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

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

**April 5, 2023**

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

Peter Dion, General Manager, WMGLD  
Mark Cousins, Finance Manager  
Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager  
Joe Collins, Business Analyst- Energy Services  
Sylvia Vaccaro, Minute Secretary

Jon Wortmann, thoughtLeaders, LLC

Members of the Public

Kevin Cain, 4 Gumwood Lane  
Sasha Simone, Melrose resident  
Karen Johnson, Malden resident

**PLACE: 480 North Ave., Wakefield, MA**  
**& ZOOM MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Commr. Kallay called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and advised the meeting was being recorded.

**CHAIR REMARKS:**

None

**COMMISSIONER REMARKS:**

Commr. Boettcher stated that in looking at other municipals websites, he discovered that Peabody conducts an energy awareness forum on a quarterly basis. He also said that there is a form on their website which allows their customers to submit ideas, suggestions, and topics for discussion and thought this may be something to take into consideration. Pete advised that he had spoken to Peabody’s General Manager, who said that there were twelve people at the first forum, and no one attended the second one, so he is now considering just having a yearly forum. Pete noted that we do have a form on our website for our customers to submit any questions and they can always send an email to any of our email addresses. He also stated that the Town does forward emails that pertain to WMGLD.

**TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:**

Not present.

**Public Comments**

Kevin Cain expressed his wish to speak about the streetlights on Gumwood Lane.

**A motion** was made by Commr. Warchol to address Streetlights out of order and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

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

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

**Streetlights**

Pete stated that there was a customer concern about the lack of light on Gumwood Lane. He explained that this is a secondary road with four lantern style fixtures. Pete explained that WMGLD did investigate this concern, and temporarily added a streetlight in front of 4 Gumwood. The residents were not in favor of this new light, so it was removed. Dave Polson noted that the fixtures were high-pressure sodium lamps were starting to fail, so all four were re-lamped with LEDs. The LEDs give off a brighter whiter light even though the wattage is the same as the high-pressure sodium lights. He

continued to say that he went out to the site and took pictures both before and after the re-lamping and stated that there was a noticeable improvement. Commr. Warchol said that the person that filed the complaint reached out to him and Commr Kallay and they are working on their responses. He noted that it should be up to the Town to address this issue with the customer. Pete said we should tell the customer that we updated the lighting to the best of our ability and that the matter is closed.

Kevin Cain said that he has lived at 4 Gumwood Lane for 24 years and there has never been a light on the pole in front of his house. He remarked that the person that made the complaint does not even live on the street and does not think that it is right that if they continue to complain and won't take no for an answer, that they can dictate that a light be installed in front of his house. He stated that he and his wife walk around neighborhoods in Wakefield, so does that mean he can demand lights be installed in other areas in Wakefield too. He explained that there is no documentation of any safety issues or concerns that have occurred because of lighting issues on this street. He said that when the temporary light was installed in front of his house, it lit up like a movie set. He also added that he is pleased with the LED upgrade of the existing lights and he feels it is sufficient. He stated that the communication with Dave Polson about this issue has been tremendous.

Both Commrs. Kallay and Warchol reiterated that the placement of streetlights is up to the Town as they pay for them. Commr. Kallay explained that she was merely inquiring if there were any requirements or rules about streetlights. Pete stated that there are no formal requirements, there are guidelines. Commr. Warchol said that Steve Maio is saying it is up to WMGLD to decide where lights go. Commr. Courcy said the Town bought the lights and is responsible but certainly the Town looks to WMGLD for recommendations, but ultimately the Town is the final decision maker. Commr. Boettcher commented that he sees WMGLD as the contractors that maintain the streetlights, but at the end of the day it is the Town that pays for the lights, so the placement of the lights is up to the Town. He noted that the Town does not have a policy surrounding streetlights. If there was a policy, then when a request is made it would then be analyzed against the policy and a decision made. Dave explained that the request came from Steve Maio to add a streetlight, so we added the light. The customer at 4 Gumwood did not want the light and seeing where there were no safety concerns the light was removed. Steve Maio was informed of all this and was satisfied. Steve then informed the customer that filed the complaint that a light would not be installed. It was after this that the customer contacted two WMGLD commissioners with her complaint. If the customer requesting the light wants to pursue this, then the next step might be for them to go to Town Council. Commr. Boettcher commented that WMGLD has done our due diligence and if and Steve Maio is satisfied with not putting the light there and absent any other information/details, he considers the matter closed. Commr. Kallay stated that she is satisfied that this discussion brought clarification and that

the Town is responsible for the placement of streetlights and considers this issue closed.

**A motion** was made by Commr. Boettcher to move out of order item D3, 2023 Strategic Planning and seconded by Commr Warchol.

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

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

### **Strategic Planning**

Pete explained that Jon Wortmann has been conducting a series of classes around goals, values, and communications with WMGLD staff. He said he thought Jon would be valuable to the Board in determining what the goals of the strategic planning session would be and also helpful in facilitating such an effort. Jon stated that the goal is to help you think about what you would like to know about strategic planning, the process, and the options. He stated that he has helped the Salem Fire Department and the Shrewsbury DPW with training, coaching, and facilitating sessions. A discussion ensued as to what the Board would like to achieve during these strategic sessions and the process to get there.

Jon said that the Board could start the process with problem statements or need assessments. These agreed upon problems would become the core issues that would become the focus of their attention. They would then decide on how to resolve the core issues. A draft statement would be completed and presented to a focus group of staff members led by the management team. The Board would then come back to review and finalize the rest of the plan and decide if a third session is warranted. Jon mentioned that he will give the Commissioners homework before the first session to expedite the process. Jon will get back to Pete with a proposal on what was discussed tonight.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Approval of the March 8, 2023, minutes was before the Board for approval.

**A motion** to approve March 8, 2023, as presented in the Board book was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Warchol.

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

Commr. Warchol  
Commr. Kallay

Aye  
Aye

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **Project Updates**

#### **Energy Park**

Pete said that Dave is working with Procurement Manager Sara Eriksen on the specifications for the major equipment bid. A clause will be built into the specifications ensuring that no penalties are assessed in the unlikely event that the project does not move forward. He noted that there are long lead times for the equipment, so hopefully this should not be an issue. He said that the Fail-Safe Petition was filed with MEPA and a statement was released on March 3, 2023. An appeal was filed with a final decision issued on March 22, 2023. At this point in time, WMGLD is moving forward with the procurement of major equipment with significant lead times. Pete said the high school roof solar design came in at a little over 500 kw, so we may look at a lease model for this, however this is still subject to change because the design has not been finalized.

Sasha Simone, a Melrose resident, wanted to know if the public was allowed to ask questions if they have any. Commr. Kallay noted that it is normally done during the public comment section, but she would allow it.

Karen Johnson, a Malden resident, inquired if the alternative analysis was available to the public. Pete explained that the DOER asked WMGLD to wait to submit the analysis because they are working on a new portal, so it can be submitted electronically. There is no update as to when this tool will be available. Once it is posted with DOER it will also be available on our website.

### **Winter Supply Update**

Pete said that the fuel charge held constant this month.

### **MMWEC Project 2023A**

Pete explained that the vote on this would be to authorize the General Manager to execute an agreement with MMWEC to execute a PPA to move forward. All the data is included in the Board book. Commr. Boettcher and Commr. Kallay noted that the information presented states Marblehead and not Wakefield. Pete advised he will get clarification on this and get back to the Board with the Wakefield's numbers. He believes it was an oversight, but

the numbers are similar. He stated that this is a MMWEC project with the Seabrook Plant that will take effect in 2030. WMGLD will receive both supply and energy emission free certificates to meet our portfolio requirements. He noted that NEXTERA Energy owns Seabrook and NEXTERA Marketing is the subsidiary marketing the product. He clarified that this is a small layer of our portfolio, and we will need additional layers to help us reach our goals. This project will represent up to 10 percent of our portfolio. Commr. Warchol and Commr Boettcher both stated that this is a great opportunity for WMGLD. Pete said that he will provide the updated numbers to the Board.

**A motion** to vote on the certificate of vote for special Project 2023A known as attachment 1, page 85, in the April 5, 2023, Board book was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Warchol.

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

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

**A motion** to take item E2, Municipal Light Commissioners of Massachusetts, out of order was made by Commr. Warchol and seconded by Commr Boettcher.

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

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

## **New Business**

### **Municipal Light Commissioners of Massachusetts**

Commr. Kallay stated she has been giving regular updates to the Board on any discussions with other Commissioners at the State level as well as discussions at MEAM. There is an upcoming presentation and discussion on May 11, 2023 that is open to all commissioners. The meeting will include a discussion of rate design by RAP (Regulatory Assistance Project) and a generic discussion if this body should be formalized by having a Commissioners Association. She stated that if any Commissioners were interested in attending, they can send an email to: [light.commissioners@gmail.com](mailto:light.commissioners@gmail.com) to be included in these ZOOM meetings. Commr. Courcy inquired if this group is being formed to support General Managers or to support the goals and agenda of MCAN (Massachusetts Climate Action Network). He mentioned that

members have filed legislation against MLPs. He stated that he believes this effort is counter to most of the MLPs positions and is not in support of it. He also stated that if you do meet and there is a quorum then some commissioners cannot speak. Pete noted that this does raise questions and concerns about the Open Meeting Law, having a presentation is one thing, but if there are any discussions about our goals it would be an issue. Commr. Kallay said that this has not been an issue to date. She noted that if there is a quorum then there has to be a conversation on how to manage it. Commr. Warchol questioned how that would be managed. Commr. Courcy stated that there are members that are consultants getting paid from people pushing renewables and thinks that this group has an agenda. Commr. Kallay stated that everyone can decide for themselves if they are interested in signing up for these ZOOM meetings.

### **Goals – 2023**

Pete noted that he met with Commr. Kallay and Commr. Courcy to review the 2022 goals and set the goals for 2023. Updates to the 2023 goals are noted as follows:

Page 2: Class 2 leaks were changed to 40 and the safety number was reduced from .8 to .7.

Page 3: There were housekeeping some items. We also clarified that Voltrek is now under contract to provide technical support and guidance for transportation electrification.

Page 5: 2c inserted MMWEC battery incentive program  
3c inserted the Energy Park

Pete noted that he met with staff about the updated 2023 goals, and they are on board.

**A motion** to approve the 2023 goals as presented in the April 5, 2023, Board book was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Warchol.

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

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

Mark Cousins noted that the final financials are included in the Board book with the updated pension numbers.

### **Objectives 2022 Results**

Pete provided a review of the 2022 results with the Board as follows:

Page 1: There was one single loss time accident and a single minor motor vehicle accident.

Training employees work started back in October and November of last year, continuing into this year.

Every employee has COVID test kits available to them so they can test at home.

Page 2: Pete stated that our end of year numbers for SAIFI is .46 and CAIDI is 54 minutes. This means our customers lose power once every year and a half and the time to restore power is 54 minutes.

The budgets illustrate what was deferred to 2023 and what was added. On the gas side there were a couple of major areas that were added such as the dead main on Cedar and Emerson.

There is supporting material for maintenance. On the substation side there is breaker, relay, transformer, and vegetation management.

113 inside gas services were moved outside.

There were no Class 2 leaks until 12/30/22. This has been fixed and we are scheduling repairs as reported. There were 50 Class 3 leaks that have now increased to 55 due to the annual 3<sup>rd</sup> party survey.

Our goal is to reduce this to 40 this year.

Lawn equipment was added to the rebate program.

We have been educating our customers about heating and transportation electrification and energy savings at the Farmer's Market, Facebook and individual educational sessions, and we developed the EV Time of Use rate. We have also engaged both Abode and Voltrek as subject matter experts for the staff and our customers.

Page 4: Mark noted that overtime was a little over 12% under the 19% goal. Capital spending with the OEM spending audit presented in November had no deficiencies. He mentioned that he is working towards 3 months cash on hand. He continually monitors the situation and there have been no issues. He does not believe there will be 3 months cash on hand at the end of this year. The receivables are down by .6 compared to last year. Mark mentioned that the only time we terminate anyone's service is when they do not communicate with us. The last thing we want to do is terminate their service.

Pete noted that he is managing the power supply in a layered strategy to mitigate spikes in costs and reduce our dependence on gas and diesel fuels in company vehicles. The level 2 and 3 chargers have been installed in the garage. The electric bucket truck is ready and

should be shipped in a few weeks. He also noted that WMGLD is communicating the impacts of increases in fossil fuel costs on customer rates and mitigation options via postings on Facebook, the Wakefield Item, as well as an energy assistance mailer that was sent out to customers.

Pete stated WMGLD's non-carbon emitting resources are over 51% now and moving in the right direction. He noted the Seabrook project will assist with this progression.

Page 5: Pete stated that the 480 North Ave Solar Project contracts are signed, and the equipment is ordered. The final design on the roof is complete. He mentioned that we are waiting for a delivery date for the inverter. The second DPW roof is completed. WMGLD joined MMWEC battery project. Pete said that 86 heat pump and 60 insulation rebates were issued in 2022 compared to 30 heat pump rebates in 2021. He mentioned that if we compare the number of customers the IOUs serve versus the number of customers they have impacted, our numbers are more than triple their penetration rate. Commrs. Kallay and Boettcher attributed this to the technical assistance provided by Abode. Pete mentioned that it has been challenging adding EVs to our fleet due to extended lead times. Two EV chargers were installed at the head of the lake. He added that the moratorium on multi families having to go all electric heat pumps has had a tremendous impact.

He stated that WMGLD continues to support Green Communities And the DPW work is ongoing and constantly changing. WMGLD received the APPA grant for the educational portion of the Energy Park. Pete concluded by saying that WMGLD continues to participate in APPA, NEPPA, and MEAM.

Commr. Courcy stated that the office staff also needs to be complimented with the success of the heat pump program. He said that WMGLD had a tremendously successful year. An A plus year.

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

None

**A motion** to come out of General session to go into Executive session to receive an update on the collective bargaining and then to discuss the scoring on the performance evaluation and come out of executive session to vote on the performance award and then to adjourn was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Warchol at 8:30 pm.

**Roll Call Vote:** Commr. Boettcher

Aye

Commr. Courcy	Aye
Commr. Warchol	Aye
Commr. Kallay	Aye

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

Commr Courcy commented that Pete and staff had a tremendous year across all the goal categories, specifically in his leadership. Pete not only met his goals, but in most cases, he exceeded expectations, so the Board is awarding the full 6% bonus. Pete remarked that he has a great team and said he would not be able to do it without the help of Dave and Mark. Commr. Boettcher noted that the staff is successful under Pete's leadership and that WMGLD has become a model for other municipals. Commr. Kallay thanked Pete for all the hard work involved with the Energy Park.

**A motion** to vote to award the General Manager the full amount of his performance award was made by Commr. Warchol and seconded by Commr. Boettcher

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

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

**A motion** to adjourn was made at 9:00 pm by Commr Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Warchol.

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

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.