APPROVED
October 15, 2026

New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Engineering and Operations Committee

Teams Meeting

September 18, 2026, 9:00am

Present: Committee Members: Tom Mongeon (Chair), Bill Darcy, John Goodrich, Laurel Boivin, Alana Albee, Leo Dwyer
Other Board Members: Peter Laufenberg, Pat Barbour, Carl Knowlton
NHEC Employees: Michael Jennings, Josh Mazzei, Luke Croteau, Kristen Taylor, John Geronaitis, Ben Doyle, Jeremy Clark, Cindy Melanson and Christine Parent (Recording)
Others Present: Nancy Isikoff, Todd Fahey

Meeting Called to Order
Chair Mongeon called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Agenda Review & April 2026 Meeting Recap

Chair Mongeon reviewed the agenda. There were no suggested changes to the agenda.

Governance Reminder

Mr. Fahey, General Counsel, provided a reminder of governance and fiduciary duties:

- Duty of Care: To act in good faith and with ordinary care and in reliance on adequate information.
- Duty of Loyalty: To act in the best interest of the purposes of the organization, not in the interest of oneself.
- Duty of Obedience: To act in accordance with law and the organization's governing documents.

Mr. Fahey also shared Board Policy B-1, Statement of Purpose, Missions, Vision & Values. He stated the board is in service to the members because that is a cooperative principle, and attentiveness to member concerns is the backdrop to today's discussion.
Chair Mongeon introduced member, Ms. Isikoff, from Holderness. Ms. Isikoff is the President of the White Oak Watershed Association. This organization has been collaborating with the Squam Lakes Association on cyanobacteria blooms in White Oak Pond. Ms. Isikoff reported that members of the Lakes Region community have raised concerns regarding possible effects of herbicide use near lakes on water quality.

Herbicide

Chair Mongeon reviewed the objectives of the herbicide discussion as follows:

- Review the background of the vegetation management program.

- Discuss modification to opt-out from one year to five years.
- Review the plan to improve communications regarding herbicide

Mr. Mazzei shared the Vegetation Management Program Overview, found in the OnBoard meeting materials, addressing the following topics:

- Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) - Current IVM Cycle, Annual IVM Costs
- Herbicide Opt-Out Program – Background, Current Program & History, Proposed Improvements
- Communication Plan – Multi-Year Opt-Out
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Staff Recommendation and Vote
    - Resolution 1 – Herbicide Opt-Out Program and Enhanced Member Communication

Chair Mongeon added that NHEC plans to obtain all the lake association emails in their territory and put them on the distribution list to notify them when spraying in their areas.

Discussion:

Mr. Darcy referenced the picture in the presentation of growth after six months and stated that regarding the resolution, change of ownership is important because those who want a lake view should have the same option to opt-out as the predecessor.

Mr. Darcy stated using the term “immediately” in the resolution could be misleading because NHEC could adopt the resolution immediately, but implementation will take some time. Mr. Jennings replied that the immediate action will be that the current list of one-year opt-outs will become five-year opt-outs. Mr. Darcy agreed to this clarification.

Ms. Albee raised the following questions:

- Could NHEC do a February and March newsletter communication instead of February or March?
- How does NHEC plan to communicate with municipalities about the opt-out? Mr. Geronaitis replied that NHEC mails the town a letter with an information coupon, which is the same as the newspaper ad. Per law, it is up to the town to post how the letters are structured and who they are sent to.

Mr. Goodrich stated that understanding herbicides is a huge topic and raised the following questions:

- Is the opt-out group of roughly 700 members in 2025 primarily on lakes? Mr. Geronaitis stated the data is not specific to areas, it is spread out over the entire territory.
- What is the reason behind the staff recommendation on opt-out? Mr. Jennings replied that he asked the team to do this because the current process is cumbersome for the member. A five-year opt-out allows opt-out for the entire vegetation management cycle.

Ms. Boivin raised the following questions:

- Will the current opt-outs that will be moved to the five-year opt-out be removed from the current one-year opt-out mailing list? Mr. Jennings replied that NHEC only sends notification to members if they are within 200 feet of an area that is going to be treated, and NHEC is required to notify members even if they are opted out, per state law. Mr. Geronaitis added that state law does not distinguish if they have an opt-out status, and the only exception would be if the whole road was opted out. There is a section for notes on the notification where staff can add that a member is already opted out, so it does not cause confusion to those members.
- What controls will management put in place to ensure that opt-outs are accurately communicated to contractors, and will the five-year opt-out change the current process? Mr. Geronaitis replied that NHEC records opt-outs and shares that information with contractors weekly via spreadsheets. During spraying season, crews call in with locations every morning and veg management informs them at that time of opt-outs. Five-year opt-outs will depend on timing, but that could potentially lead to less yearly changes to notify crews of.
- Will there be an opt-out deadline? Mr. Geronaitis replied that earlier is better. Treatment occurs from July 1 to mid-October, and outreach occurs in April/May.
- What is staff's recommendation for reporting to the board? Mr. Jennings replied that this topic is not traditionally reported to the board. He recommends working with the board members to determine what they would like to see for reporting and frequency.

Mr. Dwyer raised the following questions:

- Why did NHEC pick a five-year opt-out rather than an eight-year opt-out, since it is an eight-year cycle? Mr. Jennings replied that there have been concerns over properties changing hands. Five years covers the initial spraying and mid-cycle spraying, and it is unlikely that there would be any spraying between five and eight years.
- How cumbersome is this, and how do we know where property boundaries are? Mr. Jennings replied turning one into five is not too cumbersome, and it is worth the member benefit. Mr. Mazzei added it is an additional data set to manage and will need to be looked into further. Mr. Geronaitis stated that members include property descriptions on their notes. He added that crews carry paper or digital copies of the tax map when they are notifying and applying. NHEC prefers door-to-door notification to allow field conversations about property lines to take place.
- Do we allow non-members to opt-out? Mr. Geronaitis replied that NHEC does allow non-members to opt-out, and there are two opt-out forms on website, one for members and one for non-members.

Ms. Isikoff raised the following questions:

- Would NHEC notify lake associations or watershed associations about specific properties or just in general that there will be spraying about? Mr. Jennings replied that as part of communications enhancement, NHEC is working on developing better maps and could

provide links to those maps to associations.

- Can towns opt-out of spraying? Mr. Jennings replied that state law prohibits towns from being able to prevent herbicide treatment within their towns. Mr. Laufenberg added that towns can opt-out town property, but they cannot opt-out other people's property.
- Would Mr. Darcy's suggestion about a permanent opt-out make less work for NHEC staff? Mr. Jennings replied the challenge is that the person registered to the electric account does not have to be the property owner, and only the property owner has the authority to opt-out. How many members this applies to is not available, and NHEC would need a reference database to show property ownership to monitor changes. Part of the resolution is to explore this option further.

Ms. Isikoff stated that this year, the opt-out deadline online was April 1, and some people had not received notification yet and thought they missed the deadline. Mr. Geronaitis stated that information was in a newsletter, and April 1 was the recommended opt-out date, not a deadline. Mr. Geronaitis added NHEC encourages early opt-out so there is no miscommunication. Members can opt-out as late as when they see the truck coming down the road to spray.

Mr. Laufenberg raised the following questions:

- When a new owner comes in how, do they know if a property has been opted out and can they reverse the current opt-out? Mr. Jennings replied that NHEC would not know the property changed hands until the five years were up. Mr. Laufenberg stated NHEC would not know there was a new owner and the new owner would not know they were opted out. Mr. Jennings replied that the communication side will need fine tuning.
- How much herbicide does the co-op spray on average in a given year? Mr. Geronaitis replied that NHEC sprays roughly one quart to a half gallon of foliar herbicide per acre. Annually, it is about 400 gallons, on average, across the entire NHEC territory.

Ms. Albee made the following **motion**, seconded by Ms. Boivin:

The committee recommends to the Board of Directors to approve the Herbicide Opt-Out Program and Enhanced Member Communication.

Discussion on the motion:

Mr. Darcy will propose an amendment when the resolution gets to the board that a new property owner will be notified of current opt-out with the option to change it.

Mr. Goodrich stated he has the same concerns as Mr. Darcy, and the opt-out could be viewed as an encumbrance for a new owner, but he will support the resolution at the moment.

Mr. Fahey stated the form could contain an affirmative statement that upon sale or listing of the property that the member takes action to notify the successor and/or NHEC of the sale. He added there is a need to balance all needs of the co-op, not just some. Mr. Jennings replied that tracking property ownership is difficult and might be difficult to implement if added to the resolution. Electric accounts changing hands is not correlated to property ownership.

Mr. Dwyer asked at what percent of opt-out would NHEC decide to no longer use herbicide? Mr. Jennings replied there is a real cost component to that, including personnel and payroll and benefits.

VOTE: for the motion was unanimous.

Current Herbicide Program Information

Mr. Mazzei continued his presentation on Herbicide, with the following topics presented:

- Why Treat Regrowth, Info about NHEC's Herbicide Treatment
- Future Policy Discussion – Shoreline Setback Alternatives, Herbicide Application Buffers and Offsets, Cost Estimates of Shoreline Setbacks and Abandonment Selective Herbicide Use, Alternatives for Consideration, Questions for Committee Discussion

Chair Mongeon asked committee members to share questions they would like answered at the next meeting in October.

Questions for Future Discussion on Herbicide:

1. How long does herbicide last on the ground when sprayed?
2. Mr. Darcy will submit his questions in writing to the committee.
3. How does cutting in rights of way close to water interact with shoreland protection districts that preclude cutting close to lakes?
4. Does the regulatory permitting process address questions about the impact to the shoreline and groundwater?
5. What is the policy outcome that we are trying to achieve through an additional setback?
6. What herbicides have been used, in what quantities each year since 2018, how have costs and application rates changed over time, what are the associated risks to aquatics and drift, and what factors explain the year-to-year changes in herbicide use and costs?
7. What formula and data were used to estimate the costs of each setback option, and how would those costs affect the average residential electric bill in both percentage terms and actual dollars (for example, what does a 0.5% increase for a 50-foot setback mean for a typical customer)?
8. What is the plan to monitor this in the future?
9. General question to consider, not necessarily for the next meeting: What are we trying to do over the next 10-15 years with herbicides and what strategy should be used?
10. Perspective on our usage per year compared to other nutrients and phosphates that get into our lakes.
11. Is there a correlation with the herbicides we use and cyanobacteria?
12. Since we try to allocate costs to the members who incur them, if a small group is asking for opt-out should the cost be charged to those specific members or spread over the membership as a whole?

Chair Mongeon stated NHEC will send notice to Ms. Isikoff when the next meeting details are finalized. Ms. Isikoff requested Mr. Jennings to share slides that were presented today.

Transformer Replacement Program

Mr. Croteau shared the NHEC Substation Transformer Replacement Program (TRP), Risk Evaluation presentation, which can be found in the OnBoard meeting materials, as follows:

- TRP Origin and Projects to Date
- 2026 Review of the TRP
- High Priority TRP Projects – Alton, Sunapee, Lee and Intervale
- Risks with Delayed Replacement
- Why Remove the Fixed Annual Target
- Replacement Strategy Pros/Cons
- TRP Historical Spending
- Summary and Recommendation

Discussion*:*

Ms. Albee referenced locations that cannot be restored via other feeders (part of next presentation) and asked if Intervale could be switched or pushed out a year. Ms. Albee also asked if these costs can be spread to unrestrained development instead of all the membership. Mr. Jennings replied that any of these projects could be pushed out if desired, but Intervale relies on one bulk transformer, and backup feed does not have capacity to cover it reliably for more than a short-term duration. NHEC does its best to have the cost causer pay when possible, but there isn't one huge cause, but many smaller causes, so costs are socialized.

Mr. Goodrich pointed out a transformer can run past capacity for a certain period of time before it breaks down. Mr. Goodrich added it is a very complex formula to decide when to invest and when not to invest, and there are a lot of factors involved, as outlined in Mr. Croteau's presentation. He agreed that staff need flexibility to decide where the investment goes.

Mr. Jennings stated that Intervale is located in Bartlett, physically between Bartlett and North Conway.

Ms. Boivin asked what the current loading confidence level is in contingency plans and what the risk is. Mr. Jennings replied that the initial assessment looks at likelihood and impact (are there sufficient ties to pick up load from somewhere). Mr. Croteau added that part of the contingency plan is use of a mobile transformer.

Transmission Outage Frequency

Due to time constraints, this topic was not addressed. Please forward questions on Transmission Outage Frequency to Chair Mongeon and Mr. Mazzei, and they will be answered in future meetings.

Small Contracts

Due to time constraints, this topic was not addressed. Please forward questions on Small Contracts to Chair Mongeon and Mr. Mazzei, and they will be answered in future meetings.

Action Items

- Mr. Jennings will work with the board members to determine what they would like to see for reporting and frequency regarding herbicide use.
- Mr. Jennings will touch base with Ms. Isikoff to share slides that were presented today and will send notice to Ms. Isikoff when the next meeting details are finalized.

Adjournment

Chair Mongeon adjourned the meeting at 10:31 a.m.