

MINUTES OF THE SOMERSWORTH COMMUNITY POWER COMMITTEE  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
November 9, 2023 – 4:30 p.m.

Committee Members present:      Councilor Matt Gerding, Chairman  
   Councilor David Witham  
   Timothy Bascom, Business Owner Representative  
   Laura Barry, Resident Representative  
   Chris Horton, Planning Board Representative

Administration/Staff present:      City Manager, Bob Belmore  
   Finance Director, Scott Smith

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Councilor Gerding called the meeting to order.

Approve Past Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2023

*Councilor Witham made a motion to approve the minutes of October 19, 2023, seconded by Mr. Bascom, all in favor, minutes approved.*

Somersworth Community Power Electric Aggregation Plan – Discuss Goals and Objectives

Councilor Gerding referred the committee members to the draft community power electric aggregation plan and stated that the intention is for the committee to define our local goals and objectives.

Councilor Witham inquired if we need to assign a local representative and list that on page 2 as noted in the draft. Manager Belmore responded that his recommendation was for Director Smith to be assigned as the local representative and that I (Manager Belmore) will be the alternate.

Councilor Gerding asked the committee members if they had any other questions on the draft plan. Seeing none, he referred the committee to page 6 of the draft plan. Councilor Gerding also referred the committee to copies of the Somersworth Master Plan Growth and Development Strategy, and the NH Department of Energy Policy Goals stating these should be a good resource to help in defining our local goal.

Councilor Gerding stated he thought that Section 2.1 of the Master Plan – Lead by example – seek to make city government services as energy efficient and sustainable as possible is applicable.

Witham agreed that both documents are applicable from a 60,000-foot view in using power more efficiently and cost effective.

Mr. Horton stated the first objective in the draft plan of Lower rates is good. Also, thinks we should look to make investments in sustainable power locally.

Ms. Barry agreed that Section 2 from the Master Plan is applicable and could be used toward developing the goal for the aggregation plan.

Councilor Gerding stated that there seems to be a consensus to use Section 2 from the Master Plan and Goal number 2 of the Department of Energy goals as a basis to develop a local goal for the aggregation plan.

Councilor Witham suggested the following for the aggregation plan goal;

*“To provide a cost effective, secure, reliable, resilient, and sustainable energy system for Somersworth’s residents, businesses, and local Governments.”*

Councilor Gerding asked if everyone is in agreement with the stated goal. All members responded in the affirmative.

Councilor Gerding suggested the committee move on to the objectives section of the plan.

Ms. Barry said she did not disagree with any of the objectives in the draft plan, but stated she wasn’t sure what was meant by “Manage Risk, Limit Liability” and questions if that should be one of our objectives.

Manager Belmore said he will reach out to our contact at community power for an explanation and ask if any of the other community members amended that objective in their aggregation plan.

Ms. Barry questioned what the committee’s role would be under the “Public Advocacy” objective. Councilor Gerding agreed and questioned how we would involve ourselves with this.

Manager Belmore responded that we could include language that we use the NH Municipal Association for advocacy assistance in matters such as this.

Councilor Witham suggested we edit the “Community Resilience” objective by deleting the first portion from ... support through the word education ... and replace it with the word encourage. Councilor Gerding suggested we add ... and other resilience strategies ... to the end of that objective. *All members agreed.*

Councilor Witham suggested we amend the “Lower Rates” objective by deleting the word ... Eversource ... at the end and replace with ... other providers ... *All members agreed.*

Councilor Gerding suggested we amend the “Public Advocacy” objective by adding the following at the end of the objective ... in coordination with the NH Municipal Association Legislative Advocacy ... *All members agreed.*

Councilor Witham suggested we amend the “Consumer Protections” objective to add the following at the end of that objective ... residents, businesses, and local government ... *All members agreed.*

Ms. Barry questioned if we wanted to keep all the detail as listed under the “Regional Collaborations” objective? Councilor Witham suggested we strike everything after ... projects ... but keep ... other clean energy infrastructure developments ... *All members agreed.*

The members reviewed the “Manage Risk, Limit Liability” objective and decided to leave it as is until we receive a response from the Community Power representative.

Ms. Barry asked if we should include any objectives from our local policies such as the Master Plan. Councilor Gerding said we could either create a new objective, or weave something into one of the existing objectives.

Councilor Witham suggested we add the following objective;

**“Local Policy”**, The City of Somersworth shall promote efforts for cost effective energy strategies through Ordinance, Regulation, Policy, and Practice. *All members agreed.*

Ms. Barry suggested we consider an objective to keep the Community Power as easy as possible, and to provide communication with residents, businesses, and local government about the Community Power process.

Councilor Witham suggested we add the following to the end of the “Public Advocacy” objective ... the City will make every effort to advise consumers of the participation process and betterment of the Community Power program ... *All members agreed.*

Councilor Gerding asked if anyone had any other changes to the objectives. There were none. Councilor Gerding suggested one more meeting to review and approve the draft aggregation plan.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2023 at 4:00PM.

*Councilor Witham made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Barry, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 5:25PM.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Scott Smith, Deputy CM/Director of Finance