

## **Deadlines set for Eversource to sell its power plants**

■

### **Electric utility:**

Eversource will continue to be a regulated distribution and transmission utility.

### **Staff Report**

**CONCORD** — Regulators have set the dates by which Eversource will auction off the remaining power plants it owns in New Hampshire, including the large coalburning plant in Bow.

The state hired financial advisers J.P. Morgan to conduct the auction, which will complete a process that began in 2002 when the Seabrook Nuclear Power Station was successfully sold in a similar two-round auction conducted by JPM.

According to an order issued by the Public Utilities Commission on Tuesday, Round 1 bidders will begin to submit their qualifications in mid- to late-November.

Criteria for selection into Round 1 includes ownership and operation of similar facilities and documented sources of financing to complete the purchase.

Preliminary nonbinding offers will be due in mid- to late-February, 2017.

Round 2 bidders will be identified in early to mid-March. That group will be allowed access to detailed information about the facilities through an electronic data room, and given facility tours and meetings with existing Eversource management.

Round 2 is expected to last approximately eight weeks, with final bids due in early to mid-May 2017.

“Depending on the nature of the final proposals received, JPM is likely to recommend that the Commission select more than one party for final negotiations,” according to the PUC order.

The sale of the power plants is taking place in order to complete the restructuring of electricity markets the Legislature approved in the 1990s, which calls for separate ownership of generation and transmission.

Eversource will continue to be a regulated distribution and transmission utility, but will no longer own power plants.

The agreement contains protections for current employees at the three fossilfuel and nine hydro-electric plants being sold.

Buyers must honor existing collective bargaining agreements and must agree to keep the plants in service for at least 18 months following the purchase.

The fossil fuel plants to be sold are Merrimack Station in Bow, a coal-burning plant; Newington Station in Newington, which burns oil or natural gas; and Schiller Station in Portsmouth, which can burn coal or

oil in two units; and biomass in a third.

The hydroelectric plants include Amoskeag Hydro, Manchester; Ayers Island, Bristol; Canaan Hydro, West Stewartstown; Eastman Falls, Franklin; Garvins Falls, Bow; Gorham Hydro, Gorham; Hooksett Hydro, Hooksett; Jackman Hydro, Hillsborough; Smith Hydro, Berlin.

Money from the sale of the plants will offset the liability of Eversource ratepayers for the losses the company will incur through the divestiture.