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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**

**February 12, 2025**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Comms., Chair Sharon Daly  
Jennifer Kallay  
Elton Prifti  
Jack Warchol

Peter Dion, General Manager  
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. Daly called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm and advised the meeting was being recorded.

**CHAIR REMARKS:**

Commr. Daly requested an update on grant funding considering the recent Executive Orders issued by the Trump Administration. Joe Collins advised the pipeline replacement work funded by the PHMSA 2022 grant is ongoing, and a reimbursement was received shortly after submitting invoices. The environmental survey requirement for the 2024 grant has been delayed by the federal government and is being reviewed to see if some Executive Orders may affect certain requirements. The Grant Coordinator from PHMSA did not express any concerns that it would not go through. It may just take longer. Pete Dion noted that we are taking a pause on applying for new grants and are focused on seeking a reimbursement payment for the remaining

\$300,000 from the PHMSA 2022 grant. This work will be finished by April 2025, and we will submit all invoices as soon as they are received for reimbursement. Commr. Daly inquired about the MA DOER Municipal funding for EV infrastructure and the feasibility study. Dave Polson explained that the purpose of the grant is to evaluate the area along highways as part of the MA DOT buildout and a company reached out to WMGLD to see if our infrastructure would support it. Pete said that the issue with this comes down to who owns the land. If the land is owned by a developer then that triggers other requirements for the developer which they have concerns about undertaking.

### **COMMISSIONERS REMARKS:**

Commr. Kallay circulated the notes from the MA DOER webinar on Large Building Energy Reporting (LBER) as well as the published list of covered buildings associated with the large building reporting regulation. She said that she will also forward an email containing agendas and schedules for the upcoming Massachusetts Light Commissioners Association meetings.

### **TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:**

Not present.

### **Public Comments**

None.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Approval of January 22, 2025, minutes was before the Board for approval. Commr Warchol provided additional edits.

**A motion** to accept the December 12, 2024, minutes as amended was made by Commr. Kallay and seconded by Commr. Warchol.

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

### **Old Business**

#### **Project Updates**

#### **Energy Park**

Dave Polson stated that progress continues despite weather conditions. The battery vendor is working on the conduit and foundation work. Our site contractor has installed two manholes, which involved a significant amount of ledge to be removed. He said that drainage work will begin at the back of the site, which may involve removing more ledge. Conduit work will continue for the next 3-4 weeks. Our goal is still to have the battery in operation for June 1, 2025.

## **Discussion MEAM on Communications- Jane Parenteau, Executive Secretary**

Jane Parenteau explained that MEAM represents all 40 municipal electric departments in Massachusetts with its primary mission to defend their right to maintain local control. She explained that 4 years ago a Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Caucus was formed consisting of 27 senators and 40 representatives led by two co-chairs. In October of 2024, when it was necessary to reach out to our legislators about a series of issues threatening local control, a letter was sent by the two co-chairs to the Senators and Representatives outlining the challenges the municipal electric departments were facing. It was up to them whether they wanted to sign on or off on that letter. Approximately 35 of them cosigned the letter. Timing is always an issue, so once the letter goes out to the co-chairs it is then forwarded to the General Managers, so they may forward to their Board. Commr. Kallay inquired why MEAM does not communicate directly with Commissioners. Jane explained that there are 40 municipals with boards consisting of anywhere from 3 to 7 members each and it would be too difficult to do, so it was decided that communications would be directed to the General Managers, who would then forward the information to their Boards. Pete explained that there has been more activity over the past few months with the Legislative committee trying to protect local control in the public power model. Commr. Kallay also requested that MEAM entertain allowing Commissioners to call in and listen or attend meetings remotely because many cannot physically attend the meetings. Commr. Daly commented that the breakdown in communications resulted in legislators reaching out to a few WMGLD Commissioners about this letter, however the Commissioners did not have any knowledge of this letter. Commr. Daly explained that two legislators did not sign the letter because they were not informed by the WMGLD Board. Jane stated that MEAM relies on the General Managers to inform their Boards. She said that she will bring back WMGLD Commissioners' wants and wishes to the MEAM Executive Committee. Commr. Daly inquired as to MEAM's next steps for addressing the Clean Heat Standard and the Large Building Energy Reporting regulations. Jane said that MEAM has met with multiple people at the MA DEP and MA DOER. MA DOER noted that they have the authority to regulate MLPs under 21N. According to MEAM's lobbyist, this does not apply to MLPs. Pete explained that there are privacy issues around this and offered some solutions, but says MA DOER insists there is a mandate to include MLPs and simply dismissed MLPs arguments. Jane stated that with the Clean Heat Standard and the Decarbonization Clearinghouse are going to take money away from local control and send it to other utilities like Eversource and challenge the public power model. Jane further clarified that the initial draft language included electric distribution companies, which historically did not include MLPs. Sometime in the Fall 2024, MA DOER added the exact duplicate language that it used to describe electric distribution companies, and it repeated that for MLPs, thereby causing the urgency for the letter to go out.

### **Clean Heat Standard Letter**

Comms. Daly and Warchol met to draft a letter to the Legislature expressing concerns about MLPs losing local control if the Clean Heat Standard regulation is

adopted. The goal was to draft one letter, however the Commissioners selected different approaches to this letter, which they shared with the other Commissioners for discussion. Commr. Warchol's letter stated the WMGLD Board is not in agreement with these regulations, and they should not apply to MLPs. Commr. Daly's letter stated that WMGLD will abide with the regulations even though they do not agree with them and offered recommended changes specific to municipals. Commr. Warchol suggested sending his letter out first and if the regulations pass than send out Commr. Daly's letter. He also proposed taking his letter and tweaking it so that everyone can sign it. If that is not the case then perhaps some sign it and some do not. Commr. Daly stated that we could submit Jack's letter now, which is closely aligned with MEAM's letter or wait until the draft regulations come out, so we have something more specific to respond to and provide recommendations. She noted that this was her approach with her letter. Pete said that his opinion is it is better to stay out in front of this issue and protect public power. Pete explained that the utility was given a goal to Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050. It was not our mandate to make our customers change their heating systems. It was decided that Commr. Warchol will revise his letter and include some language from Commr. Daly's letter. This will be forwarded to the Board so a vote can be taken at the March 5, 2025. Board meeting when all Commissioners are in attendance.

## **Large Building Energy Reporting**

Pete stated that there are data issues with the list of large buildings in Wakefield that are currently subject to LBER regulations. Olivia Hayes, Business Analyst at WMGLD, reached out to MA DOER, and they said that it is up to the building owner to resolve any data discrepancies. He noted that smaller utilities do not have the staff to resolve these data issues. Pete mentioned that WMGLD will work with our customers to resolve these data issues, so they can comply with state regulations, but the MLPs should not be required to report this information separately to the State. He explained that if the State imposes this regulation on MLPs, then they will continue to impose further regulations like the Clean Heat Standard. Pete stated that MEAM is working with our lobbyists and are engaging legal counsel to assist with these issues.

## **WMGLD Website Development Update**

Pete mentioned that a lot of feedback from the focus group has already been incorporated into the website. Pete stated that staff met with the website developer who originally designed the site back in 2017, to discuss options for improving the website. He suggested that we re-do the website, rather than make small fixes. There are two options under consideration. The first is to use the current version of Word Press and update the core of our current website. The second option is to start with new website design software. Pricing for both options are under consideration is expected next week.

## **New Business**

### **General Manager 2024 Performance Review and 2025 Goals**

The subcommittee of Commrs. Kallay and Prifti met last month to review the 2024 performance versus goals and develop 2025 goals (included on page 55 in the Board Book). They provided their revisions to the rest of the Board and discussion ensued. Pete provided the Board with a detailed review of his 2024 performance versus goals (included in the Board book). It was decided to wait for Commr. Boettcher to be in attendance to participate in the performance and goals discussion.

**Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Board.**

**Executive Session if necessary**

**Adjournment**

**A motion** to adjourn was made at 9:35 pm by Commr. Warhol and seconded by Commr. Kallay

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.