

WMGLD
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Peter D. Dion, General Manager

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

WAKEFIELD MUNICIPAL GAS & LIGHT DEPARTMENT

BOARD OF GAS & LIGHT COMMISSIONERS MEETING

October 2, 2024

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

Peter Dion, General Manager
Mark Cousins, Finance Manager
Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager
Joe Collins, Business Analyst - Energy Services
Olivia Hayes, Business Analyst – Energy Services
Sara Eriksen, Facilities and Procurement Manager
Sylvia Vaccaro, Minute Secretary

Members of the Public

None

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

CALL TO ORDER:

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

CHAIR REMARKS:

Commr. Daly asked Pete to provide an update on the restoration efforts being made in the hurricane ravaged states of Tennessee, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Pete explained that NEPPA coordinates mutual aid during these times. NEPPA began mobilizing crews before the storm hit. Six crews were enroute to Florida and Georgia but were rerouted to areas Georgia and South Carolina because Florida was not as severely impacted. He explained that Florida has two of the largest municipals in the country, Orlando and Kissimmee, so they were able to provide support to others in Florida. WMGLD's one crew is in Georgia now but may be relocated, if needed. The conditions are not the best, as they are sleeping on cots in a firehouse. Pete stated that both he and Dave have been participating in the ESCC (Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council) calls along with FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission), the Department of Energy and representatives from the White House to actively support any needs from affected areas. The Carolinas will need more help, but do not have any way to accommodate the help, so the Florida response team is setting up temporary tent cities for these workers.

COMMISSIONERS REMARKS:

Commr. Kallay noted that the Massachusetts Light Commissioners Association will be conducting a webinar on October 24, 2024, from 7 – 8:30 about electric utilities and geothermal projects. The next webinar will be sometime in the Spring. She also mentioned that there is an inter-agency rate working group that formed at the State level. Pete said that both Zoe and Kate from MMWEC have been involved with this. It is about how to change electric rates as we go forward with electrification. Commr. Kallay said she can forward the link with all the information. Commr. Daly inquired if there were updates on the GIS hourly REC rule changes. Pete noted that it did pass, but it is still voluntary right now and it could take up to 18 months to implement.

TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:

Commr. Warchol stated that Doug Butler is the new liaison.

Public Comments

None

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of the September 4, 2024, minutes was before the Board for approval.

A motion to approve the September 4, 2024, minutes as revised was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Old Business

Pete informed the Board that one of the major projects they have been working on is the cable replacement between Beebe and Wakefield Ave.

substations. He said that they completed more than half in July & August and will continue portions of the work this fall, thereby eliminating all the lead cable on this feeder. This explains why there is a large adjustment to the capital expenditure for the year.

Project Updates

Energy Park

Pete mentioned that the site work is about to go out to bid. Dave stated that the conduit work on Hemlock is almost complete, and the high school conduit is tied in now. He explained that the site work includes the foundation for the buildings and ground grid fencing getting it ready to accept the deliveries for the equipment. Site work will start in the fall & winter months. The battery work will be in the spring. The battery will be in service and up and running on a temporary connection to the grid before summer peak. Pete mentioned that the battery will be funded thru the MMWEC Pooled Loan Program, which essentially works like a construction loan. Commr. Boettcher inquired about the term of the loan. Mark Cousins replied that WMGLD can tailor the terms of the loan to their comfort level. It is usually based on the life expectancy of the asset. He noted it will probably be under 20 years.

Kenneth J. Chase Jr Community Solar Project and Dedication Update

Commr. Warchol noted that Matt & Michelle Chase have confirmed the dedication date of October 23, 2024, at 4:00 pm at the light department.

Discussion of WMGLD Deposits and Fees

Olivia Hayes reviewed the current deposits and fees with the Board. A survey of comparable size Massachusetts municipalities was used for comparison. It was noted that WMGLD falls in the mid-range for these deposits and fees. Commr. Kallay asked for these deposits and fees to be posted clearly on WMGLD's website.

Residential Security Deposits:

- No deposit is required of residential property owners
- A deposit is required of all residential tenants
 - \$250 for electricity
 - \$400 for all electric (including electric heat)
 - \$400 for electric with gas heat

Commercial Security Deposits:

- Commercial accounts under the same name as the property owner do not require a deposit (Same as residential policy)
- A deposit is required of all commercial tenants
- Deposit is calculated based on estimated three-month usage

Other WMGLD Fees

New Gas Service	\$1,000
New Electric Service	\$ 100
Temporary Electric Service	\$ 100
Return Check	\$ 25
Gas Business Hours Service Call	\$ 75
Gas After Hours Service Call	\$ 150
Reconnect Fee (after shut off for non-payment)	\$ 50

Discussion of Grants

Joe Collins provided the Board with an overview of the grants that WMGLD has already received, the grants that are currently in process, and grants WMGLD may apply for in the future. A discussion ensued as to why WMGLD was not awarded certain grants and what could have been done differently to have a positive outcome.

A motion to move an agenda item out of order so Sara Eriksen can present an update on Facilities and Procurement was made by Commr. Warchol and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Facilities and Procurement Overview- Sara Eriksen

Sara reviewed WMGLD's fleet inventory and explained that prices and availability has gotten better since the COVID pandemic. WMGLD currently has 4 passenger plug-in hybrids and a full EV Ford Lighting truck. The next passenger vehicle that is going to be procured is a plug-in hybrid. She stated that she is waiting on a gas Ford 250 that facilities will use for plowing. The gas savings for the year on these vehicles is about 500-600 gallons. She noted that a new energy efficient garage door was recently installed. The inside of the building has been repainted with the inside of the garage to be repainted in 2025. The roof repairs were completed prior to the solar installation. All long-term bids are up to date. Short-term bids for the Energy Park are in process.

Strategic Planning Update – Priorities

Commr. Daly stated that she had been speaking to Pete about 2025 goals and initiatives and it is realistic to take on only two or three a year. Pete explained that from his perspective he feels the following three should be addressed next year, developing a plan to curb the gas peak, looking at the 10-year load and

supply forecast, and developing criteria for applying for grants. A lot of the other goals and initiatives listed are ongoing. Commr. Kallay inquired if it was time to conduct another customer survey. Pete stated that the last one was conducted about 5 or 6 years ago by the company Great Blue and he was pleased with their work. He noted that the Board could have future discussions about what they want to learn from a customer survey. Commr. Kallay also noted that some research and analysis work would likely occur related to rate design in tandem with the monitoring of the Interagency Rate Working Group activities. She also noted that work would be required to develop a new energy efficiency program for low-income customers if IRA money is allocated to WMGLD for this purpose.

New Business

Energy Park Funding Authorization

Pete explained that the Energy Park will initially be funded through the MMWEC Pooled Loan Program and will be termed out in permanent financing when the project is completed. An authorization for the project and for the General Manager to pursue the financing that is required through the MMWEC Pooled Loan Program is before the Board tonight. Mark stated that the current bank is Bank of America, but this will be changing over to Chase. Pete explained that by taking a vote now we can count the costs that we are accumulating now such as the deposits on the switch gear and the generator because the bank wants to know that the authorizing body has enabled us to do so. Mark explained that our debt is pooled with other systems debt and packaged under MMWEC and marketed to the bank. It is termed out with interest in the 2-3% range. The furthest maturity date on outstanding pooled loans is nine years.

A motion for the authorization for the project which is known as the Energy Park and for the General Manager to pursue the financing that is required through the MMWEC Pooled Loan Program was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Kallay.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Energy Conservation Charge – Preliminary Discussion

Pete explained that we will be over budget for this year. Joe explained that when we announced the reduction of the solar rebate incentive, we honored the previous incentive of \$1.20/kw for those individuals who were already in the pipeline. However, there were more customers that signed up than were anticipated, who are completing projects now which is causing us to be over budget. Pete said we are now at \$0.007 of a cent for the Energy Conservation Charge. Mark stated the billing system will allow us to go to \$0.0075 which would translate into \$40,000 in additional funds. Pete said for the average customer the

cost increase would be \$4.50 per year. Commr. Kallay requested more detailed projections on demand by measure, so Board members can see which measures are likely to see increased demand/funding and which are likely to see decreased demand/funding. The Board can give this consideration for future discussion.

Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Executive Session if necessary

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:45 pm by Commr. Kallay and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.