

# 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, October 7, 2025, 29 Prospect Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room.

**Present:** Commissioners Jim Pedone, Tony Meola, and James Kingsley. Town Administrator Heather Butler, WBMLP Staff Jonathan Fitch & Chris Trudeau.

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

**Meeting Minutes:** The Board reviewed and approved the meeting minutes from June 10, 2025.

### **Customer Issues:**

- The Board and staff discussed the dead ash tree at 23 Shrewsbury Street. Customer sent the Board a letter requesting removal of a dead ash tree. WBMLP will remove the tree.
- WBMLP informed the Board that a utility pole fell on a car at 51 Lancaster Street. WBMLP installed a new private property pole, 13-1, adjacent to existing old pole. WBMLP transferred our overhead conductors. When Charter transferred their overhead cable on September 22<sup>nd</sup> the old pole fell on customers parked car. Insurance is covering damages and WBMLP will assume 50% responsibility.

**Financials:** The Board reviewed attached income statement through Aug 2025.

**Senior Center:** Staff let the Board know it will meet with the Senior Men's Breakfast Group to discuss WBMLP operations at 9am, October 16<sup>th</sup>. WBMLP will provide coffee and donuts.

**Touch A Truck:** WBMLP will participate in the Touch-A-Truck Community Event at 10:30am – 12:00pm, October 19<sup>th</sup> with the police and fire departments.

**New Development:** The Board and staff discussed the following projects and interconnections.

- Century Drive: Site work still underway for 7-9 commercial buildings.
- 235-249 West Boylston St: Received ZBA Comprehensive Permit for three buildings. One building on Pierce St. with 60 apartments. Two buildings on West Boylston St with 10 apartments & (3) commercial spaces each.
- 244-264 West Boylston Street: Received ZBA Special Permit for a new Dunkin Donuts between CVS and existing Dunkin Donuts.

- Hartwell & Shrewsbury St: 3<sup>rd</sup> (8) unit commercial building under construction.

**Trash Bill Service:** The TA, Board, and staff discussed the Town request for WBMLP to consider providing monthly fixed fee trash billing and collections for approximately 2,500 residential properties in town. WBMLP would set up a new trash provider in our billing system, format our bills with the additional line item for trash and open all our existing payment channels for trash payments.

The Board discussed concerns related to how customer service would be provided, how to separate and account for payments and impact on our accounting system. The Board also had concerns with mixing town services with the MLP electric service. The Board did not approve adding trash service on our bills and through our billing system.

**Flail Head Cutter Purchase:** Staff and DPW requested the Board to consider purchasing, 50/50%, a rotary and flail head mower attachment for the DPW's front loader. The total cost is approx. \$191k. WBMLP and the Board is waiting on additional information from the DPW.

**Tree Trimming RFP:** Staff told the Board that Dillon Tree started the cycle 1 tree trimming (northeastern corner of town) of our overhead distribution lines.

**Ripple Fiber:** The Board was provided an update on the Ripple Fiber installation which started in the southwestern portion of town adjacent to Holden. WBMLP drafted a conduit agreement with Ripple Fiber to use our conduits under the (2) Mass Highway Route 190 bridges. Ripple will connect and provide ISP service at pole 49 woodland Street which is connected to our headend. Ripple will shift their design to aerial pole attachments on our utility poles during the winter.

**Municipal ISP and Fiber Network:** Staff provided the Board with a project update. All headend equipment is installed and just waiting on Ripple's ISP interconnection and service. The tie-in location is pole-49 Woodland Street. Holden town line. WBMLP is exchanging conduit access and pole attachment fees for ISP quality internet service.

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

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The Board asked about the flywheel energy storage system adjacent to the BESS. Staff let the Board know the site wasn't operational and they are waiting for a reply from Amber Kinetics on when they can fix.

**Rate Study:** The Board and staff discussed the attached Cost of Service (COS) for electricity rates that haven't significantly changed since 2009/2014. The rate changes discussed by the Board included:

- Increasing Monthly Customer Charge to recover increased fixed expenses independent of energy sales. Increase \$2-3/year.
- Reducing or eliminating the 10% Early Payment Discount on residential, commercial, and industrial customers. Phase out and reduce by 5% per year.
- Reducing or eliminating the 15% Early Payment Discount on senior residential customers. Phase out and reduce 5% per year.
- Increasing small government, security lights, large commercial, industrial, large municipal, and municipal industrial variable rates (\$/kWh) by approximately 4%.
- Make paperless billing and ACH payments required for the early payment discount.
- Maintain the current overall rate design.

The Board discussed not increasing the three municipal rates since those rates are essentially paid by taxpayers, which are our ratepayers. The Board discussed not changing the residential and senior residential rates at this time. The Board and staff decided to continue this discussion at the next monthly meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

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James Kingsley

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Jim Pedone

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Tony Meola