

**Peterborough Community  
Power Plan**



**Adopted at Town Meeting May 10, 2022  
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## **Executive Summary**

Peterborough Community Power is a new program, authorized by the New Hampshire legislature, to provide electricity to residents, businesses, and other entities on a competitive basis. Under the program:

- Peterborough Community Power, once operational, will serve as the default electricity supplier to residences and businesses within the Town of Peterborough. Like all electricity suppliers, it will be self-funded through revenues received from participating customers. The Town will not need to raise taxes to pay for it.
- Eversource, our local utility, will continue to deliver electricity to customers, own and maintain power lines, and bill customers.
- Peterborough's Select Board, with advisory support from the Town Administrator and the Peterborough Community Power Task Force, will be authorized to: (i) contract for the necessary services and power supplies to implement and operate the program, (ii) set customer rates prior to program launch, and (iii) provide oversight over the program thereafter. The Town will work with one of three organizations, described later, that knows the electricity market. Town staff will not need expertise in the energy sector.

Once the Town and the NH Public Utilities Commission (NHPUC) approve Peterborough's Community Power Plan and after the Select Board has approved a power supply contract, all electricity customers in Peterborough will be notified. Customers currently using the Eversource default service will be enrolled in Peterborough Community Power after a 30-day period during which they may opt out and remain with Eversource's default service if they wish. If they do not opt out, customers will be transferred to Peterborough Community Power's default plan by a date given in the notification.

Customers buying electricity from a third-party supplier may opt into the Peterborough Community Power program.

Community Power will help Peterborough reach its climate and energy goal of 100% renewable electricity by 2030, passed in warrant article 11 in the town meeting vote on May 11, 2021. The Peterborough Community Power Plan will also provide a means for ratepayers to support energy efficiency, job creation, and climate resilience and preparedness regardless of their economic status.

Peterborough Community Power will:

- **Offer a default option** that will, on average, be less expensive than the Eversource default but will include a higher portion of renewable energy. The percentage of renewable energy will increase over time.
- **Offer two opt-up alternatives**, one with approximately 50% and another at 100% renewable electricity, possibly at higher prices.
- **Offer an opt-down alternative** to be as inexpensive as possible while meeting state requirements for renewable energy.
- **Provide fiscal stability** to ensure the program maintains competitive rates and advances the Town's renewable energy policy goals over the long term.

## **Peterborough Community Power Goals and Objectives**

### **History**

Warrant Article 11 passed in the Town Meeting vote on May 11, 2021. It set a goal for Peterborough of 100% renewable energy by 2030 for all electricity used within the Town. This created the need for a Peterborough Community Power Plan to assist in achieving this goal.

The Peterborough Select Board sought volunteers for a committee to investigate possible routes to the goal. On September 7, 2021, the Select Board appointed those volunteers to serve on the Peterborough Community Power Task Force, an official Town Committee. The Task Force began public biweekly meetings in the Abbot Board Room of the Peterborough Town Library on Wednesday, September 22. On October 20, these meetings became weekly.

The Task Force decided that the best approach to increase the proportion of renewable energy in the Town's electricity mix, while maintaining low prices, would be to take advantage of the possibilities for Community Power provided by recent New Hampshire legislation (RSA 53-E, as modified in October, 2021, by HB 315; "NH Community Power Legislation" (see Appendix 2 for details on RSA 53-E and other NH laws that enable Community Power.)

The Task Force consulted with three organizations that help New Hampshire municipalities take advantage of NH Community Power legislation. Two of these are Community Power Broker/Service Providers:

- [Standard Power](#) and its partner, Good Energy
- [Freedom Energy Logistics](#) and its partner, Colonial Power

The third is a non-profit Joint Powers Agency that was recently incorporated and is governed by the appointed representatives of the towns, cities, and counties that join as members:

- [The Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire](#) (CPCNH)

Each of the above entities made its case for the advantages of a Community Power program and offered to assist the Task Force both with creating such a program and with implementing it after the program is approved by Peterborough voters and by the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (NHPUC).

The Task Force reviewed examples of Community Power plans that their communities have already approved. The Task Force decided in December 2021 to develop its own plan using those from Hanover, Harrisville, and Keene as models, with modifications appropriate to Peterborough. The Task Force will continue to improve this plan draft (January 2022) as they receive input from the Select Board and the public.

Once approved by the Town, the Plan will be submitted to the NHPUC for approval. The Task Force will address any and all issues raised by the NHPUC and resubmit the Plan, as necessary. The Task Force will recommend one of the three above-mentioned organizations to the Select Board, which

will subsequently select one and start the process of implementation and maintenance of the Peterborough Community Power Program.

### **Immediate Goals**

- **Offer competitive rates** to meet or beat those available from Eversource.
- **Offer energy choices** in terms of percentage renewable power and pricing.
- **Provide fiscal stability**, including development of a reserve fund, both to ensure maintenance of competitive rates and/or to develop local energy resources and programs.
- **Maintain enhanced customer focus** to enable customers to voluntarily adopt new clean energy technologies that reduce energy expenditures and carbon emissions.
- **Offer consumer protections** to ensure contracts are fair.
- **Represent Peterborough's interests on energy issues** at the NH Legislature and the NHPUC.

### **Longer-Term Goals**

- **Stimulate the development** of local renewable electricity generation and storage.
- **Create community resilience** programs to reduce energy consumption, lower energy bills, create jobs, and build local back-up power supplies.
- **Support regional development** of clean energy infrastructure.
- **Modernize the energy grid** by supporting informed advocacy for policies, regulations, and infrastructure investments leading to a decarbonized, affordable, and resilient energy system.

### **Purpose of this Community Power Plan**

This plan sets forth the Town's policy goals for its Community Power program, summarizes Peterborough Community Power's governance and implementation processes, and commits Peterborough Community Power to comply with applicable statutes and regulations in terms of:

- Providing universal access, reliability, and equitable treatment of all classes of customers, subject to any differences arising from varying opportunities, tariffs, and arrangements in Eversource's distribution franchise territories.
- Meeting, at a minimum, the basic environmental and service standards established by the NHPUC and other applicable agencies and laws concerning the provision of service under Community Power.

Peterborough Community Power's power procurement, budgeting, and rate-setting will be carried out in accordance with the Select Board's adopted Energy Risk Management Policy and Financial Reserve Policy to ensure that the program allocates revenues in a way that balances our short- and long-term goals.

The selection process the Task Force will use to make the recommendation includes: further due diligence, reviewing the three organizations' presentations and their responses to all questions that were developed to ask each, and using a matrix to score each item on a list of criteria developed and approved by the Task Force.

## **How Peterborough Community Power Will Operate**

For an explanation of terms used in this document, see Appendix 1.

### **A. Organizational Structure**

This is how the management of Peterborough Community Power will be structured once the NHPUC approves the Peterborough Community Power Plan:

*Community Power Task Force*: The Task Force will develop a draft plan, hold public hearings on the plan to solicit public input, revise the draft plan based on that input, and submit a plan to the Select Board for its approval. Within parameters set by the Select Board, the Community Power Task Force may continue to advise the Select Board and hold meetings to assess program performance, discuss how to evolve the services and products offered to customers, and address issues that need attention.

*Select Board and town voters*: In accordance with RSA 53-E:7, Peterborough's registered voters will decide at Town Meeting whether to adopt, by a majority approval of those present and voting, the Community Power Plan after the Community Power Task Force and the Select Board have approved it. The Select Board will review and enact (or not) any future proposed amendments to the plan.

*Peterborough Community Power*: Once voters approve the Community Power Plan, Peterborough Community Power will be authorized to provide electricity and other related services to participating residents, businesses, and other customers in the town. The Select Board will oversee the program and has overall governance authority with guidance from the Task Force and other experts. Decisions regarding Peterborough Community Power, such as the adoption of an energy risk management policy and approval of rates, will be made at public meetings.

Once voters approve the plan, the Select Board, working with the Community Power Task Force, will determine how to provide for the launch and operation of Peterborough Community Power in the Town's best interest. The Task Force will recommend one of the three organizations mentioned earlier to the Select Board, which will subsequently select one and start the process of implementation and maintenance of the Peterborough Power Program.

The two options have different organizational structures as summarized below.

### **Community Power Broker/Service Provider option:**

**Select Board:** The Select Board would designate a Peterborough Community Power (PCP) Manager to provide direct management and oversight of the plan on behalf of the town. The PCP Manager would be responsible for:

- Hiring a Community Power Broker/Service Provider
- Coordinating with other municipalities to conduct a joint solicitation (if desired)
- Meeting regularly with the Community Power Broker/Service Provider to provide oversight of the plan

- Making recommendations to the Select Board on plan amendments
- Authorizing the issuance of bids for power supply
- Negotiating and executing electricity supply agreements (ESAs) consistent with the products and goals described in this plan

**Community Power Broker/Service Provider:** The Broker/Service provider would manage certain Program activities under the direction of the PCP Manager. Their responsibilities would include, among others:

- Coordinate and interact with Eversource.
- Develop and implement customer communication and education activities.
- Provide periodic reports to the PCP Manager and Peterborough Select Board.
- Negotiate ESAs with credit-worthy, risk-managing Competitive Electric Power Suppliers (CEPSs). Lead oversight and quality assurance of competitive supplier.
- Provide customer services including staffing web and telephone-based services.
- Lead oversight and quality assurance of competitive supplier.
- Represent the Town's interests at the NH PUC.
- Consult on rate setting, design, and renewables sourcing.

**Competitive Electric Power Supplier (CEPS):** All Competitive Suppliers would be relied upon to:

- Provide "all-requirements electricity" for the program.
- Fulfill other responsibilities deemed reasonable and appropriate for retail electric customers as detailed in the ESA.

### **Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH) option:**

**Membership in CPCNH:** The Select Board of the Town of Peterborough would:

- Vote to approve CPCNH's Joint Powers Agreement to become a member.
- Appoint a Director and Alternate Director to serve on CPCNH's Board of Directors.
- Review and approve the CPCNH Member Cost Sharing Agreement (which would specify the Town's choice of services provided by CPCNH).
- Review and approve the Energy Risk Management and Financial Reserves policies prepared with the assistance of CPCNH which would govern the program's power procurement and rate-setting decisions.
- Delegate, on occasion, certain decision-making authorities to Peterborough's Member Representative, as required to carry out their oversight responsibilities on behalf of Peterborough Community Power.

**Peterborough's CPCNH Member Representative:** on CPCNH's Board of Directors would:

- Act as the Town's Member Representative under the terms of the Joint Powers Agreement.
- Help oversee the start-up and operation of the agency.
- Provide input regarding the CPCNH's public advocacy on matters of policy and regulation.
- Provide feedback and direction to the CPCNH's service providers and staff as operations and customer services evolve over time.

- Report back regularly regarding the performance of Peterborough Community Power and on any matter that warrants attention or requires action by the Select Board.

**Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH):** The CPCNH will:

- Issue a competitive solicitation for the services and credit support necessary to operate the new power agency.
- Be relied upon to procure “all-requirements electricity” and provide all the services required to launch and operate Peterborough Community Power.
- Manage Peterborough’s power supply in accordance with the Cost Sharing Agreement and Energy Risk Management and Financial Reserves policies approved by the Select Board (which may, for example, stipulate the Town’s choice of how to balance considerations of cost versus higher renewable power content, including not-to-exceed rates, etc.).

**CPCNH Board of Directors:** The CPCNH board of directors would:

- Govern the power agency to ensure that the power agency provides the services necessary to carry out each of its members’ stated policy requirements, such as:
  - Increased renewable and local power sources
  - Competitive rates
  - Accrual of financial reserves
  - Promulgation of local programs
- Carry out its responsibilities in accordance with the processes specified in the CPCNH Joint Powers Agreement, including by establishing a number of committees (also composed of Member Representatives) that meet regularly to provide additional oversight over specific areas of focus — such as:
  - Executive Committee
  - Finance Committee
  - Governance Committee
  - Member Operations
  - Engagement Committee
  - Regulatory and Legislative Affairs Committee
  - Risk Management Committee (For example, the Risk Management Committee has been tasked with managing the competitive solicitation for services and credit support described above.)

## **B. Operations and Funding**

Peterborough Community Power will contract with qualified vendors and credit-worthy suppliers to provide the services, credit support and electricity required to launch and operate the program. Once selected, either the CPCNH or the Community Power Broker/Service Provider will assist with selection of and contracting with qualified vendors and suppliers.

These third-party entities are expected to fund the upfront cost of implementing the program, the expense of which will be amortized and recovered in the program’s rates and charges to participating customers. The third parties may also seek opportunities to apply for grant funding.

Services provided by third-party entities required to launch and operate the program will include:

- Portfolio risk management services (direct [Coalition model] or by the Competitive Electric Power Supplier [Broker model])
- Wholesale supplier services direct [Coalition model] or by the Competitive Electric Power Supplier [Broker model])
- Financial services
- Electronic data interchange with the utilities
- Customer data management and billing services
- Customer notification and relationship management services (e.g., call center or website)
- Additional support services pertaining to management and planning, budgeting and rate setting, local project development support, regulatory compliance, and legislative and regulatory engagement services on matters that could impact the program and participating customers

Peterborough Community Power will provide “all-requirements” electricity supply for its customers, including all the electrical energy, capacity, reserves, ancillary services, transmission services to the extent not provided by Eversource, transmission and distribution losses, congestion management, and other services or products necessary to provide firm power supply to participants and meet the requirements of New Hampshire’s Renewable Portfolio Standard ([NH RSA 362-F](#)). Electricity supply contracts will be executed or guaranteed by investment-grade entities, and suppliers will be required to maintain sufficient insurance and meet appropriate performance levels. Additional information on how Peterborough Community Power will implement Load Serving Entity (LSE) services is found in [Appendix 4](#), *How Load Serving Entity Services will be Implemented*.

Additionally, [NH RSA 53-E](#) provides Community Power programs with authorities pertaining to meter ownership, meter reading, billing, and other related services. These authorities provide Peterborough Community Power with the ability to help customers adopt and use innovative technologies (for example, building management systems, smart thermostats, backup battery storage systems, or controllable electric vehicle chargers) in ways that save money, enhance resiliency of the grid, and decarbonize our power supply.

However, the implementation of these authorities is expected to take time, as it requires the NHPUC to adopt enabling rules and coordination with Eversource to adapt existing meter and billing system processes.

### **C. Rights and Responsibilities of Program Participants**

All participants will have the customer protection provisions of the law and regulations of New Hampshire, including the right to question billing and service quality practices. Customers may ask questions of and register complaints with the Town of Peterborough, Eversource, and the NHPUC.

Peterborough Community Power shall maintain the confidentiality of individual customer data in compliance with its obligations as a service provider under [RSA 363:38](#) (Duties and Responsibilities of Service Providers) and other applicable statutes and NHPUC rules. Confidential data includes customers’ name, service address, billing address, telephone number, account number, payment information, and electricity consumption that can identify, singly or in combination, a specific

customer. This data will not be subject to public disclosure under [RSA 91-A](#) (Access to Governmental Records and Meetings). Suppliers and vendors for Peterborough Community Power will be contractually required to maintain the confidentiality of individual customer data pursuant to [RSA 363:38, V\(b\)](#). Appendix 5, *Customer Data Protection Plan*, details the reasonable security procedures and practices that the Town and Peterborough Community Power will employ to protect individual customer data from unauthorized access, use, destruction, modification, or disclosure.

Aggregate data that does not compromise confidentiality of individual customers may be released at the discretion of Peterborough Community Power and as required by law or regulation.

Participants will continue to be responsible for paying their electricity bills. Failure to do so may result in a customer being transferred from Peterborough Community Power back to Eversource for default energy service, payment collections, and utility shut offs under procedures subject to oversight by the NHPUC.

Participants are responsible for requesting any exemption from the collection of any applicable taxes and must provide appropriate documentation of exemptions to Peterborough Community Power.

## **D. Contractual and Legal Requirements**

### **1. Methods of Entering into and Terminating Agreements**

This Community Power Plan authorizes the Select Board to negotiate, enter into, modify, enforce, and terminate agreements as necessary for the implementation and operation of Peterborough Community Power.

### **2. Rate Setting, Costs, Enrollment Process, and Options**

Customers who choose not to participate in Peterborough Community Power shall not be responsible for any costs associated with the program.

Peterborough Community Power will launch only if it is able to offer residential default rates that are initially lower than or competitive with those offered by Eversource. Thereafter, the program will strive to maintain competitive rates while working to achieve the program's goals as set forth in this Community Power Plan and modified as needed at the direction of the Select Board. (See Appendix 3 for more information on rate setting and energy procurement cycles as used by Eversource.)

The Select Board will adopt Energy Risk Management and Financial Reserve policies to govern the program's power procurement cost and rate-setting decisions. Rates will be set at a level such that revenues from participating customers are projected to meet or exceed the ongoing operating and capital costs of the program.

To ensure the financial stability of Peterborough Community Power, a portion of revenues will

be deposited in a financial reserve account. In general, the fund will be restricted for uses such as:

- **In the near term**, maintain competitive customer rates in the context of price fluctuations in the electricity market and other factors.
- **In the medium term**, as collateral for power purchase agreements (including for the development of new renewable projects), and for additional credit enhancements and purposes that lower the program's cost of service.
- **Over the long term**, directly fund other program financial requirements or augment the financing for development of new projects and programs in the later years of the program, subject to the Select Board's approval.

As required by law, the program will set rates that ensure the equitable treatment of all classes of customers, subject to any differences arising from varying opportunities, tariffs, and arrangements in Eversource's distribution franchise territory. In other words, customers will be treated the same based on their circumstances.

Changes to the program's default service rates shall be set and publicly posted in accordance with state rules at least 30 days in advance of any rate change.

After approval of this Community Power Plan and before the launch of Peterborough Community Power, all electricity customers in the Town of Peterborough will be sent notifications regarding the program and offered the opportunity to participate:

- **Customers currently on Eversource default service** will be notified, provided the opportunity to decline participation, and thereafter transferred to Peterborough Community Power if they do not "opt-out".
- **Customers already served by Competitive Electric Power Suppliers** will receive notifications describing the program (along with a warning that early termination fees may apply with some supplier) that give them the opportunity to opt into the program.

All notices will be mailed to customers at least 30 days in advance of program launch and provide instructions for customers on how to opt-out or request to opt-in to the program (for example, by return postcard, calling a phone number or using a web portal). All such information and notifications will also be made available on the Town's website section established for the Community Power Program.

Optional products such as increased renewable power content beyond the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) content of the program's default supply product and other energy services, may be offered on an opt-in basis.

After launch, the program will periodically send notices to inform new Eversource default service customers about the default service rates of Eversource and Peterborough Community Power and will transfer new customers onto Peterborough Community Power's default service unless they choose to be served by Eversource or a competitive electric power supplier.

Customers who request to opt into the program may do so at the discretion and subject to the

terms of Peterborough Community Power.

Residents, businesses, and other electricity customers may opt out of participating in Peterborough Community Power default service by submitting a request to transfer back to Eversource default service or to a Competitive Electric Power Supplier of their choosing. Such requests must be submitted with adequate notice in advance of the customer's next regular meter reading by Eversource (in the same manner as if they were on utility-provided default service or as approved by the NHPUC). (Customers requesting a transfer on dates other than their next available regular meter reading date may be charged an off-cycle meter reading and billing charge.)

Customers that have opted into an optional product offered by Peterborough Community Power may switch back to the Peterborough Community Power default or to the Eversource default or may take service from a competitive electric power supplier subject to any terms and conditions of the optional product. Such terms and conditions will be disclosed in advance and as part of the service agreement.

### **3. Ensuring Discounts for Electric Assistance Program Participants**

Income-eligible households can qualify for discounts on their electric bills under the Electric Assistance Program. Peterborough Community Power will support income-eligible customers who enroll in the Electric Assistance Program to receive their discount.

Electric Assistance Program discounts are funded by all ratepayers as part of the Systems Benefits Charge, which is charged to customers and collected by the distribution utilities (Eversource for Peterborough).

At present, the NHPUC and utilities only support provision of the discount to individual customers when the customer's electricity supply charges are billed through the distribution utility, Eversource. Peterborough Community Power consequently will rely on Eversource to bill all customer accounts enrolled in the Electric Assistance Program. This represents no change in the provision or funding of this program.

This arrangement may be revisited if, at some point in future, the NHPUC approves rules that enable Community Power programs to provide Electric Assistance Program customers with their discount directly.

### **4. Net Metering Policies and Group Net Metering Policies**

In accordance with [RSA 362-A:9, II](#), Community Power programs may determine the terms and conditions for net metering. To support the development of distributed energy resources within Peterborough, Peterborough Community Power will seek to offer net metering terms and conditions -- for standard, alternative, and group net metering. For example, community solar falls under group net metering.

To ensure net metering customers can make a fully informed decision on their participation in Peterborough Community Power, relevant Peterborough Community Power education and outreach materials will clearly communicate all differences between the net metering value and operation provided by Peterborough Community Power and Eversource default service.

Peterborough Community Power will also evaluate how proposed or implemented changes to the utility metering or billing infrastructure may create new opportunities to enhance net metering benefits. The enabling services and strategies that Peterborough Community Power may pursue, to benefit and encourage customers to adopt distributed generation, include but are not limited to:

- Dual-billing customer-generators separately for supply services
- Offering time-varying rates and alternative credit mechanisms to compensate customers for surplus generation
- Streamlining the establishment of new Group Net Metering and Low-Moderate Income Solar Project groups
- Facilitating interval meter and Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) meter installations for customer-generators
- Engaging at the Legislature and NHPUC to advocate for upgrades and reforms to metering and billing infrastructure and business processes to enable Net Energy Metering and other innovative services to benefit customer-generators

## **5. Termination of the Program**

There is no planned termination date for Peterborough Community Power.

Peterborough Community Power may be terminated by majority approval of those present and voting at Town Meeting. If so terminated, Peterborough Community Power would cease operations after satisfying any obligations contractually entered into prior to termination, at which point participating customers would either be transferred to default service provided by Eversource or to a Competitive Electric Power Supplier of their choosing.

Peterborough Community Power will provide at least 90 days advance notice or as otherwise required in administrative rules adopted by the NHPUC regarding the potential or planned termination of the program to participating customers, the NHPUC, and Eversource.

Upon termination, the balance of any funds accrued in the program's financial reserve fund and other accounts, if any, would be available for distribution or application as directed by the Select Board and in accordance with any applicable law and regulation.

## **E. Public Approval Process and Next Steps**

Peterborough's Community Power Task Force developed this Community Power Plan with input from the public, as required under [NH RSA 53-E](#).

The Community Power Task Force has determined that this plan satisfies applicable statutory

requirements and is in the best long-term interest of the Town of Peterborough and residents, businesses, and other ratepayers. As such:

1. The Community Power Task Force may now submit this Community Power Plan for consideration by the Peterborough Select Board and, in turn, at Town Meeting.
2. Adoption of this Plan at Town Meeting, by majority approval of those present and voting, will establish Peterborough Community Power as approved with statutory authorities defined under NH RSA 53-E:3.
3. Future decisions made by the Select Board regarding how to implement and operate Peterborough Community Power, including the execution of any agreements, will be made at duly noticed public meetings.

The Town will submit this plan to the NHPUC to ensure compliance with applicable statutes and rules and will submit the plan to Eversource and the NH Office of the Consumer Advocate on the same day. The NHPUC has 60 days to approve or disapprove the plan, under a process that allows for public comment on the plan. If the NHPUC identifies areas where the plan needs to be revised, the Select Board will update the plan and resubmit it for approval to the NHPUC.

Additionally, the program will not launch until the NHPUC adopts administrative rules governing Community Power. Such rules are needed, for example, to authorize the Town of Peterborough to request access to additional customer data from Eversource that will be needed to implement and administer Peterborough Community Power.

The NHPUC has recently voted to proceed with an initial proposal for administrative rules, by approving the petition for rulemaking and rules proposed by the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire, and Peterborough Community Power will participate in the Commission's public review process.