



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**

April 7, 2021

MINUTES

IN ATTENDANCE:

Commrs. Phil Courcy, Chairman
Thomas Boettcher, Secretary
Jennifer Kallay
John J. Warchol
Kenneth Chase

Peter Dion, General Manager, WMGLD

Mark Cousins, Financial Manager
Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager
Sylvia Vaccaro, Office Manager

Members of the Public

Elton Prifti 18 Partridge Ln.

PLACE: ZOOM MEETING

CALL TO ORDER:

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

Chair Remarks:

Commr. Courcy commented that on March 26th, the Climate bill was signed by Governor Baker. He also noted that on March 21st, the State issued the third round of bids for 1600 megawatts of offshore wind power. Commr. Courcy said that both he and Pete have been working with Steve Maio on a couple of issues; Envision Wakefield, which will be discussed later in the meeting and the second being public notification of street digging between National Grid, the Town, WMGLD, and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Pete commented that Raven Fournier will be working with Jennifer McDonald from the Town to coordinate street digging notification. Currently the Town has a link to our website's homepage but moving forward we will be able to provide a link that will point directly to a map indicating the streets we are working on as well as including macro level schedules.

Commr. Boettcher inquired if there was a way to utilize the GIS system for this level of detail, like our outage map. Pete stated that it is difficult to update this on a day-to-day basis. Providing a map of the whole project will provide the needed level of detail. He also stated that we do flyer the neighborhood. Raven will also include a graphic of where we will be working.

Commissioner Remarks:

Commr. Kallay provided an update on the Green Community's efforts. She stated the Town is currently characterizing different facilities and vehicles and entering the information into the MEI tool. WMGLD will then append the monthly energy use data going back to 2018. She also informed the Board that the Palmer biomass plant, which is an MLP project through ENE member utilities, had their approval revoked by the Department of Environmental Protection. She stated this may have implications for biomass plants moving forward. Pete said there is specific language about biomass in the new Climate Bill and we will probably not see much interest or pursuit of new projects going forward. Commr. Kallay also stated that she heard that Chicopee and Holyoke had pulled out of the Peabody natural gas peaker plant. Pete stated that they are still part of the project and required to fulfill all their obligations as required by the Purchase Supply Agreement (PSA), but they requested for MMWEC to see if others would be interested in their shares. MMWEC is currently soliciting others to see if anyone is interested in purchasing each of their 2.5 megawatts. Pete indicated that according to the PSA neither Chicopee nor Holyoke can just walk away. Someone would have to purchase their shares. Commr. Kallay inquired as to why each wants to withdraw. Peter state that he believed with Holyoke it is portfolio related and in Chicopee it is concern over political push back. Commr. Kallay informed the Board there is a stretch code article on the warrant at Town Meeting on Saturday, May 8, and wanted to reach out to respectfully ask for support of this article. She will include some of these points in a letter to the editor of the Item. She stated that building codes in general do not focus on energy use. This is an energy specific code that focuses on

reducing building energy use. Developers have little incentive or motivation to minimize the ongoing operational costs associated with energy. This code focuses on making sure the opportunities to reduce the longer-term operational costs are not missed during building construction. It is far more costly to fix buildings after they are built. The incremental costs to meet these codes are less than 1 percent of the total construction costs. Wakefield is well behind others. More than 80 percent of towns in Massachusetts have already adopted this code including Melrose, Saugus, Woburn, Reading, and Stoneham. Pete stated that this is not as big burden on developers as it used to be. Commr. Kallay said she spoke to a customer that was trying to convert from oil to natural gas. The customer fell under a paving moratorium that she was unaware of as well as not being aware of our heat pump options. Commr. Kallay noted that these are topics that require ongoing customer education. Commr. Boettcher asked if we have the heat pump consultant in place. Pete responded that we have met with them and have scheduled the contractor meeting for May 4th. We are making some changes to the Heat Pump Program format and converting to a per-ton basis for rebates. Pete also stated that we will be conducting a residential seminar on May 13. Commr. Boettcher inquired if residents would have the ability to have a one-on-one meeting with the heat pump consultant. Pete stated that they will be able to meet, and it will become a requirement of the new and improved program.

Secretary's Report

Approval of minutes from the March 3, 2021 meeting was before the Board for approval. There were no comments or corrections. Commr. Warchol had one minor edit.

A motion was made by Commr. Courcy to approve the March 3, 2021 Board minutes as ammended and seconded by Commr. Warchol.

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

The motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business:

Project Updates

Pete stated they are wrapping up with Spring dead main installation work. We will be going back to complete tie overs in the areas of Lowell St.- Vernon St. and Cedar St.- Emerson St. We are coordinating with National Grid, so we do not interfere with their work. He also noted that Broadway may reopen in the next few weeks per Town Engineer, Bill Renault. Bill's

proposal is that we be given a temporary permit with approval of a permanent solution.

Nation Grid

They have resumed work at night on both Salem and Montrose streets for the next week or two, then near Broadway Plaza at night for a few weeks. They will continue work up Broadway during the day.

Commr. Boettcher inquired about the recent Lakeside fire incident. Pete explained that the issue was with customer owned equipment and that the building which housed most of their high voltage switchgear has been replaced with an outdoor, overhead solution.

McGrail Substation Upgrades

Pete informed the Board that all old outdoor switchgear has been deenergized with almost all the indoor switchgear deenergized as well. Vinnie McMahon is in the process of obtaining prices for the disposal of this gear. There is some interest in some of the breakers. Pete explained that early this summer we will begin the process of disposing of the indoor equipment, although there will be some asbestos that will need to be removed first. The next steps will be working on 4kv conversion, so that we can retire the Burns station on Ballister St. This will be retired and included in next year's Capital budget.

Climate Bill

Pete mentioned that Governor Baker signed the Climate Bill on March 26th with the MLP language remaining intact, so we now have a framework to work with as we move toward Net Zero. We are in discussions with two developers now for an offshore wind project and hopefully MMWEC will create a project that municipals can participate in the future. In addition to this, the other big issue is transmission costs. We will closely monitor at the ISO level, and at local state levels. There should be a greater role for municipals in transmission ownership. If we are going to be a 15 percent owner of an offshore wind project, then we should be a 15 percent owner of the transmission that is being built to come in. We are able to obtain financing much easier than IOUs or independents. Pete noted that we will be having discussions with different transmission owners to see if we can have opportunities to participate in that side of the world.

Commr. Kallay stated that this is wonderful news, and this landmark piece of legislation is a big deal for everyone. We now have a roadmap. She also noted that other states will be watching this closely and perhaps be following in our footsteps. Pete said that municipals have never been given enough

credit for what they have done. Municipals have been leading the way in combatting climate change. He said that forty-one municipals united to propose the language to be included in this Bill.

Upcoming Board Reorganization

Pete stated that the Board will not reorganize until next month. He stated that Tom Boettcher is slated to take over as Chairman. The next position that is up is Ken's and it appears that Elton Prifti will fill that position and serve as Secretary. Commr. Kallay's position will be up after that and she will then serve as secretary.

Commr. Kallay expressed her thanks to Commr. Chase for his many years of service. Pete extended his thanks to Commr. Chase for his leadership and guidance and noted that Commr. Chase has served this Board since the 1970s. Commr. Warchol said it was tremendous serving with Commr. Chase for the past 17 years. He noted that during this time, the Department has come a long way. He thanked Commr. Chase for his many years of dedicated service to the ratepayers and the town of Wakefield. Commr. Boettcher thanked Commr. Chase for serving our community so well over the years. Commr. Courcy concurred and extended well wishes to Commr. Chase.

New Business

Envision Wakefield Downtown Projects

Pete mentioned that WMGLD was originally told by the Town that they wanted streetlights that were just a little shorter than what they originally had on Albion Street. The Town then decided they wanted something fancier. This change obviously increased costs. We have a couple of renderings that we are working on and have met with Steve Maio and Ed Dombroski to discuss these. Pete said that the town will pay for some of the capitol cost and then we will factor the rest of the capital costs into the streetlight rates going forward. The project will tie Albion St. across and through the intersection to Foundry, Maple, and Lake Streets. There will be a combination of tighter distribution of lower profile lights with flower baskets along Albion and in certain sections of Foundry St. In the larger areas across the intersection and down Tuttle St. we would use a roadway version. To be dark sky compliant we would use a flatter light and not the globe represented in the rendering. Pete stated that all WMGLD LED fixtures are dark sky compliant.

Commr. Kallay asked if these lights were the ones that had been already replaced. Pete said yes, but as we take these down, we will reuse them in other areas.

Commr. Boettcher inquired if these lights are part of our standard. Pete said they are not, but these are LED lights and if we use a standard to include all these streets, we will be able to digest them. Commr. Boettcher inquired if there was funding from the developer for the streetlighting. Pete said there was some funding for underground streetlights, but not the decorative fixtures. Commr. Kallay said there are basically 2 different standards, and it is important to denote how you are delineating where to place decorative lighting. Dave Polson stated that it is the Town that is making the decision. Commr. Boettcher said that the Town is trying to make these areas more walkable because of all the new development. Pete said the assumption is that all of Foundry St. will be developed overtime and going forward as certain areas are developed, we can place the costs for the decorative lighting on the developers.

Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Commr. Boettcher stated that as a liaison to the Environmental Sustainability Committee, he asked Pete and team to come up with a one-page flyer highlighting WMGLD's environmental efforts for Earth Day or rather Earth month. He thanked them for their efforts and requested that it be posted to our website so that the ESC can link it to their promotions. Pete stated that we will also post this on social media around Earth Day. Commr. Boettcher hopes that this can be updated and published every year. Commr. Kallay suggested for the future that our incentive programs be renamed so that it is more intuitive for our customers. Commr. Boettcher inquired if the Request for Proposal (RFP) had gone out for the Community Solar Project. Dave Polson said that the RFP is being finalized and will be going out soon.

Commr. Courcy stated that the final financial audit numbers were submitted and approved. Mark Cousins stated that the auditors presented the preliminary financials to the Board in the November- December timeframe. It is always complete except for the pension number. The Retirement Board is audited at the same time as the Town, and we participate in the Wakefield Retirement Board so we have to wait for this number. It broke down to \$80,000.00 gas and \$230,000.00 electric. This number was as expected. Pete noted that the Board already took a vote back in November and this was just an update.

Commr Kallay inquired about the conservation budget as it shows we are \$55,000 under collected. She thought as of the last meeting we were underspent by \$20,000.00. Mark stated that it may have been that we separated out the solar grant. It is incentives, rebates, and inclusive of the solar program. Pete noted that we can separate it out going forward. She also noticed that the receivable aging jumped up in February. Mark noted that if you look at the February number over the past few years it does increase and is a normal trend. Pete said that February's numbers include all the winter gas bills.

Pete mentioned that we are in the lien process. We started with a list of about 340 customers. We will continue to work our lists down before we turn the list over to the Town to lien in the beginning of May.

Commr. Courcy stated that on April 1st Eversource announced a near 5 percent residential rate increase.

Executive Session

A motion to enter Executive session at 7:37 PM to discuss Union Collective Bargaining returning to open session at its conclusion to report on and vote on what was discussed in Executive session and vote for adjournment was made by Commr. Courcy and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Roll Call Vote: Commr. Boettcher Aye
 Commr. Chase Aye
 Commr. Courcy Aye
 Commr. Kallay Aye
 Commr. Warchol Aye
The motion was approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Commr. Courcy and seconded by Commr. Boettcher to increase the Union labor contract by 2.75% for a one-year extension of the Bargaining Union contract.

Roll Call Vote: Commr. Boettcher Aye
 Commr. Chase Aye
 Commr. Courcy Aye
 Commr. Kallay Aye
 Commr. Warchol Aye
The motion was approved unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:47 pm by Commr. Courcy and seconded by Commr. Kallay.

Roll Call Vote: Commr. Boettcher Aye
 Commr. Chase Aye
 Commr. Courcy Aye
 Commr. Kallay Aye
 Commr. Warchol Aye
The motion was approved unanimously.