

WEST BOYLSTON MUNICIPAL LIGHTING PLANT

4 Crescent Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

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Board of Light Commission, Regular Session Meeting Minutes, 5:00pm, June 18, 2024

Present: Commissioner's Win Handy, Tony Meola, and Jim Pedone. WBMLP GM Jon Fitch, Assistant GM Brian Allen, and Office Manager Chris Trudeau.

Agenda: The Board approved the agenda as posted. The Board added a discussion about vehicle mounted dash-cameras, inventory/stock, and air source heat pump rebates.

Meeting Minutes: The Board reviewed and approved the meeting minutes from January 2, 2024 and February 6, 2024.

Customer Issues: Staff and Board discussed roof top solar at 65/67 Briarwood Circle. The customer is considering a roof-top solar project on the roof of the assisted living and memory care facilities located in both WBMLP and National Grid's service territory. The solar system would be interconnected solely through their National Grid electric service.

Financials: Staff provided the Board with an update on the financial audit. The audit will restart July 9th and 10th, 2024. Commissioner Meola asked about the rate of return from our depreciation and operating reserve accounts with Bartholomew. GM Fitch let the Board know that as of the last statement date the rate of return based on current market value was approximately 1%. The commissioners would like to see better returns from other fixed income investments.

Transmission Costs: Our Schedule 9 and Schedule 1 Regional Network Service transmission rates are increasing by approx. 20% effective 1/1/2025 and 6/1/2024 respectively. As an example, our April 2024 load at the coincidental peak load of National Grid (April 4th, hour 11) was 9,009kW's. The increased rates would cost WBMLP approximately \$23,000 more in April 2024.

Cybersecurity Grant: WBMLP, MMWEC, and the Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) are coapplying under the Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance (RMUC) Program, sponsored by the Department of Energy (DOE). If awarded, STCC will receive grant funding and shoulder the burden of the grant management/reporting and MMWEC municipals will get the benefit of cybersecurity services and training.

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Clean Heat Standard: MA MLP's are continuing to discuss as a group and with MassDEP, the proposed Clean Heat Standard (CHS), applicable on all utilities, delivered fuel companies, and MLPs. The CHS requires MLPs to fully electrify an annual number of residential HVAC systems and lower annual GHG emissions; or pay a compliance payment.

Energy Future Grant: WBMLP and (25) other MLP's were awarded \$500,000 as a group for a "Municipal Electrification and Load Management for Decarbonization Project". The MLP's propose to develop plans to expand and increase electrification projects throughout our communities and develop plans to manage our increased load because of electrification.

CBA and Office Staff Wage and Salary Increase: WBMLP staff let the Board know that effective July 1, 2024 all wages and salaries will increase 2.9% per the collective bargaining agreement and our practice of applying the CBA increase on office wages and salaries. This increase across (12) employees is approx. \$36k and maintains wages and salaries near or at the MEAM MLP average.

The Board discussed how increases in wages, energy costs, transmission expenses, and other operational expenses will impact future electricity rates. GM Fitch told the board that a future rate increase will be necessary and that WBMLP hasn't changed residential rates since 2009 and all the other rates since 2014.

Project 2015A: GM Fitch provide the Board with a project update. Commercial operations started in June and began ISO-NE market participation on July 1, 2024. Staff let the Board know that we could schedule a site visit anytime. Commissioner Handy requested the project 2015A cost to date. GM Fitch will provide the final project cost to date.

New Garage: The Board was provided with a project update. Contractor needs to finish paving, signage, and punch list items. The Board discussed and requested staff to schedule an open house and to begin using the facility for future Board meetings. Commissioner Handy inquired about the emergency generator for the new facility. WBMLP staff let the Board know that it will purchase and install a backup generator after construction is complete. It will be less expensive if we do this as a separate project and not as a change order. Commissioner Handy asked about the dead ash trees along the property boarder. WBMLP will keep an eye on the trees to see if they become dangerous.

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Gen-Set Rental: The temp gen-set is installed and is being dispatched for this summer's monthly peaks.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS): The Board and staff discussed the status of the 3MW/9MWh BESS project under construction.

Municipal Fiber Network: GM Fitch let the Board know the WBMLP/Town was awarded a \$151,131 grant through the MA Municipal Fiber Grant program. The grant requires a \$37,800 contribution and the entire amount will be used to interconnect (9) public buildings to our municipal fiber network. WBMLP executed the Community Compact Municipal Fiber grant contract on June 4, 2024. The grant funds should arrive in our account within 45 days. WBMLP has until December 31, 2025 to complete the project. WBMLP will connect the new garage to our fiber network and set up computers in the new building as a backup to the main office.

Future Solar: WBMLP was contacted by a solar developer interested in floating solar on the reservoir.

Fast DC EV Chargers: The chargers are generating over \$1,000 per month now.

Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant Program. The US EPA is offering funding to eligible recipients to replace existing non-zero-emission Class 6 and 7 heavy-duty vehicles with eligible Class 6 and 7 zero-emission vehicles. MMWEC will provide additional information.

Fuel Cell with Carbon Capture: The Board did not discuss this in detail.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:18pm.

Jim Pedone

Tony Meola