



WMGLD
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Peter D. Dion, General Manager

Philip Courcy, Chair
Thomas Boettcher, Secretary
Kenneth J. Chase, Jr.
Jennifer Kallay
John J. Warchol

**WAKEFIELD MUNICIPAL GAS & LIGHT DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF GAS & LIGHT COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

January 6, 2021

MINUTES

IN ATTENDANCE: Commrs. Phil Courcy, Chairman
Thomas Boettcher, Secretary
Jennifer Kallay
John J. Warchol
Ken Chase

Peter Dion, General Manager, WMGLD

Mark Cousins, Financial Manager
Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager
Vinnie McMahon, Senior Engineer
Paul Redmond, Electric Superintendent
Sylvia Vaccaro, Office Manager

Julie Smith-Galvin, Town Liaison
Elton Prifti -Member of the Public

PLACE: ZOOM MEETING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Courcy called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. and informed the Board that the meeting is being recorded.

Chair Remarks:

Commr. Courcy acknowledged the passing of Carl Mata, husband of Maureen Mata, Executive Secretary to Pete Dion and extended the Board's condolences. He expressed his appreciation for mentioning the Commissioners in the WMGLD Christmas Greeting that was published in the Wakefield Item. Chair Courcy applauded Dave Polson, Vinnie McMahon, and Raven Fournier for their efforts in continuing their education, which provides not only personal growth, but great value to WMGLD. He stated that the Climate and Transportation bills have advanced to the Governor for signature. Also, on December 23rd the large bill in response to the Lawrence gas incident that involves emergency response, professional engineering sign-off and record keeping passed. He also noted the delay in the offshore wind farm. He stated that once the Governor signs the Climate bill we will be able to see how that will affect our strategic plan

Commissioner Remarks:

Commr. Boettcher commented that the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has issued extensions and grants concerning electric vehicle incentive programs and electric vehicle charging. There is a grant for direct current/ fast charging for both the public and private sector. Grant money is also available for workplace fleets and charging for multi dwelling units. These grants may be available as early as the end of March 2021. He will forward this information to the other Board members as this may be beneficial to both the town and the utility.

Town Council Comments:

Julie Smith- Galvin noted that next Monday Town Council will begin their budget process.

Secretary's Report

Approval of the minutes from the December 2, 2020 meeting was before the Board for approval.

Commr. Kallay noted three corrections to be made. Pete forwarded to the board comments from Commr. Kallay which included some typos as well as a list of requests for inclusion in the 2015A discussion.

A motion was made by Commr. Warchol to accept the December 2, 2020 Board minutes with the corrections made by Commr. Kallay and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of the minutes from the December 2, 2020 Executive session was before the Board for approval.

A motion was made by Commr Warhol to approve and seconded by Commr. Kallay.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business:

Project Updates

Presentation of McGrail Substation Upgrades

Vinnie McMahon, Senior Engineer and Paul Redmond, Electric Superintendent provided the Board with a presentation on the design, planning and construction of upgrades to the McGrail Substation on Wakefield Ave.

Vinnie stated that the goal was to eliminate antiquated equipment while leveraging Wallace Substation capacity with a new circuit to Wakefield Ave. This would allow Wakefield Ave. to be a distribution switching hub between Wallace and Beebe Substations. He stated that this allows us to feed McGrail from both Beebe and Wallace substations. This upgrade will ultimately enable us to feed the entire Town from McGrail if needed.

The use of the new modular switchgear allows for simplicity, significant cost savings, and long-term reliability. The new compact design will require minimal maintenance. It can also handle future circuits and creates potential space for battery storage on site. Excavation for this project was done by our excavation contractor, B & E Services with our own linemen performing all the conduit and form work.

Paul noted that the first step was to cut over two 13.8kv circuits to energize the new substation, while ensuring both the new and old substations had backup feeds during the transition. The second step was to cut over 4kv circuits which feed downtown Wakefield to the new substation. This required extensive planning, switching, and after-hours work. The third step was to cut over the remaining 13.8kv circuits to the new substation and decommission the entire old substation. The oil has been drained the oil from the two old transformers to prepare them for removal in the next few weeks. Customer communications was imperative during this whole process and outages were scheduled off-hours to accommodate our customers.

Pete stated that the Substation and Line crews took pride and ownership in this project. Commr Boettcher noted the professional worksite conditions of Wakefield Ave Substation during this upgrade project. He inquired what the cost savings would be because of the reduced maintenance requirements. Dave Polson and Pete stated that the annual saving for testing and maintenance would range from \$20,000-\$25,000.

2021 Goals and Objectives

A draft of the 2021 Goals and Objectives that were prepared and reviewed by Pete Dion and Commissioners Courcy and Kallay were presented and discussed with the Board. The 2020 goals were used as a template with the following modifications and additions:

Training

To continue to operate in the COVID-19 control plan was added as item #5.

Operational

Items #3 and 4 were revised. Both the electrical and gas individual capital items on the spreadsheet in the budget were incorporated into one-line item and referred to the spreadsheet in the capital plan.

Customer Service

To update, add, and organize the website to be more user friendly and accessible. Adding information about solar, electrification of heating and transportation, rate sheets, and commercial energy and efficiency programs.

Financial

To add working towards having three months cash on hand as per the auditor's recommendation.

Managing receivables growth due to COVID-19 was also add as an item.

Commr. Warchol inquired as to our current cash position. Mark Cousins, Finance Manager, stated that we currently have one-month cash on hand, which is up from last year's audit even during this COVID environment.

Environmental

This is a new section that has been added due to the new legislation that is currently with the Governor for approval.

Support installation of non-carbon emitting generating resources.

Support decarbonization of heating and transportation sectors.

Commr. Warchol asked for clarification of item 3a. Discussion ensued and it was agreed upon that item 3a should read as follows; Support community adoption of heating system electrification through both contractor and resident education, potentially providing heating coaches, as well as including educational resources on our website.

It was also decided to keep the rating scale as (1-5) and the multiplier as 3.334.

A motion was made to approve the 2021 Goals and Objectives with the amendments and changes discussed tonight was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Chase.

Chair Courcy mentioned that at other town meetings roll call votes were taken and every commissioner was called upon by name to cast their vote. It was decided that going forward this would be the voting format.

Roll Call Vote:	Commr. Boettcher	Aye
	Commr. Chase	Aye
	Commr. Courcy	Aye
	Commr. Kallay	Aye
	Commr. Warchol	Aye

The motion was approved unanimously.

Strategic Planning 2021 Plans

Pete stated that if the bill becomes final then we can begin to have discussions around how to achieve our goals over the next 5-10 years. Commr. Boettcher commented once the bill is approved, we will be able to align our short and long-term goals to the 2050 roadmap. Commr. Kallay noted that after the legislation is adopted it will be a relevant time to revisit our Strategic Planning effort. She also mentioned that we did complete a lot of items that we had initially identified in Phase One, so we are already finished with that phase. She stated that it may be easier to add a dedicated Strategic Plan Board meeting, once we know more about the bill. Pete said that perhaps we can have either MMWEC, MEAM, or ENE provide a presentation on this new bill.

Chair Courcy introduced a member of the public in attendance, Elton Prifti, Engineering Manager with National Grid. He resides in Wakefield at 18 Partridge Lane.

New Business

Low Income Discussion

Chair Courcy presented his research on the State of Massachusetts low-income eligibility requirements as well as the Town of Wakefield's Senior Discount Program. He noted that the State of Massachusetts Department of Health provides Eversource and National Grid with a Mass Health Standard letter that lists the person's eligibility for a low-income rate.

Commr. Kallay stated that she is interested in offering energy efficiency incentives for low-income residents versus offering low-

income rates as low-income rates do not fix the problem. Pete said that we could expand our energy efficiency program based on low-income criteria that would qualify low-income residents for an enhanced rebate incentive. Commr. Boettcher stated that the money would be better spent to reduce someone's energy usage versus a low-income rate that will not reduce their energy consumption. Commr. Kallay said that we could offer a carve out through our solar program for lower-income customers. Commr. Warchol stated that he has not received a response back from the Department of Transitional Assistance in regard to the terms of the agreement that the utility would have to enter into with the state to participate in a low-income rate program. Commr. Boettcher noted that Mass Save has an energy efficiency program for low-income residents. Pete stated that he and Mark Cousins will research this, as it is a better alternative to a low-income rate because you will be fixing the problem instead of throwing money at it. He also mentioned that the Board can change the Energy Conservation Charge without going to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) unlike if you changed a rate.

Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Commr. Boettcher inquired if a link to our Energy Efficiency Rebates and incentives has been added to the Building and Permitting Department's website. Pete stated that it is in process. Pete commented that he has emailed EV Watts twice about our EV Program but has not received a response yet. He will continue to follow-up. Commr. Boettcher inquired if there can be a presentation for the March Board meeting around our Energy Efficiency programs, Connected Homes and the public's response and benefits from these programs.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:41 p.m. by Commr. Chase and seconded by Commr. Warchol.

Roll Call Vote:	Commr. Boettcher	Aye
	Commr. Chase	Aye
	Commr. Courcy	Aye
	Commr. Kallay	Aye
	Commr. Warchol	Aye

Unanimously in favor of adjournment.