



WMGLD
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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

October 3, 2022

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

Peter Dion, General Manager, WMGLD

Mike McLane, Town Council Liaison

Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager
Mark Cousins, Finance Manager
Joe Collins, Business Analyst- Energy Services
Sara Eriksen, Facilities & Procurement Manager
Sylvia Vaccaro, Office Manager

PLACE: 480 North Ave, Wakefield and ZOOM MEETING

CALL TO ORDER:

Commr. Kallay called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. and informed the Board the meeting is being recorded.

CHAIR REMARKS:

Commr. Kallay commented that she will read an email she received from a WMGLD customer during the public comment section.

COMMISSIONER REMARKS:

No comments

TOWN COUNCIL LIASON COMMENTS:

Mike stated that Pete made a succinct presentation on the Energy Park and the ARPA request. He stated that all seven Town Council members will individually go back and talk to the Town Administrator about their choices for the ARPA request. He is hoping that decisions will be made in the next two to four weeks. He believes the low-income energy assistance program has a favorable chance of being approved. He mentioned that personally he would like to see the approval of the solar project at the Housing Authority building located at 101 Broadway. He commented that all requests will be reviewed, and he will keep the Board informed of any updates.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Commr. Kallay read the following email from WMGLD customer, Pete Davis:

Dear WMGLD Board of Commissioners,

Thanks for all of your hard work and to everyone you work with at WMGLD. Every day I feel lucky that we have the best utility in the Commonwealth, especially when something goes wrong, and our power is only out for minutes or when I look at my bill and compare to the sticker shock others experience with the big utility companies.

I am writing with some suggestions for improvements to our energy efficiency programs. I realize we have a much smaller budget to work with from our ratepayers and based on our surcharges that limits what we have budget to do. One area where I would have liked to see some improvements is on the annual (\$2500) cap, this hit me when I moved in because I added split ductless heat pumps and then had almost no money left to cover my air sealing project that I would have been better off punting another year since it would have let me get back over \$1,000 more in incentives.

At this point any change to the program wouldn't really help me personally in any significant way, but I think it would be great to do anything you can to encourage more adoption of electric heat pumps and insulation projects by removing additional barriers if your program budget is sufficient to support this.

Clearly we're not even close to the big utilities on the incentives for installing heat pumps by thousands of dollars, but even Reading (RMLD) is now offering \$1,000/ton for

heat pumps with a \$6,000 cap vs. our \$500/ton (\$2,000 cap) on a new system
<https://www.rmld.com/efficiency-electrification-programs/air-source-heat-pump>.

My energy audit revealed I should add additional insulation to my attic but given the ever-increasing cost of insulation and the \$1500 cap on insulation projects, it will never pay for itself in savings on my bill, so without a significant increase in incentives for insulation, it sadly doesn't make financial sense for me to do that project.

Best Regards,
Pete

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of the minutes included in the Board book from the September 7, 2022, meeting was before the Board for approval.

A motion was made by Commr. Courcy to approve the September 7, 2022, minutes as amended and including edits provided by Commr. Warchol seconded by Commr. Warchol.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Project Updates

i. Northeast Tech/Wakefield HS Energy Park

Pete mentioned that on September 28, 2022, he presented the Energy Park Project to Town Council and received favorable feedback. He noted that there have been new developments requiring additional steps in the process but none that seem insurmountable. The easement for the land WMGLD is seeking for the Energy Park was received by the Town with a covenant that it was to be used as a park, therefore a Home Rule petition will need to be filed with the legislature so the Town can reappropriate the use of the land for a different purpose. A new location for a park will need to be identified. Steve Maio has already identified some potential new locations. Pete also noted that the Planning Board as well as the Parks & Recreation Committee must sign off on this project. He said that 128 trees will need to be removed, but WMGLD will replace the 128 trees with others around Town. Commr. Kallay stated that an explanation of how the Energy Park will work would be beneficial to share with the

public. Pete said that he and Dave will work on an educational video for the public.

ii 4KV Project – Burns Substation

Pete said that Burns Substation was deenergized the day of the last Board meeting and crews have been in the process of dismantling the old kv structure and cleaning up the area. The remaining 4kv residential circuits out of Wakefield Ave. will be retired through the rest of this year and the one step down area on Butler Ave. coming from New Salem St. towards Water St. will be retired next year. Pete noted that over the years we have brought in 13.8kv from multiple sides of town, so we have the ability to bring it into Wakefield square.

He cited that three people from the line department have been in Florida this past week assisting with mutual aid to restore power after hurricane Ian.

Commr. Kallay inquired about the status of the solar project at 480 North Ave. Pete explained that we are still working on the details of the contract.

2. Electric Vehicle Proposed Rate and Marketing Materials

Commr. Warchol asked for clarification of the EV analysis spreadsheet. Pete explained that the numbers were correct, however the labels will be better defined going forward. Pete stated that in order to benefit from the proposed Time of Use rate (TOU), you cannot charge on peak more than 12 percent of the time. He said that this new rate would favor new construction and customers that need to upgrade their electric service over a single residence that already has a sufficient service. Therefore, the TOU rate may not be for everyone with an electric vehicle. He continued to say that the goal for the utility is to have customers charge off-peak. Commr. Boettcher noted that we will need to provide comprehensive marketing materials to our customers, so they fully understand the TOU rate. He noted this will provide another option for our customers in addition to the Connected Homes program. Joe Collins said that he is finalizing an FAQ sheet about the new TOU rate. A discussion ensued regarding the benefit to the customer, as well as how WMGLD would consider the avoided costs. Commr. Warchol requested a sensitivity analysis related to the rate selection.

3. Winter Supply Updates

Pete stated that MMWEC will attend next month's Board meeting to discuss this winter's forecast. As of today, our gas rates are 12.6 percent higher, and our electric rates are 20.5 percent higher than this time last year. National Grid's gas rates are 64 percent higher, and their electric rates are 22 percent higher than last year. Pete stated that we do not want to ask for a reallocation of gas capacity from National Grid until we have one full year gas use from the NGrid system and we are only at ten months.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Facilities and Procurement Overview- Sara Ericksen

Sara stated that WMGLD's 480 North Ave. location has six Level II chargers, two single, two dual pedestal, and one Level III. She also noted that the Wakefield Ave substation has one Level II charger. WMGLD 's electric fleet is made up of a 2022 Ford Transit van, a Nissan Leaf, and a Hyundai hybrid SUV.

She reviewed the budgeted fleet acquisitions for the next three years and noted that due to supply chain issues there are delays in receiving these vehicles. She revealed that supply chain issues have stretched out lead times for stock as far as 2-3 years. She and her staff are constantly monitoring these lead times while planning for future needs. Sara commented that WMGLD has entered into a one-year agreement with Stuart Irby to help reduce the impact of lead times for gas stock. They will be housing an annual average of our stock and we will communicate with them on any planned projects promptly. She said that on the electric side it has been more challenging, but that they have been proactive since the beginning of the pandemic and are in a good place. Sara noted that WMGLD just entered into an agreement with WESCO that is similar to the Stuart Irby agreement. She commented that they have implemented helpful measures by creating an overstock room, shared stock list drives, and continuous communications between departments and frequent meetings. She said that transformer lead times are between one and two and half years and they are purchasing new transformers based on anticipated needs forecasted out until 2024-2025 for system improvement projects. She also mentioned that they have also been purchasing refurbished transformers, which are nearly half the price and are the only option if you wish to receive a transformer in a

reasonable amount of time. These have the same warranty as new transformers with a life expectancy of twenty plus years.

Any other matter not anticipated by the Chair

None

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:12 pm by Commr. Courcy and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously.