



WMGLD  
P.O. BOX 190 480 North Ave.  
Wakefield, MA 01880  
Tel. (781) 246-6363 Fax (781) 246-0419

Peter D. Dion, General Manager

Jennifer Kallay , Chair  
Elton Prifti, Secretary  
Thomas Boettcher  
Philip Courcy  
John J. Warchol

## WAKEFIELD MUNICIPAL GAS & LIGHT DEPARTMENT

### BOARD OF GAS & LIGHT COMMISSIONERS MEETING

**June 1, 2022**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Commrs., Chair Jennifer Kallay  
Elton Prifti, Secretary  
Thomas Boettcher  
Phil Courcy  
Jack Warchol

Peter Dion, General Manager, WMGLD

Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager  
Mark Cousins, Finance Manager  
Vinnie McMahon, Senior Engineer  
Sylvia Vaccaro, Office Manager

Members of the Public

**PLACE: ZOOM MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Commr. Kallay called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and informed the Board the meeting is being recorded.

**CHAIR REMARKS:**

Commr. Kallay remarked that the Green Community Energy Reduction Plan was approved by Town Council and the School Committee, so the Town Administrator and

School Superintendent can sign the plan when it comes before them. She advised that the next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 13, 2022. The August meeting will be skipped because of the NEPPA conference, so the Board will reconvene on Wednesday, September 7, 2022.

**COMMISSIONER REMARKS:**

Commr. Courcy commented that he attended the first MEAM General Manager’s Meeting on May 19, 2022. Commr. Prifti reminded the Board of the unfortunate underground incident that occurred last week resulting in the death of a National Grid employee in Medford, MA. He stressed the importance of following procedures and wearing the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Pete stated that WMGLD held a safety stand down meeting that morning with our crews, where Paul Redmond, Electric Superintendent, shared the details of the incident. He also noted that someone from National Grid was present and shared further details of the incident. Commr. Boettcher noted that he shared the Clean Bus Rebate Program webinar that Pete shared with him to the School Committee, ESC (Environmental Sustainability Committee), and it was passed on to the School Business Manager, Busing Coordinator, Superintendent, and Facilities Director, so someone from the school will be participating.

**TOWN COUNCIL LIASON COMMENTS:** Not present

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Not present

**SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Approval of the minutes included in the Board book from the May 11, 2022, meeting was before the board for approval.

**A motion** was made by Commr. Boettcher to approve the May 11, 2022, minutes as amended and was seconded by Commr. Courcy.

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>	Commr. Boettcher	Aye
	Commr. Courcy	Aye
	Commr. Kallay	Aye
	Commr. Prifti	Aye
	Commr. Warchol	Aye

The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Project Updates**

**Northeast Tech/ Wakefield HS Energy Park**

Pete explained that a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the School Design committee was directed to the Northeast Tech School Building Committee.

This is just a draft at this point. They did request clarification on some items, but none were a major concern. The MOU is moving forward with the design for all-electric heat. Gas will only be used in the labs and for cooking. Dave Polson commented that all parties involved in this project have been very supportive of the MOU and there has been no negative feedback. Commr. Kallay questioned if this goes directly before the School Building Committee for discussion.

Dave stated that the subcommittee meets, and the design team presents along with the superintendent to the building subcommittee. The subcommittee makes a recommendation whether to support this or not and also move it along to the building committee. Commr. Kallay inquired as to what updates the subcommittee is requesting. Vinnie McMahon stated that they requested the following:

- A detailed listing of each town department that approved of this project, such as Wiring inspector, Building Inspector, Conservation Commission, Town engineer, and Town manager
- They questioned how they would receive the rebates
- They wanted one word changed in the first section about having permanent and emergency power backup generation in the case we do not get the generator in time.

Vinnie explained that it did not matter if the word permanent was in there because there was no risk in giving them permanent power.

Commr. Kallay expressed her desire to have a detailed listing of exactly who is paying for each element incorporated into the MOU. Pete noted that WMGLD will cover the gas & electrical interconnection costs. Northeast Tech has budgeted \$350,000.00- \$400,000.00 in their budget. WMGLD will grant a \$300,000.00 credit thereby reducing the school's cost down to \$186,000.00. Pete stated we will provide a third transformer on site. Everything beyond that transformer is on them. Dave said that the transformer takes the place of their emergency generator. Commr. Kallay requested that we detail the costs and the benefits. She said that the MOU looks great and is happy to hear about the support and interest. Commr. Boettcher appreciates the teams hard work which is a testament to the effort that turned this project around. Pete explained that the design team and building committee were very good to work with and were open to explore all options. Commr. Boettcher noted that this project is beneficial to both organizations. Pete stated that ultimately it will be beneficial to the Town when they look at building the new high school.

## **COVID**

Pete noted that there were a small number of cases this past month.

## **Solar Project**

Pete stated that the transformer outside of 480 North Ave. will be changed out as to handle both the EV and solar load. He also noted that the electric van is in however, we are still waiting for both the electric pickup and bucket truck with electric lift system due in this fall. Commr. Boettcher noted that the EV charging dashboard is only displaying consumption between Monday and Friday and does not capture weekend consumption. Dave Polson will investigate and get back to him. Commr. Prifti inquired if there is a loss of power at 480 North Ave, how will the EV's be charged. Pete explained that there is a gas fired back up generator plus we will have solar soon. Commr. Kallay asked if we will be rebidding the Wakefield Ave. solar project. Pete stated that we will be circling back to it at some point in the Fall. Commr. Kallay stated that she did receive the update on the solar on the Broadway building which she shared with the Town and the Green Communities committee. The data shows that up to December 2021 the facility saved \$4500.00 total in energy costs due to the solar. Thirty percent was used by the building with seventy percent being sold back to the grid. Pete explained that the pump building should see more energy used by the building than what is sold back to the grid. Commr. Kallay stated as more Town buildings are added, she would like to compare those metrics to see what the differences are.

## **Winter Gas and Electric Supply Status**

### **Gas Moratorium**

Pete noted that if the Board wants to expand the current moratorium, the wording from the previous moratorium can be used with the addition of "new residential". Commr. Kallay asked the other Board members if this is what they were envisioning. Commr. Warchol commented that he thought we were carving out a situation that something would be considered new but on the same footprint. Pete said that he thought the Board did not want to address renovations and just wanted to address new construction.

Commr. Kallay asked if an existing structure with gas service is torn down, but the foundation is still intact, would it qualify for gas service. Pete noted that it would. She then asked if the same criteria exist, but the home used to heat with oil, could it get gas service. Pete explained they would either go on a wait list or if the homeowner/builder does the trenching themselves then we would provide gas service. Pete noted that as long as it is not going to be multi-family and the homeowner/builder is willing to dig the trench, then we would provide gas service. Commr. Boettcher inquired if we would suggest and or advise the builder/homeowner about heat pumps and require them to consult with ABODE. Pete explained that we do have this information on our website. Pete explained that with new single family residential construction, WMGLD is not brought into the building and design phase at the beginning like we are with multi family, apartments, or condos. Commr. Warchol inquired as to what point would the cut off be for new residential service as to the instance where a small house was torn down and two new houses have been built already, but the third house has not. Pete stated that we would have to see where things are in the building and permitting process. Commr. Warchol said that he is unsure what the benefit of expanding the moratorium to include new construction single family homes. Commr. Boettcher stated that these would not add to our load. Commr. Prifti stated that instead of expanding the moratorium to include new single-family construction, we could just state that we are not expanding our gas network any longer.

Pete noted that the moratorium that Commr. Prifti defined is a full moratorium that both Middleboro & Westfield utilities have implemented. Commr. Courcy stated that he is not in favor of a full moratorium. He noted that the last moratorium was implemented based on the recommendations of the General Manager because of all the new construction of apartments and condos and not having adequate supply. We are currently managing the gas supply and budget and he does not see a reason to incorporate new construction of single families. He stated that this would be putting a real burden on the construction of new homes and would be very costly. Commr. Warchol stated that he believes the Board should give the ratepayers a heads up and allow for their comments. Pete stated that residential services do not have a significant incremental impact since new homes are more efficient. Commr. Boettcher asked if there was a way to intercede with the building permit, so the builder/homeowner must engage with WMGLD sooner. Commr. Kallay stated that this is more of a town code issue and perhaps this should be convened with

a larger meeting on this issue. Dave stated that we can only influence, where the town can require. Commr. Kallay stated that she is satisfied with revisiting this on a broader scale with the Town. She agrees with Commr. Warchol as far as what the impact would be by expanding the moratorium. Commr. Boettcher inquired if there is a breakdown of the new gas services that are listed on the dashboard in the Board book. Mark Cousins stated that he will talk to Raven Fournier and is sure that this information will be able to be provided in the future. Pete noted that if the gas crews are working on a street and someone on that street has been on the waiting list for gas service, or if they have done the trenching themselves, then we will tie them in at that time. He also mentioned that the gas crews work ahead of the Town's paving schedule because any street that has been paved can not be cut/dug for seven years.

### **Collective Bargaining – Review and Approval of Agreements with both Associations**

Pete thanked Commr. Courcy for participating in this process. He noted that generic questions or objections would be answered in public session, but specific questions may be required to be answered in Executive session. The vote will be taken in public session. Commr. Kallay asked Pete to describe the implications changes to the entry level salaries . She wanted to clarify whether it is a reduction in salary or a lesser increase. Pete explained the entry level positions in the Gas department and Substations were paid a much higher rate than the Line department so those were adjusted down significantly in relation to experience. Pete stated that this applies to new hires, a lot of the people that were at this rate are no longer at this entry level. No one is taking a pay cut. We are adjusting this now before there any new retirements and new hires, so we do not perpetuate the problem. Commr. Courcy said that the Association did not make any unreasonable demands and all asks were well thought out and presented. He continued to say that all associations were fair to all in their groups, and they were good to work with overall. Pete stated that these sessions have evolved over the years and there is a much stronger relationship and a shared trust. He said that there were things we needed to see in this contract to make it work. Both Commrs Kallay and Warchol provided minor grammatical changes to the contracts. Commr. Boettcher thanked Commr. Courcy for sitting in these negotiations for the Board. Commr. Kallay stated that the contracts look good and thanked Commr. Courcy for the hard work.

**A motion:** To approve agreements as documented in the Board book with minor grammatical revisions as noted was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Commr. Boettcher	Aye
Commr. Courcy	Aye
Commr. Kallay	Aye
Commr. Prifti	Aye
Commr. Warchol	Aye

The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

## **New Business**

None

## **Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Chair**

Pete mentioned to the Board that his raise was delayed until after the Associations' contracts were settled. He said that his 3-year contract with two optional years is now in the 1<sup>st</sup> option extension year. Pete mentioned that Commr. Kallay and Commr Courcy were the General Manager's committee. Commr. Kallay stated that she will take this offline and talk to Commr. Courcy. Commr. Boettcher thanked Pete for taking care of the Farmer's Market request. Commr. Boettcher also asked if a WMGLD truck will be in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. Pete said that we have not participated in the past. If we assign the on-call person to do this and he gets a call it while in the parade it would present an issue. Typically, we have a truck stationed outside of the parade route in case of we receive an emergency call.

## **Executive Session- Collective Bargaining if necessary Adjournment**

Not necessary

**A motion** to adjourn was made at 7:29 pm by Commr. Courcy and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>	Commr. Boettcher	Aye
	Commr. Courcy	Aye
	Commr. Kallay	Aye
	Commr. Prifti	Aye
	Commr. Warchol	Aye

The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.