

WMGLD
P.O. BOX 190 480 North Ave.
Wakefield, MA 01880
Tel. (781) 246-6363 Fax (781)
246-0419



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 STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

March 20, 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
Sylvia Vaccaro, Minute Secretary

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Commr. Warchol called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm and advised the meeting was being recorded.

CHAIR REMARKS:

None

COMMISSIONERS REMARKS:

None

TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:

None

Public Comments

None

Strategic Planning Discussion- Facilitated by Jon Wortmann

Jon complimented the Board on a fantastic job building the initiatives and narrowing down the goals. He stated that the focus of this session will be reviewing the draft goals and associated initiatives to see if there are any changes that should be made and to get a sense of the language used and the direction the Board wants to take. The Board decided that the initiatives would be given to staff for them to develop strategies (or the how's) and the corresponding timelines to meet these. These strategies will be presented to the Board for review and feedback. The Commissioners each read their assigned initiative and discussion ensued as to what revisions, if any, should be made. Below is the revised working draft the group settled on.

Big Goals and Initiatives

1. **Electric and Gas Supply: Develop a 2030 energy supply transition plan driving towards the 2050 net zero energy goal (Commr. Kallay)**
 - a. Develop a 10-year load forecast, coordinated with the electric and gas supply forecasts
 - b. Reduce the gas peak
 - c. Reduce overall gas usage
 - d. Develop projections of carbon-free generation in the electric supply portfolio
 - e. Monitor the progression of electrification in Wakefield

2. **Electric and Gas Systems: To build our infrastructure to be prepared for the 2050 net zero energy goal (Commr. Prifti)**
 - a. Provide an overview of the existing electric and gas system and their load capabilities
 - b. Identify the investments needed to maintain/improve safe and reliable gas and electric systems
 - c. Identify the incremental investment needed in the electric distribution system based on the ten-year load forecast
 - d. Perform a threat analysis as needed including climate, cyber, physical infrastructure, and IT obsolescence
 - e. Develop a plan to mitigate stranded costs in the gas system

3. **Customer: Address customer barriers and needs to drive electrification of buildings and transportation (Commr. Warchol)**

- a. Survey customer pain points and needs to support the energy transition
 - b. Evolve offerings to continually reflect new technologies, environmental impacts, cost-effectiveness, and greatest-savings opportunities
 - c. Develop and evolve education and outreach efforts targeted to specific groups
 - d. Explore new electric and gas rate designs factoring in affordability
4. **Workforce: Develop the energy workers of 2030 and beyond (Commr. Boettcher)**
- a. Identify new roles and skillsets
 - b. Define roles to be phased out
 - c. Create and identify training programs for future needs
 - d. Encourage current staff training, mentoring, and talent development
 - e. Develop partnerships to increase the potential future workforce
 - f. Foster an environment where employees want to stay and grow
5. **Funding: Maximize Diverse Funding Sources in Order to Lower Customer Costs (Commr. Daly)**
- a. Research and apply, monitor and track, external sources of funding for investments in all facets of operations
 - b. Determine investment responsibility of new initiatives
 - c. Advocate for other financing and funding sources for customers
 - d. Pursue partnerships with the Town and other large customers to share in the development of new projects
 - e. Define decision-making criteria for pursuing funding opportunities

WMGLD staff will format this document to ensure appropriate flow of goals and initiatives by the June Board meeting, and incorporate input from the Board on high priority initiatives. Between June and December, the staff will develop strategies and provide a timeline for each. This strategy list with the assigned staff owner will be presented to the Board at the January 2025 Board meeting and incorporated into the 2025 performance goals for WMGLD shortly thereafter.

DOER Proposal for IRA Funding

Commr. Kallay mentioned that the DOER conducted a recent webinar where they proposed an approach for IRA funding. The DOER opened a comment period about this until March 25, 2024. She stated that she wanted to hear what the other Commissioner's thoughts were about the proposal and if they had any comments. She noted this proposal includes the HER and HEAR rebates. HER would include home efficiency rebates and HEAR would include home electrification appliance rebates. The DOE has requested the DOER to prioritize at least 41% of funds to be allocated to low and moderate-income residents. Twenty-two million dollars is slated for the Commonwealth's 40 Municipal light plants (MLPs) along with matching funds from MLPs. It is unclear if existing MLP rebate programs would be considered as part of this match. The application

deadline for this funding will be in Fall 2024. Pete said that he and Joe Collins have been following this with MMWEC. He mentioned that the Commissioners may submit their comments to him, and he will forward them to Zoe Eckert at MMWEC. Comments coming from MMWEC may carry more weight as they represent multiple municipals. Commr. Kallay pointed out that WMGLD may need assistance from the State to identify low-income customers. Pete said that he would speak to Zoe about this and get back to the Board with details. He mentioned that included in the Board book is the Grant and IRA Summary sheet which details WMGLD's activities in pursuing grants. Commr. Kallay mentioned that strategic planning goals, initiatives, and strategies related to improving capabilities to service low- and moderate-income residents may become more important in 2024/2025 with this new source of funding

New Business

None

Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Commr. Warchol provided photocopies of the 2024 Goals document for the Commissioners to review for finalization at the next meeting. The Board decided that there would not be an April Board meeting and that the May Board meeting will be held on May 8, 2024, at 6:30p.m. Commr. Warchol mentioned that this meeting will be held after the WMGLD Board elections, so the Board will hold its reorganization and will vote on the approval of the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities annual report.

Adjournment

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

Roll Call Vote:

Commr. Kallay	Aye
Commr. Prifti	Aye
Commr. Daly	Aye
Commr. Boettcher	Aye
Commr. Warchol	Aye

The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.