

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

January 10, 2024

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
Joe Collins, Business Analyst- Energy Services
Sylvia Vaccaro, Minute Secretary

Jon Wortmann, thought**LEADERS**, LLC

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 stated that he spoke to an Assistant Director at the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and they stated that because WMGLD is a municipal a rate hearing for an on-bill tariff is not required.

COMMISSIONERS REMARKS:

Commr. Boettcher thanked Pete and staff for their continued response and support of the system during recent weather events. He stated he wants to ensure that the naming and dedication of the Community Solar Program to former Commr. Ken Chase's 42 years of service to the utility and community is incorporated into all marketing and enrollment material. He commented that he has noticed an uptick in the number of questions he is receiving about heat pumps, as well as posts on social media. He mentioned that perhaps WMGLD should conduct another heat pump informational session. Pete stated that he is curious to see what the attendance will be at Beebe Library on January 25, 2024, for the Community Solar Program. Based on that we may look at a hybrid informational session for heat pumps. Pete also noted that we would have ABODE attend to provide information, as well as an HVAC contractor and a WMGLD customer that may have converted to a heat pump. Commr. Daly noted that the Environmental Sustainability Committee (ESC) held a strategy session last week. They suggested that WMGLD inform Tiana Veldwisch in advance of any WMGLD public informational sessions, so that she can help advertise and promote these programs. Commr. Daly also advised that the ESC is very interested in the Community Solar Program. Joe Collins stated that he would contact Tiana. Commr. Daly commented that there were some ideas that came out of the ESC strategy session and that she emailed these to Pete right before the start of tonight's Board meeting.

TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:

Not present

Public Comments

None

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of the December 6, 2023, minutes was before the Board for approval.

A motion to approve the December 6, 2023, minutes was made by Commr. Kallay and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION – FACILITATED BY JON WORTMANN

Jon explained the process is to review the Mission, Vision and Value statements and decide which words the Board loves from these statements and which words they want to omit. He noted that you may want to edit these, so they are not too wordy and to concentrate on the key words. He stated the Mission is the Why, Vision is where you are going, and Values is what is most important.

Jon read the current **Mission** statement:

The Wakefield Municipal Gas and Light Department (WMGLD) and its employees provide our customers with safe, reliable, competitively priced, and

environmentally responsible energy resources and services that enhance quality of life, while adjusting to the ever-changing energy marketplace.

The Board discussed and edited this statement as follows:

To provide our customers with safe, reliable, competitively priced, and environmentally responsible energy resources and services that enhance quality of life, while adjusting to the ever-changing energy marketplace.

Jon read the current **Vision** statement:

Beyond our Mission, WMGLD is committed to being a trusted partner for our customers and the greater community in promoting the use of electric power and other energy resources to achieve an affordable, cleaner, and more sustainable energy future.

The Board discussed and edited this statement as follows:

To be a trusted partner for our customers and the greater community to achieve an affordable, cleaner, and more sustainable energy future.

Jon read the current **Values** statement:

WMGLD will accomplish its mission and maintain its vision by focusing on our core values, which are:

- The safety of our employees and the community we serve
- Fiscally effective management of our resources to control costs and ensure the highest levels of service, quality, and resilience
- Dedication to courtesy and excellence in our customers' experience
- Responsible leadership as stewards of the environment
- Collaboration and fairness in all interactions with stakeholders

The Board discussed and edited the Values as follows:

We Value:

- The safety of our employees, customers, and community
- Fiscally effective management of our resources
- The highest levels of system reliability and resilience
- Dedication to courtesy and the customer's experience
- Responsible leadership as stewards of the environment

Jon stated the next steps are identifying the Problem Statements and the actions to solve these. Each Commissioner thought of problems that the utility is currently

experiencing or will experience in the future. Below are the problem statements that were identified:

Problem Statements

- Optimizing financial resources to reach net zero by 2050 balancing cost, training work force, and maintaining reliability
- Ensuring sufficient affordable energy
- Solving the uncertain future of the gas system
- Accessing financial support for electrification
- Providing customers the tools to enable the energy transition
- Feeding the pipeline of future municipal energy management and workers
- Creating new IT systems, products, platforms, and processes to enable the energy transition

Jon explained that the next step is to look at the timeline on the goals and initiatives to solve these problem statements. Pete stated that most projects are at least a 3-years in duration. The Board discussed the timeline for the larger goals needed to achieve net zero by 2050. Jon asked how long you as a commission want to build pillars out to reach the 2050 net zero goal. The Board collectively decided that the timeline would be 7-10 years.

Jon continued to explain that goals are what you do when you get to the vision. Initiatives are the bundle of activities to reach the goals. He said that the focus will be on the big goals that will funnel into initiatives. The professional staff will work on turning these initiatives into measurable plans, so we can then talk about strategies that will live up to the how's of the big goals and initiatives. The Board discussed and decided on the following big goals:

- Develop a ten-year energy transition plan driving towards 2050 goals
- Survey customer pain points and needs to support the energy transition
- Define who remains in the gas system and the cost structure
- Reduce the gas peak by transitioning customers
- Optimizing investment in the gas and electric system
- Enable and support transition of buildings from carbon for HVAC
- Encourage energy worker talent development
- Research and participate in grant funding

It was agreed that Jon will meet with the Board again to continue this process on March 20, 2024, and at the May 1, 2024, Board meeting. He will email these goals to the Board, so they may edit and add any new goals before they meet again in March.

Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Pete said the under the DPU 20-80 order, WMGLD would be expected to reduce the number of gas customers by 1% each year starting in 2026 and will penalize the utilities that do not reach their annual goals. The housing sector will not meet the Net Zero 2050 goal if we do not convert customers off fossil fuels. Commr. Warchol inquired what Net Zero is for WMGLD. It was decided that this topic is something that can be assigned to staff to research and report back.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:40 pm by Commr. Kallay and seconded by Commr. Daly.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.