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

Peter D. Dion, General Manager

WAKEFIELD MUNICIPAL GAS & LIGHT DEPARTMENT

BOARD OF GAS & LIGHT COMMISSIONERS MEETING

May 8, 2024

IN ATTENDANCE: Commrs., Chair Sharon Daly
Thomas Boettcher, Secretary
Jennifer Kallay
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

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Commr. Warchol called the meeting to order at 6:50 pm and advised the meeting was being recorded.

CHAIR REMARKS:

None

COMMISSIONERS REMARKS:

Commr. Kallay informed the Board that she and Commr. Boettcher attended the March 25, 2024, Town Council meeting and wanted to provided them with an update. The Town Council did not select the \$500,000 Galvin Middle School partial rooftop solar project for funding with the remaining ARPA money. They did commit to draft a warrant article for the November 2024 Town Meeting to fund the project through the capital budget. They also decided to stop funding low-income energy assistance through ARPA and redirect any remaining funds left after this heating season to other purposes. Town Council is also drafting a warrant article to incorporate low-income energy assistance funding into the annual budget, for November 2024 Town Meeting, in time for next heating season. Commr. Kallay mentioned that one Town Councilor noted that it would be good to coordinate this effort with weatherization and heating system upgrade support targeted to low-income customers, which ties nicely to the \$22 million funding opportunity recently discussed that is slated for late 2024/2025. Commr. Kallay also mentioned that it would be good to check in with the Town on the customers who have leveraged this funding as they may be interested in our community solar project, if not already on our outreach list. Commr. Kallay also remarked that the Forest Glade Cemetery maintenance building is slated for a new roof this fiscal year and wondered if this could be considered for a small solar project. Both Pete and Commr. Warchol noted that the building might be too small and shaded for solar. Commr. Daly mentioned that Beebe Library had recently replaced its roof and inquired whether the roof was a good candidate for a solar project. Pete mentioned that an assessment of solar potential was done a few years ago and given to Joseph Conway, Director of DPW. Commr. Kallay mentioned that it would be good to verify whether it could be considered for a project.

TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:

A new Town Council liaison has not been appointed.

Public Comments

None

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of March 6, 2024 Minutes–School Department Meeting, Approval of March 6, 2024, Minutes-Board Meeting, and Approval of March 20, 2024, Strategic Planning Minutes was before the Board for approval.

A motion to approve the March 6,2024 Minutes–School Department Meeting, Approval of March 6, 2024, Minutes-Board Meeting, and Approval of March 20, 2024, Strategic Planning Minutes, was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Kallay.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

Old Business

Project Updates

Energy Park

Pete stated that all approvals to begin construction have been received and the DPW Advisory Committee has signed off on the storm water run-off plan. Dave Polson noted that construction on the driveway will begin within a week with tree removal starting soon after. He commented that the battery contract is being finalized and all long lead time equipment has been ordered and assigned delivery dates. Dave mentioned that the contractual in-service date for the battery has been tracking less than one year, so we are hopeful that the battery will be in service before next summer. This would enable us to use it for peak periods next summer for load shedding prior to the school's opening. Pete said that as of now everything is on schedule. He said that bids have been received for the site cleanup for the Burns substation on Ballister St with work potentially starting in the June/July period. He remarked that the DPW has approved the planting plan for the Mapleway Park for the Fall. Commr. Boettcher inquired if WMGLD will be applying for additional grant funding for this project. Pete commented that WMGLD is still seeking grants but did not receive the second gas infrastructure grant this year, which would have included Main Street from Green Street out to the Melrose line and a lot of side streets. He stated that work will still continue in that area, and we will apply again next year. Commr. Daly inquired as to why WMGLD did not receive the grant. Pete noted that he thought WMGLD project was too small. He said bids are out for materials for the grant that we did secure for the Water Street and Otis Street areas. Construction bids will be in by June with work to start in August with the hope of completing the project by the end of the year.

Kenneth J. Chase Jr. Community Solar Project and Dedication Update

Commr. Warchol explained that Ken will not be available in the short term because of an injury and will have to go to rehab, so we will need to postpone the June dedication ceremony. Pete said we will wait to see how Ken is doing and reschedule the ceremony. He informed the Board that the Community Solar project is fully allocated on the non-low-income side with 78 customers that have agreed to participate. He noted that 3kW was taken off the low-income side, so we were able to fill the requests of customers as of the end of April. We are up to 8kW subscribed on the low-income side, leaving 21kW still open. He suggested waiting until the end of June or later to see if we can solicit more requests on the low-income side. If not, we can revisit the non-low-income customers that wanted more than two units. Commr. Boettcher suggested that WMGLD speak with the Town's Affordable

Housing units to see if they would be interested in taking the remaining kW set aside for low-income customers.

Finalize General Manager 2024 Goals

Pete commented that Commr. Daly made a final edit to the document. Commr. Daly stated that the edit was solely for clarification purposes on page 4, under Manage Accounts Receivables. The word (trends) was omitted from the measure.

Strategic Planning Discussion

Pete noted that he made minor modifications to the draft in reference to the sequence of the items. He stated that the Board agreed to settle on these items by the June Board meeting. It would then be given to staff to work on over the summer to build a macro schedule. Commr. Daly asked what the time frame would be for the plan. Pete said that we had agreed the target time frame would be between 7 and 10 years.

New Business

Approval of 2023 Department of Public Utilities Annual Report

Mark noted that there is both financial and statistical information in this report. On the financial side it contains the basics such as balance sheet and income statement. On the statistical side it contains information such as, number of kW sold, cubic. ft. of gas sold, distribution stats, # of poles, and conductors. It is a comprehensive report on the operation. Tonight, the Board is being asked to sign off on this report, so it may be filed with the DPU. Pete has the signature page for the Commissioners to sign.

A motion to approve the Department of Public Utilities annual report for calendar year 2023 was made by Commr. Kallay and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

MMWEC Annual Meeting- Discussion of Presentations and Programs

Commr. Kallay mentioned that WMGLD was presented with an award at the annual meeting. Commr. Boettcher congratulated the entire department for being recognized by their peers. Commr. Kallay thought the residential battery storage program was very interesting as well as the EV to grid mobile storage. She was interested in what everyone's thoughts were on these and any other presentations of interest. Commr. Daly said that she was interested in the presentation on MMWEC's revamped website. She noted that MMWEC would be happy to connect us with their vendor. Pete said one of the things we agreed to do on our goals and objectives this year

was to form a focus group led by a third party to look at our website. The Fall time frame is being considered for this. Commr. Daly also talked about analytics that MMWEC is doing to use data to shape electrification projects and where the distribution system can handle them; develop time-of-use rates and rate structure strategies; and program validation. Pete said some of this applied more to the large municipals and there is also a possibility of data overload. He explained that MMWEC offers a lot of services. For example, we process our own rebates, but MMWEC provides that service for other municipals. We have to be sure of what we will get out of that data and how useful it will be. We use the MMWEC service that forecasts peaks and we run our units based on this service.

Commr. Boettcher commented that the battery storage program was interesting, however for a non-solar customer to install a battery for outages is not a selling point because the average outage for an IOU customer is 7.6 hours a year isn't applicable in an MLP. Pete said this program would put WMGLD in the appliance business, which is a concern. There is too much risk and little reward in this program for the utility. He stated he would rather give a larger incentive and let the ownership be on the customer side, keeping WMGLD out of the middle. Commr. Kallay stated that she is very interested in the battery to grid. Pete said that a bus entity that would charge overnight on the time-of-use rate may be perfect for this. Pete commented that we will share thoughts with the Town's Community and Economic Development Director about potential opportunities EV fleet charging and the time-of-use rate.

Pete explained that he was interested in MMWEC's discussions on the large-scale projects and their understanding that we need these to drive towards a green portfolio. They talked about developing a third phase at Berkshire Wind and potentially repowering Berkshire 1. The large battery project in Ludlow is on hold for now because ISO-NE was not going to recognize it as a capacity resource, reducing its value. Pete noted that 3 to 5 years from now he would like to see some demonstration projects at the Energy Park, utilizing the last quarter acre of the site for a demonstration project such as carbon capture, fuel cells or flywheels. These are things that we will monitor for the future.

Board Reorganization

Commr. Warchol stated that Commr. Prifti previously expressed to him that he is stepping down from his role as secretary and does not want to be considered for Chairperson. Following the regular succession plan would mean that Commr. Daly is up for the Chairperson position and Commr. Boettcher is up for the secretary position. Both Commissioners agreed to accept these positions. Commr. Daly asked if anyone else would be willing to take on the position as liaison to the Environmental Sustainability Committee and Commr. Kallay agreed to be the liaison.

A motion to make Commr. Sharon Daly, our next Chairperson and Commr. Tom Boettcher, our next secretary, was made by Commr. Warchol and seconded by Commr. Kallay.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

A motion to make Commr. Kallay as the next liaison to the Environmental Sustainability Committee was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Daly.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Executive Session if necessary

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:20 pm by Commr. Warchol and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.