

# WEST BOYLSTON MUNICIPAL LIGHTING PLANT

4 Crescent Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

Telephone (508) 835-3681

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## **Board of Light Commission, Regular Session Meeting Minutes**

5:00pm, September 2, 2025, 29 Prospect Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room.

**Present:** Commissioners Jim Pedone, James Kingsley, and Tony Meola. WBMLP staff, Jonathan Fitch and Chris Trudeau. Town Administrator Heather Butler, DPW Director Tom Degnan, and Gregory Zakarian, Finance Committee Member.

**Agenda:** The Board approved the agenda without any changes or corrections.

**Meeting Minutes:** The Board reviewed and approved the meeting minutes from April 8, 2025, and May 6, 2025.

**Customer Issues:** None discussed.

**Trash Bill Service:** The Board, Town Administrator, and Finance Committee Member discussed WBMLP providing monthly trash billing and collections for approximately 2,500 residential properties in town. WBMLP would set up a new trash provider account in our billing system, format our bills with the additional line item for trash and open all our existing payment channels for trash payments by residents. The Board requested WBMLP staff to prepare a written summary of the impacts and processes required to provide this service. The Board also asked staff to invite the TA to attend their next meeting.

**Flail Head Cutter Purchase:** GM Fitch and DPW Director Tom Degnan requested the Board to consider sharing the cost to purchase a rotary and flail head mower attachment for the DPW's front loader. The total cost is approx. \$191k. The cutter has a 24' reach and would mow roadside ROW's and minimize the annual cost of trimming and cutting by our outsourced tree contractors. GM Fitch states that it currently costs about \$2,400 per day to hire a contractor and flail head cutter which we recently used on West Boylston Street. The Board discussed the purchase and requested additional information for its next meeting, regarding maintenance, warranty, repair costs, cost savings to WBMLP storage location, etc.

**Tree Trimming RFP:** GM Fitch let the Board know that WBMLP is soliciting bids for this year's tree trimming for cycle 1 (northeastern corner of town) of our overhead electrical distribution lines. Bids are due September 8<sup>th</sup>.

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**Ripple Fiber:** The Board and staff discussed the status of the Ripple Fiber project in town. Ripple is working in the southwestern portion of town adjacent to Holden. WBMLP is drafting a conduit agreement with Ripple Fiber to use our conduits under the (2) Mass Highway Route 190 bridges.

**Municipal ISP and Fiber Network:** WBMLP staff provided the Board a project update on the municipal ISP project. Headend equipment is getting installed. Waiting on Ripple Fiber to provide ISP service. Looking for best tie-in location near Holden town line. WBMLP plans to provide service to WBMLP's substation, library, senior center, and DPW first. WBMLP is waiving conduit access and pole attachment fees in exchange for ISP quality internet service.

**Battery Energy Storage System (BESS):** The Board was provided a project update on the BESS project. The BESS project is currently under construction and all equipment is installed. Testing and commissioning are underway. WBMLP anticipates a commercial operation date by the end of September 2025.

**Critical Mass Program:** GM Fitch told the Board that WBMLP and MMWEC are looking into electrifying and decarbonizing a heating and cooling system for a low or midrise building utilizing an ultra-shallow geothermal system. Innovia, (<https://www.innoviageo.com/>), is looking to partner with an MLP to install an efficient geothermal heating and cooling system. WBMLP is investigating the library as a potential location.

**MLP Z-Loan:** Staff let the Board know MA DOER is setting up an MLP 0% loan for up to five years for any qualifying residential energy efficiency or electrification projects. WBMLP anticipates the 0% loan to be available in 2026.

**Connected Homes:** WBMLP staff and the Board discussed MMWEC Connected Homes Program for our residential customers. Starting September 1st, MMWEC will implement pre-heating and pre-cooling to all thermostats enrolled in Connected Homes. This means that one hour prior to the peak, customer thermostats will be adjusted +/- 3 degrees depending on season. The goal of this is to minimize any noticeable discomfort for the customer. MMWEC will reach out to all our customers with HVAC controls enrolled in Connected Homes to notify them of this program change.

**Temp Generator:** Staff informed the Board the summer generator rental is ending. The summer load reduction program successfully reduced our monthly peak load in June, July, and August. The peak loads occurred on:

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- June peak was June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1900hrs. Both monthly and annual peaks.
- July peak was July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1900hrs. Monthly Peak.
- August peak was August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1900hrs. Monthly peak.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

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James Kingsley

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Jim Pedone

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Tony Meola