



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

**July 13, 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

**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:** None

**COMMISSIONER REMARKS:**

Commr. Warchol stated that he met with Pete, Dave, and representatives from Voltrek regarding how multi-families will be able to accommodate EV charging in the future. He noted that multi-unit properties are faced with more challenges than single family residences. There are questions such as who would pay for the preliminary work that needs to be completed, how the chargers would be metered, and if there is grant money available for these types of projects. Commr. Warchol explained that he would like WMGLD to assist and guide these ratepayers on the best practices for EV installation. He also mentioned that it would be beneficial if WMGLD would provide an informational session for those who manage multi-unit properties. He said that it may be best if this session was held in October 2022, so that the Board may have discussions around this issue in the September 2022 Board meeting. Commr. Kallay remarked that this item will be added to the September 2022 agenda. Pete noted that WMGLD has contracted Voltrek in an advisory capacity, similar to the role ABODE is serving with heat pumps and Blue Sel is for solar projects. Commr. Boettcher thanked WMGLD for providing additional power to the Farmer's Market enabling them to add more vendors. He mentioned that a ratepayer asked him if it was possible for his WMGLD bill to include usage from across his neighborhood. Pete stated that this may be something that could be added to our website. Mark Cousins noted that he will have the IT Manager look into this.

**TOWN COUNCIL LIASON COMMENTS:** Not present

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Not present

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Approval of the minutes included in the Board book from the June 1, 2022, meeting was before the board for approval.

**A motion** was made by Commr. Warchol to approve the June 1, 2022, minutes as presented 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.

**OLD BUSINESS:**  
**Project Updates**

**A motion** was made by Commr. Courcy to move out of order the General Manager's contract discussion and was seconded by Commr. Warchol.

**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.

### **General Manager's Contract**

Pete stated that he met with Commr. Kallay and Commr. Courcy to discuss his 2022 raise and an extension of his contract. Based on the discussion of the General Manager's position relative to the market and taking in consideration the two WMGLD associations agreements a 5.25% raise retroactive to January 1, 2022, was discussed. He mentioned that it was decided to put off his raise and ultimately Mark Cousins' and Dave Polson's raises because they were in contract negotiations with the Employees and Supervisor's Associations. Commr. Kallay noted that the 5.25% raise is in line with the other raises for 2022.

**A motion** to approve a 5.25% raise for the General Manager retroactive to January 1, 2022 was made by Commr. Courcy and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

**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.

Discussion continued on a proposed extension to the General Manager's contract.

Pete highlighted the proposed changes to the contract.

- Article 3, it was proposed that the term change from 3 years to 5 years beginning January 1, 2023, running until the end of 2027.
- Also in Article 3, would be moving the date to review and agree on Goals and Objectives from January to March 15<sup>th</sup>. This would allow for all numbers from the prior year to be finalized and reported to the Board for discussion and resolution over the January, February, and March Board meetings.

- Article 4 would include a new base beginning on January 1, 2023. The new salary would be a 2.75% raise over the 2022 salary that was just approved. This is consistent with the Supervisor’s Association contract.
- Article 4 is the longevity payment; it has had two provisions in the past. We are currently under the second provision which is \$10,000. It states you must complete the entire year to achieve this. It is recommended to make \$10,000 the permanent number.
- Article 5 proposes to increase the vacation from four weeks to five weeks.
- Section 5.2 proposes the sick time back be reduced to 25% or one - quarter to be in line with the changes in the Employees and Supervisor’s Association agreements.

Pete said there was an appendix to the contract that had generic goals and objectives, it was removed because we now have more defined goals & objectives. Commr. Warchol stated that back in the 2014-2016 contract there was a notice provision for termination in section 6.2 that the Board would give the General Manager 180 days’ notice and the General Manager would give the Board 120 days’ notice. He thought that this had been changed so that both parties would be required to give 180 days’ notice. He asked if this was a change from the last contract because he thought it was increased in the 2014-2016 contract. Pete stated that he is not opposed to changing the number to 180 days. It was agreed that 120 days’ notice was sufficient.

**A motion** was made by Commr. Courcy to approve the General Manager’s 2023-2027 contract as amended and was seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

**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.

**Proposed Policy for Non-represented Exempt Employees**

This proposed policy would specifically apply to both Mark Cousins and Dave Polson, at this time, who are not governed under any contract. It guarantees them the minimum benefits that are provided to the Supervisory Association, in terms of things such as vacation and sick time, especially with the buyback sick time that was instituted this year.. Commr. Boettcher stated that he is in full support of this. Commr. Warchol inquired if this would be a stand-alone policy. Pete noted that it would be incorporated in the handbook as a company policy.

**A motion** was made Commr. Warchol to approve the exempt employee benefit policy that would be added to the employee handbook 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.

Commr. Kallay commented that Pete is a good General Manager and would like to give him an opportunity to comment.

Pete stated that he appreciates the support of the Board for the five-year contract. He stated that he believes we have the resources and the ability to do great things and enjoys coming to work every day. He noted that WMGLD is among the leaders of the municipals in almost every category.

Commr. Boettcher thanked Pete for the work that he and the staff does for the utility and the greater community. Commr. Warchol also thanked Pete for all his work and is very glad to enter this agreement for another five years. Commr. Prifti stated that he looks forward to working with Pete in the future.

### **Northeast Tech/ Wakefield HS Energy Park**

Pete explained that this will be located on Hemlock Rd. between the new Northeast Tech and the new high school. Dave Polson noted that WMGLD's proposal was well received by the Northeast Metro Tech team, and the project is moving forward. He also mentioned that he has had preliminary discussions with the high school about their new building project. Pete said that Atty. Mike McCarthy is working on an action plan for obtaining

(potentially a one acre) easement at this location, which will require a vote at town meeting. WMGLD will begin a public education and information program before the town Meeting vote.

Vinnie McMahon explained that the Energy Park promotes electrification and works towards a net-zero 2050. The Northeast Metro Tech (NEMT) and Wakefield High School electric bills will be reduced by WMGLD owned solar arrays. It will allow the Town to apply for potential resiliency grants for emergency centers. It also adds peak shaving capabilities for WMGLD and eliminates the need for diesel generators at both schools. Finally, it provides energy management and environmental education opportunities for NEMT and Wakefield High School students. Vinnie also provided a detailed description of the Energy Park. It will be a microgrid interconnected to WMGLD's electric system, the new NEMT, and the future Wakefield High School. Both schools will be all- electric and will have solar installed on their roofs. NEMT will use natural gas for cooking and lab use. The Energy Park components will consist of two 250kW solar arrays, 5MW (15MWh) battery storage unit, and a 3MW gas generator.

The battery (with the help from generator and solar arrays) will serve as the emergency power source for both schools and can serve as primary power source during extended outages. He noted the key stakeholders as NEMT Project Team, Town Departments and Committees, Wakefield Memorial High School Design Team, State Legislators and Regulators, Wakefield residents, and NEMT participating communities. Vinnie mentioned that there will be communications and education plans in place to educate the public on decarbonization and the benefits to the community. WMGLD will have meetings with State legislators and regulators as well as providing press releases, info sessions, website updates, and hand out flyers for the general public. Wakefield boards and committees will be regularly updated on the project. Commr. Kallay inquired about the timing of these educational plans and communications. Vinnie responded that the project is still in the early design phase. Commr. Boettcher stated that it is important to bring in the State legislators sooner versus later, so they can be advocates for WMGLD and potentially set aside state money. Pete said that he has had preliminary discussions with Kate, Donald, and Jason and we will notify them once we have the easement. Pete commented that one issue we are having on the regulatory side is that nothing will probably happen as far as support until the administration changes in January 2023.

Vinnie noted that there are immediate areas of concern such as the obtaining an easement at the November 2022 Town Meeting which will allow WMGLD to build on town owned land. He also noted that WMGLD will

have to be cognizant of land conservation and vegetation management issues and be good stewards of the land. The state of Massachusetts will have to grant location for Hemlock Rd. (a state-owned road). Pete stated that one issue that is part of the discussion of the new Wakefield High School is changing the configuration and direction of the road, which may require our main feed off Farm Street to be redirected.

Lastly, Vinnie noted that lead times for the equipment are out from one year to one and a half years, so these will be monitored closely. Commr. Prifti inquired as to who would own the equipment. Pete said that WMGLD would own the solar and the equipment in the yard, however there is the possibility for lease to own, but ultimately, we would own and maintain all of it. Commr. Prifti also asked if the battery would be utilized to shave the peak and if any system upgrades would be required. Pete replied that it would shave the peak and the solar could flow back into the system. Vinnie noted that no system upgrades would be needed because of the proximity to Beebe substation, and it would have a dedicated circuit from Beebe. He said they will rearrange the circuits to handle the load more evenly. Pete also stated that there is a dedicated circuit going down Montrose from the Wallace substation that will be expanded over to the feed on the other side to handle the load. There will be two distribution circuit feeds from two separate substations fed by different transmission lines. There are four different transmission lines in total. Pete noted that as far as reliability this will be the most premium location not only in Wakefield, but in New England. Commr. Kallay inquired if there is a load management program for commercial buildings. Pete responded that we do not have a program at this time. Vinnie reviewed the timeframe for this project with the Energy Park. Site work will begin in 2023 and the battery system and other equipment will be ordered. The SCADA and microgrid system will be set up in 2024. Testing and commissioning will occur in the Spring of 2025 with NEMT opening in the fall of 2025. The solar work will begin in 2026 after the school is operational. Dave Polson noted that MMWEC is going out to bid for municipals that are interested in battery storage and installation. They offered the following two options: Fixed Capacity or Shared Savings. With Fixed capacity, WMGLD would own the asset and be responsible for the maintenance. Dave mentioned that WMGLD is interested in the Shared Capacity option because we would not own the asset but would share the savings with the school. This would be a lower cost for WMGLD and the school would be responsible for maintaining the asset. The next steps would be a site meeting on July 26, 2022, with a final offer mid August 2022 and execution of the contract in September 2022. Pete noted that the preliminary numbers on the Shared Capacity look beneficial to WMGLD. MMWEC has narrowed the field down to three bidders. Commr. Boettcher inquired if at the end of the long contracts would there be an option for a

dollar buy out. Pete noted there would be as well as other options that we will be able to discuss as we move forward. Pete explained that this is a great opportunity for the community. Commr. Kallay inquired if this project would qualify for Clean Peak, Connected Solutions, and SMART for solar. Pete noted that these revenue streams are for the investor-owned utilities. She mentioned that WMGLD is eligible to submit for Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grants (MVP) and wondered if we had applied for these. Pete noted that we have not yet. Commr. Boettcher asked if the Woodville school would also be able to participate in the Energy Park. Pete said that the school currently has battery lighting and no generator. He said we will have to wait to see exactly where the new high school is going to be built to have a better idea of how we would be able to incorporate the Woodville into the project.

### **Winter Gas and Electric Supply Forecast**

Pete explained that Sprague's forecasted numbers for the coming winter are still very high. He explained we will not have the allocation for capacity for the work done last winter until this August. We will have a better idea on the numbers in October when Sprague presents before the Board. Commr. Prifti inquired as to what the numbers look like. Pete noted that we were at \$9 a DEC and now we are almost at \$20 per DEC. He stated we are hedged to the extent we can be. We are getting additional capacity allocated; it is because the commodity is very expensive. Commr. Boettcher asked if this would trigger us having to use the LNG take again. Pete said it is less about supply and more about the cost of the commodity. Commr. Prifti inquired if we should begin to communicate these cost increases to our customers now, before the winter months. Pete stated that we can start informing our customers in the September/ October timeframe. Commr. Boettcher mentioned that we should inform our Budget customers of the potential increases and let non-budget customers aware of our Budget program. Commr. Kallay stated that we should provide an earlier notice to our customers utilizing Facebook, press releases and our website, as well as publicizing our financing program for energy efficiency upgrades.

### **New Business**

#### **2022 Energy Code Straw Proposal- Commissioner Boettcher**

Commr. Boettcher presented information on the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) proposed changes to the Stretch Energy Code. He mentioned that the low hanging fruit is in transportation and buildings,

where we have made some progress. He noted that new square footage is increasing by one percent each year. Twenty seven percent of all square footage will be built after 2023, so there is a lot of efficiencies that can be driven by this code. He mentioned that the DOER just opened up this straw proposal for comments until August 12, 2022. He clarified that Wakefield adopted the Green Communities; therefore, we have the Stretch Code. He explained that in 2021, when Massachusetts passed the Climate Act, the DOER was tasked with creating a path for municipalities to achieve these goals. The updated Stretch Code provides this path. DOER is making changes to the Base and Stretch codes. These will automatically be incorporated by Wakefield because we already have adopted the Base and Stretch code. The new specialized Opt-In code will have to be adopted at Town Meeting as was the Stretch Code. This is where a lot of the efficiencies and path for Municipals to meet the goals of the 2021 Climate Act are included. New buildings are rated on the HERS (Home Energy Rating System) index. The current Stretch Code requires a HERS rating of 55.

The specialized Stretch Code (Net Zero)- Residential provides three paths for compliance:

HERS 45 – All electric home that meets all stretch code efficiency requirements.

HERS 42 – Gas/propane or other fossil fuel must meet all stretch code efficiency requirements, install solar on the roof where feasible, and be electrification ready (pre-wiring for stoves, dryer, hot water, heating)

Passive House – Electric heat or electrification ready

Commr. Boettcher stated that the Commercial Stretch Code follows the Residential Stretch Code with some additional items around curtain walls and improving the building envelope and heat recovery.

Commr. Kallay commented that the code essentially makes it economically more attractive for developers to pursue the electrification route. Pete asked if this would apply to public buildings and schools. Commr. Boettcher stated that it would and noted that the Wakefield High School design team is designing to the base code and would assume NEMT is as well. Commr. Kallay queried if it would apply to any size public building. Commr. Boettcher replied that there are different classifications based on size and designation of the building as well as thresholds that have to be met within the code. He indicated that in some cases, such as large offices, it will cost about 4% less to build to code with a 31% reduction in greenhouse gases. They are adding in the new Appendix G which has additional commercial requirements around air tightness, ventilation, and Thermal Energy Demand

Intensity (TEDI). They are also adding requirements for EV ready and EV available parking spaces. The straw proposal should be finalized and ratified by December of this year, so potentially it could be voted on at Town meeting next Spring. Pete asked if we would be required to move to the Opt-in Code as part of Green Communities. Commr. Boettcher replied that, if you are a Stretch Code Community you are automatically moved into the new stretch code once ratified and the town would need to vote on the specialized opt-in code at a future Town Meeting. Commr. Kallay mentioned that perhaps WMGLD requirements may not have to be as robust because the Stretch Code maybe taking care of this. Pete mentioned that we have been seeing a lag on the school building requirements, therefore, taking action on this level has a far greater impact than any small thing we could do at an incentive and rebate level.

### **Discussion Topics for Upcoming Board Meetings**

Commr. Kallay opened the floor to topics for the Board Meeting agendas for the remainder of the year. Commr. Prifti inquired if there were any items from the Strategic Planning session that need to be reviewed. He suggested reviewing inventory management and supply chain issues. Pete explained that Sara Ericksen will be attending the September/ October 2022 meeting and can discuss these concerns. Commr. Prifti inquired if WMGLD should be meeting with any other Town departments that may be converting to electrification to assist them in this process as well as providing inventory information to WMGLD. Commr Kallay said the only building scheduled for electrification is the Woodville School.

Commr. Boettcher inquired about the timeframe for the online billing system, Mark said it is scheduled for the Fall. Commr. Boettcher asked for an update on the pilot program for pole top solar. Pete said that there has not been any further progress on this project. Commr. Boettcher inquired if we wanted to add a solar assist heat pump water heater (European rated) to our existing heat pump water heater rebate. He also mentioned including induction stoves with the possibility of eliminating some current offerings. Pete pointed out that we will review our current Energy Efficiency Program and present to the Board during the November 2022 meeting and will review the suggested additions. Jeff Morris IT Manager will present in September/October meeting.

Commr. Kallay requested that there is a conversation about the grant pipeline replacement in the Environmental Justice (EJ) area if WMGLD is

awarded the funding then what would happen to those funds that were originally allocated to that project. She inquired if those original funds may be used to help folks of lower income in other ways. Pete explained that the application is due by July 22, 2022, and Raven thinks we will hear in October.

The Board agreed that the January 2023 Board meeting would be the most opportune time to hold the Strategic Planning session. The January meeting has been rescheduled to January 23, 2023. Commr. Prifti questioned if it was time to revisit in person meetings or continue with remote meetings. Pete said the provision that allowed this change ends on July 15, 2022. We will have to see what the extension of provision looks like. Pete noted that COVID is still around and that two people are absent this week from WMGLD. The remote meetings have been a good format for the public. Commr. Boettcher stated that he would like to see the remote format still available to the public.

Commr. Kallay inquired if the Board was interested in going into Executive session for the purpose of reviewing the NEMT financials. Pete explained that these are just preliminary numbers and will update the board with any changes.

Commr. Kallay asked how many hours the generator would have to run to receive this level of revenue. Pete stated this was based on 100 hours. Commr. Boettcher then asked if part of the 100-hour calculation is for emergency preparedness versus peak shaving. Pete explained that the hours are for all.

Commr. Kallay stated that she has several questions and inquired if it is possible to contemplate these questions until September's Board meeting. Pete advised the Board that when he has more information, he will provide an updated version of the financials ahead of the September Board meeting.

Commr. Boettcher suggested moving the Executive session to the beginning of the September Board meeting, to allow more time for review and comments. Commr. Kallay requested that Pete walk the Board thru each line item.

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

None

**Executive Session- NEMT Financials and General Manager's Contract  
if necessary**

Not necessary

**A motion** to adjourn was made at 8:50 pm by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.