Northumberland Energy Committee
Meeting Minutes Feb. 27, 2026

2/27/2026 NEC Meeting Agenda

1. Chairman opens meeting
2. Members present roll call
3. 1/30/26 minutes, draft for approval
4. Reminder of meeting norms – **S**tay **W**ith **A**genda **T**opic (SWAT)
5. Letter of support by Board on 3/2/2026 for SB 538
6. Projects status review
7. Other?
8. Next meeting Date
9. Chairman close

Attachments:
Minutes
M. Elander 2/17 email

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1. Meeting Details

- **Meeting Start Time:** 10:00 AM
- **Date:** February 27, 2026
- **Attendees Roll call:** Al Rosetto (Chairman), Mark DeGenarro, Wayne Montgomery (Asst. Chairman), Sheila Smith, Dave Auger (Secretary), Melissa Elander (Clean Energy New Hampshire)

2. Approval of Minutes
- **Motion:** Wayne Montgomery moved to approve the minutes from January 30, 2026.
- **Second:** Mark DeGenarro seconded the motion.
- **Discussion:** No discussion was held.
- **Outcome:** The motion passed.

3. Letter of Support for SB 538 (Net Metering Legislation)
- **Background:** Melissa Elander from Clean Energy New Hampshire presented on SB 538, which aims to ensure that solar arrays coming online are entitled to 20 years of net metering, bypassing the current 2040 expiration date for net metering in New Hampshire. This legislation is crucial for encouraging municipal investment in solar projects.
- **Current Net Metering Structure:**
    - Net metering allows municipalities to allocate excess electricity from solar arrays to other municipal electrical accounts (e.g., water or highway departments).
    - Currently, net metering is set to expire in 2040.
    - Under current law, a new solar system would only have 14 years of net metering if installed today.

  - The proposed legislation would guarantee 20 years of net metering for projects installed between now and 2040.
  - When selling excess electricity back to the grid, there is a 25% loss on the distribution charge, which Eversource retains as an accounting cost.
- **Process for Support:** Melissa Elander requested that the Select Board vote to sign a group letter supporting SB 538. If the Select Board is unwilling, the Energy Committee could vote to sign on.
- **Discussion Points:**
  - Mark DeGenarro abstained from the initial vote, requesting more information on the pros and cons of the legislation.
  - Melissa clarified that the letter is symbolic, demonstrating municipal support for the legislation.
  - The legislation does not affect solar technology itself but rather the accounting mechanism of net metering.
  - There are no alternatives to net metering unless you go completely off grid.
  - Al Rosetto expressed concern that his personal net metering would expire in 10 years, making his panels "junk" before they are obsolete.
  - Wayne Montgomery highlighted that without this legislation, existing and future solar projects would become less attractive for investment.
  - The letter emphasizes that solar is a good investment for New Hampshire towns, helping secure financing from institutions like the bond bank.
  - Melissa Elander noted that New Hampshire's legislation is generally not very supportive of solar, and any progress is valuable.
  - Currently, 64 towns are working on or have signed on to the letter of support.
- **Motion:** Dave Auger moved that the Energy Committee support this effort and sign on to the group letter.
- **Second:** Sheila Smith seconded the motion.
- **Outcome:** The motion passed, with all in favor. (corrected 4/3/2026)
- **Action Item:** Al Rosetto will ensure the letter is on the agenda for the Monday Select Board meeting. Dave Auger will send an email copy of the letter to Al Rosetto and Michelle Randall.

4. Project Status Review

4.1 LED Street Lighting

- **Status:** The project is ready to be presented to the Select Board.
- **Proposed Board Date:** March 16th, after the town meeting, when a new board will be in place.
- **Benefits:** Expected to save a significant amount of money, with costs remaining stable for five years, followed by savings.

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- **Discussion:** Mark DeGenarro inquired about the brightness and color intensity of the fixtures, and whether this information is needed before the Select Board vote. Dave Auger clarified that this would be addressed after a survey and map creation, likely in a subsequent meeting.
- **Action Item:** Al Rosetto will ensure the LED street lighting project is on the agenda for the March 16th meeting. Dave Auger and Wayne Montgomery will prepare a presentation for the board.

4.2 Energy Capital Reserve Fund

- **Status:** This is a warrant article for a town vote at the town meeting.
- **Amount:** Requesting $5,000.
- **Discussion:**
  - Melissa Elander suggested having one or two people present at the town meeting to speak about the article.
  - Sheila Smith recommended a handout to educate residents, potentially including the warrant article and a few relevant points.
  - Melissa offered to provide a list of other North Country towns with similar reserve funds.
  - Concerns were raised about the town meeting being "overwhelming" and residents being "no mode" due to other budget increases, particularly for the school.
- **Action Item:** Dave Auger will work on creating a handout for the town meeting.

4.3 Building LED Lighting (Interior)

- **Grant Availability:** No grants are available; only Eversource incentives.
- **Eversource Incentive:** Ranges from 20% to 50% of the cost, depending on light usage.
- **Process:**
  - Eversource contractors can conduct surveys and include the incentive directly in their proposals, though their costs may be higher.
  - Alternatively, a local electrician can be used and pass on the Eversource incentive when purchasing LEDs.
- **Previous Audits:** Al Rosetto recalled an audit for the town garage and water/sewer facilities several years ago, which led to some LED conversions.
- **Action Item:** Dave Auger was appointed as the primary contact for this project, with Mark DeGenarro offering to assist. The next step is to contact Eversource for a survey.

4.4 Solar Projects (General Planning)

- **Grant Availability:** No grants or local foundation funding are currently available for solar projects.
- **Company Engagement:** Solar companies are willing to come to the community for planning.
- **Recommendations:** Melissa Elander will provide a list of 2-3 companies that work in the North Country.
- **Land Availability:**
  - The school district has a sizable lot on Brown Road.
  - The town owns 15 acres that could be developed.

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  - The old landfill off Brown Road was previously considered as a brownfield site for solar.
  - Melissa recommended focusing on existing buildings for smaller projects due to easier interconnection and better value.
- **Action Item:** Mark DeGenarro will be the primary person responsible for evaluating solar companies. Melissa Elander will send a list of recommended solar companies

4.5 Water Pumping Station Solar Project

- **High Energy Usage:** The water pumping station on Mayhew Rd (off Brown Road) has the greatest electricity usage in town, consuming 50-60% of the town's electricity.
- **Opportunity:** This location is identified as a "low-hanging fruit" for a dedicated solar array.
- **Previous Audits:** Reggie Sharon conducted an energy audit, and variable frequency drives have been installed, leading to significant savings.
- **Challenges:**
  - Ground-mount installation would be required as there are no significant structures.
  - Potential issues with neighbors due to proximity.
  - Grid connectivity problems for larger projects in the North Country.
  - Net metering rates are worse for systems over 100 kilowatts.
  - Demand charges: Solar may not help with demand charges unless the array is oversized and pumps kick on during peak sun hours.
- **Action Items:**
  - Melissa Elander requested an electric bill for the water pumping station account to assess usage and potential array size.
  - Melissa will connect with DES to inquire about funding for solar projects, given the previous audit.
  - A solar developer will be brought on-site to assess the feasibility of building a system there.
  - A special EC meeting could be scheduled after the town meeting to discuss this project in more detail, including available land and neighbor concerns.
  - Dave Auger will send Reggie Sharon's audit information to Melissa Elander.

4.6 Highway Department Equipment (Archived)

- **Status:** This project has been archived as no qualified vehicles were found, and funding was running out.

4.7 Firefighting Equipment

- **Grant Availability:** Fire trucks are eligible for a specific program, but there is age limits (1992-2009) and annual usage requirements (500 hours).
- **Discussion:** The committee will check if any of the town's fire trucks (one 12 years old, one 25 years old) fit the age criteria. Concerns were raised about meeting the 500 annual hours usage requirement due to the small fire department's low call volume.

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- **Action Item:** Wayne Montgomery will check the age and usage of the fire trucks to determine eligibility.

5. Next Meeting
   - **Proposed Date:** Friday, March 27th, at 10:00 AM.
   - **Location:** Conference room.
   - **Discussion:** The date was chosen to accommodate schedules, particularly Al Rosetto's other commitments.

Meeting End Time: The meeting adjourned at 11:08 am after a motion by Dave and second by Mark with all members in favor.

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