

## Coming Soon to Rye's Voters: Rye Community Power

In March, the citizens of Rye will have the opportunity to vote to establish the Rye Community Power program. Community Power programs allow New Hampshire municipalities to aggregate, or pool, the electric purchasing power of their citizens and businesses. So rather than 5000 small purchases of kilowatt hours, Rye will purchase one large quantity of kilowatt hours on behalf of the residents and businesses. This should enable ratepayers to receive better pricing on their electricity supply.

New Hampshire's Community Power law (SB 296; RSA 53-E) became effective on October 1, 2019. This law authorizes local governments (towns, cities and counties) to become the default electricity provider for the residents and businesses. In addition to more competitive pricing, community power programs can also offer innovative customer services and programs that communities may want. For example, we may choose to install Time-Of-Use meters, electric car chargers or battery-backup systems.

There are several key points to know about Community Power programs. *First of all, community power programs only concern the supply part of your electricity supply.* You will notice on your bill, there are two parts to your electricity charge. The first part is the Supply, or how many kilowatt hours you are being charged for. The other part is the Delivery which includes transmission and distribution charges. The Rye Community Power program, if approved, will only impact the Supply portion. Our utility, Eversource, will continue to be responsible for delivering electricity and maintaining the poles and wires.

*Another key point to know is that this program will be completely optional.* The program will only launch if it is able to offer rates that are less than or equal to the default price offered by Eversource. Every ratepayer will have the option to participate in Rye Community Power or opt-out and stay with Eversource. If a ratepayer is already using a competitive supplier, that ratepayer will be given the opportunity to opt-in to Rye Community Power. Community Power programs in other states typically have 90% participation rates. Offering the program on an opt-out basis should make it easiest for most ratepayers. Opting out will be as easy as possible for those who chose to do so - calling an 800 number, returning a postcard, or using a website.

Lastly, Rye Community Power will offer several choices for rates. The default rate, which will be the automatic choice, will be equivalent to the current Eversource rate. It will be the same cost (or possibly lower) and will have the same minimum requirement for renewable energy, currently 21.6%. There will also be a "Green" option that is competitively priced with the default rate, but will include more renewable energy than the minimum requirement. Lastly, there will be a slightly more expensive, but still competitive, "Green Prime" rate that will offer a higher percentage of renewable energy. This will enable those who wish to invest in renewables and decarbonization to have choices to do so. These options will be offered on an opt-up basis. Rye ratepayers will

be able to change their rate selection, or opt out of the program altogether at any time with no penalty and changes will take place in the next billing cycle.

The Rye Energy Committee will offer the second of two Public Forums to gather community input on December 9 at 7 pm at the Rye Junior High School. If the Select Board approves the finalized Energy Aggregation Plan in December, a warrant article will appear on the March ballot. There will also be another informational session in January before the Deliberative session on February 5.