efficient. Solar is the fastest and cheapest energy supply to build. Solar power and batteries are being proposed and need to be supported. There are no new coal or gas plants on the table. There may be tariffs on Canadian hydropower.

Skuly asked about the large amount of energy being used by AI data centers and bitcoin—is NH in danger of losing energy to them? Skoglund said that having a data center would increase local costs and supply rates over time, but that NH's electric rates are high, and it's unlikely data centers would be attracted to locate here.

CENH will offer member briefings on upcoming legislation when it's proposed.

Discussed talking to our legislators: Sly Karasinski, Barry Faulkner and Jennifer Rhodes. Faulkner is on the Public Works & Highways Committee; Karasinski on Municipal and County Gov't Comm.; Rhodes on Criminal Justice Comm. We should speak with Karasinski in October. Questions: Why can't we do a 5MW array with power available to town residents? What can we do about crazy costs for the Solar Garden connection—can that site be used for future solar?

Swanzey Vehicle Fleet—Skuly said the CIP is asking for numbers. If we want to anticipate an EV purchase, they need to know. Will Russell get us a list? He said he wants to keep Rautiola aware of the possibility of electric car for town staff, rather than old police cars. We don't have a list from the PD yet. Russell said $15 million in federal grants is on hold for Level II and III chargers in NH.

Next meeting: September 8, 1 pm

Adjournment: Russell moved, Audette seconded, all in favor, adjourned 3:30 pm.

DRAFT