

Community Power Committee

Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2023

Present: Augie Ros, Janet Byron, Emily Wrubel, Richard Pelletier (chairperson), Emily Manns (Standard Power representative)

Absent: Riché Colcombe

In attendance: No additional attendees

Meeting called to order at 3:05 PM.

Janet made a motion to nominate Richard Pelletier as chairperson, Emily W. seconded, all approved.

Emily W. made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 8/17/23, Augie seconded, all approved.

Ms. Manns handed out a packet of materials prepared by Standard Power, including a timeline, draft plan and sample survey.

Timeline was reviewed first. June 1 was only a suggested launch date, not a mandated date. But Ms. Manns said June and July are good times to go for the best pricing.

Janet questioned whether a customer who is enrolled in Hillsborough Community Power(HCP) and then opts out to another supplier, and subsequently decides to opt back in to HCP would get the original contracted price. Ms. Manns clarified there is no guarantee they will get the same initial contracted rate. That is a risk the customer takes. Ms. Manns stated that this fact is clearly documented and its purpose is to discourage the behavior of continuously jumping back and forth among suppliers. Here is a link to the state-maintained price comparison website for all electricity suppliers in NH:
<https://www.energy.nh.gov/engyapps/ceps/ResidentialCompare.aspx?choice=Eversource>

Richard asked for further clarification for the case where someone had never been enrolled in HCP and then at some time after initial launch decides to opt-in. Ms. Manns confirmed that they *would* receive the initial contracted rate because they had never actively opted out after launch.

Hillsborough Board of Selectmen will set the term of the contract. At the end of the contract period, Hillsborough can choose to renew (or not) the contract with the supplier (Direct Energy). That renewal decision does not need to go through the town meeting approval process, per Ms. Manns.

Augie asked about who provides customer service: Per Ms. Manns:

- Eversource still handles all billing questions
- Eversource handles all outage/service calls
- The 866 Direct Energy on the bill would be called for enrollment questions. One confusing situation they encountered was when customers have one meter for hot water and another for general electricity.
- The 877 number on the initial letter and website is for net-metering questions, which are directed to Ms. Manns.

Standard Power(SP) will get all customer information from Eversource. SP will then send the list to

Direct Energy who will send the initial postcard and letter to all customers. The customer would mail the postcard back (or call/webform) if they want to opt-out. Everyone on Eversource default supply will be an automatic enrollment. Customers on non-Eversource suppliers would have to explicitly opt-in if they want HCP.

Richard asked how multi-tenant buildings are handled. According to Ms. Manns, if there is one meter and one bill for the entire building, the landlord would simply make the HCP decision. If there are multiple meters and multiple bills, each bill customer would make their own HCP decision.

Augie asked if commercial businesses are eligible for HCP. Ms. Manns said that any customer receiving **Eversource default supply** is eligible for *automatic* enrollment. But she said that most larger commercial businesses utilize non-Eversource suppliers so they would not be auto-enrolled. However, *any* electric customer in Hillsborough, regardless of supplier, is eligible for HCP enrollment, if they so desire. Standard Power reserves the right to separate out some commercial customers for a different rate if they determine that they would adversely affect the rate for residential customers.

Emily W. asked how people opt-in to the various renewable energy(RE) plan levels. The initial postcard does not contain that choice. Instead, the customer must call or go on the website to opt-up or down to the RE plan they want. Changing RE plan does not constitute opting out, so changing among them preserves their right to the initial contract rates.

Action: Richard to talk with Laura Buono about setting up the Community Power page on the town website. This is where minutes and documents will be stored.

Richard asked how the warrant article get voted on since we are not an SB2 town. It was also noted that we will not have rates or contract duration prior to town meeting.

Action: Richard to work with the Selectboard, Laura Buono, and Ms. Manns to write up a warrant article and determine how it gets voted on.

Ms. Manns presented a sample town survey. It can be handed out at various municipal locations: dump, library, town hall. It could also be added to the Hillsborough Hub, or town Facebook site. The paper copy could be returned or it can be taken online in Survey Monkey. Ms. Manns stated that the survey is no longer statistically significant and that the survey impact is diminishing as more and more towns come online. She stated that the results consistently come back saying that most people want the lowest price and want renewable energy if they don't have to pay more. Janet questioned the purpose of sending out the survey then if its value is minimal. Several questioned the volume and content of the survey questions. Emily W. and Richard pointed out the survey has informational/marketing value, even if not statistical value.

Action: All committee members will review the survey and bring comments to the next meeting.

Ms. Manns briefly presented the draft HCP plan document. This is the main HCP plan document that will be posted on the Hillsborough town website. She recommends that we modify the highlighted sections and leave the remainder unaltered.

Action: All committed members will review the draft plan and bring comments to the next meeting.

Janet asked for a clarification on a statement made at the prior meeting stating that there was a guarantee that HCP would have a better rate than Eversource for 6 months after launch. That was not correct. The rate guarantee is only good from launch until Eversource next changes their rate.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 26 @ 2:00PM.

Motion to adjourn at 4:33 PM by Richard, seconded by Augie. all approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Byron