

WMGLD  
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John J. Warchol, Chair  
Elton Prifti, Secretary  
Thomas Boettcher  
Jennifer Kallay  
Sharon Daly

Peter D. Dion, General Manager

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

**July 19, 2023**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Comms., Chair Jack Warchol  
Elton Prifti, Secretary  
Jennifer Kallay  
Thomas Boettcher  
Sharon Daly

Peter Dion, General Manager, WMGLD  
Mark Cousins, Finance Manager  
Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager  
Vinnie McMahon, Senior System Engineer  
Sylvia Vaccaro, Minute Secretary

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

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**CHAIR REMARKS:**

Commr. Warchol welcomed Commr. Sharon Daly to the Board.

**COMMISSIONER REMARKS:**

Commr. Boettcher remarked that he attended the tour of the Seabrook Power Station provided by MMWEC and that it was both an educational and eye-opening experience.

## **TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:**

Not present

## **Public Comments**

None

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Approval of the June 21, 2023, minutes was before the Board for approval.

**A motion** to approve the June 21, 2023, minutes with amendments provided in the Board book was made by Commr. Prifti and seconded by Commr. Kallay.

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Commr. Warchol suggested reviewing the Dashboard for Commr. Daly's benefit. He requested an update on the peak for July 5, 2023. Pete explained that the load was higher than forecasted and the grid lost a major transmission line which increased the price per kwh for a short period. Pete explained that the situation was rectified relatively quickly, but the costs did exceed \$2.60/kwh for a period of time. Pete also explained that although the constraint on July 5<sup>th</sup> caused a pricing issue, the highest use so far for the summer was on July 6<sup>th</sup>. The Board discussed options that can be used to effectively communicate shedding load during potential peak periods to customers. Pete stated that staff will prepare a presentation on this topic for customers.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **Project Updates**

#### **Energy Park**

Pete stated that he met with EEA and state representatives, Lewis, Wong, and Lipper-Garabeddian. EEA provided updated language they would prefer to see in the Home-Rule petition which has been shared with the House. It has been referred out of committee with recommendation to pass and is now in the next committee for a third reading. Pete noted that the process is heading in a positive direction. Commr. Warchol inquired about the timeline for ordering equipment. Pete mentioned that Dave was able to push back the order date for the generator. He said that we do not want to

commit to a downpayment on the generator until we have the approval we need. He said we have a little time left, but that he explained to our Representatives that we need approval soon so we can procure equipment with enough lead time to meet deadlines. Dave said the Vocational Tech still wants permanent service by August 2025. Commr. Kallay asked that the Energy Park section of the Board book be updated and presented in a dated bullet format.

## **Transformer Load Management**

Vinnie McMahon provided the Board with an overview of the transformer load management tool being utilized at WMGLD.

- Hourly data is gathered from the Fixed AMR network metering system
- System uses the hourly meter reads to calculate hourly demand per meter
- The connectivity model in GIS system automatically links all meters to their associated transformer
- Searches by date range and percent overload are used to manage over (and under) loaded transformers
- Accuracy is also confirmed with meters in many cases.

He noted that every spring and summer transformers that show over 130% load are analyzed to determine if any of the following steps need to be taken:

- Split secondary cribs (groups of customer connected to the same transformer) by adding an additional transformer
- Install larger transformers
- Rearrange crib to distribute load to a nearby transformer that has available capacity

Vinnie explained that underloaded transformers are also analyzed to ensure they are being used efficiently. He noted that WMGLD has not had any transformers fail due to overloading since using this tool. Pete mentioned that it has been over three years since there has been a failed transformer due to overload. Vinnie mentioned that he just placed an order for new transformers that has a lead time of 2026 and that the price has tripled. Commr. Prifti inquired if we are trying to standardize the transformers we are purchasing. Dave noted that we are ordering 50 kVA transformers at a minimum. That is up from 37.5 kVA minimum prior. Commr. Prifti also asked if there is any strategic analysis being done. Dave noted that we are currently doing a study to determine current loads and how those loads will be affected with future electrification, such as EV chargers and heat pumps. Dave said that now you could have 10-11 customers on one transformer, but with future growth you are probably looking at 4 customers to each transformer. Commr. Kallay stated that she would like to see the completed study and inquired if there is any concern given the lengthy lead times. Dave noted that we are looking at the system and designing it for the next 15-20 years. He stated that Vinnie has done a great job with ordering, and we are in good shape for all our projects. Pete mentioned that MMWEC has a project they are working on to place a mass order for transformers. Pete explained that the new Wallace substation has given us redundancies at the system level, which puts us in good shape. Commr. Prifti stated that most of the load in town could be served by one substation transformer on most

days and we have four. He asked if staffing levels will be sufficient to handle the increases. Pete noted that he is looking to add one substation person and an apprentice lineman to the training pipeline over the next year.

### **Community Solar Discussion**

Joe Collins reviewed the solar fee structure spreadsheet with the Board. He stated that the net lease payment would be \$154,240 over 20 years assuming the application of the current \$1.20 per watt to the lease cost. Pete stated that he knew there was a difference in the solar activity in the winter months but did not realize how significant the difference is.

Commr. Boettcher stated that there would need to be education available to customers about solar production and how it varies from the winter to summer months. A discussion ensued about the monetary benefits for customers. Commr. Kallay stated that we need to look at the savings for both low-income and non-low-income customers and if the savings will be enough for the customers to sign-up for the program.

Pete said that he would be looking at rolling the program out on April 1, 2024.

He stated that the \$1.20 may be too high right now and may need to be adjusted.

### **Strategic Planning**

The Board agreed to have Jon Wortmann join the October 4, 2023, Board meeting to discuss strategic planning. Commr. Warchol noted that if more time is needed then they may schedule a second separate meeting.

### **New Business**

None

**A motion** to adjourn was made at 8:36 pm by Commr. Prifti and seconded by Commr. Boettcher

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.