

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



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

Peter D. Dion, General Manager

WAKEFIELD MUNICIPAL GAS & LIGHT DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF GAS & LIGHT COMMISSIONERS MEETING

May 13, 2025

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

Peter Dion, General Manager
Mark Cousins, Finance Manager
Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager
Jeff Morris, IT Manager
Joe Collins, Business Analyst
Olivia Hayes, Business Analyst
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:

None

COMMISSIONERS REMARKS:

Commr. Kallay noted that she attended the Massachusetts Light Commissioners Association meeting about EVs where Highland Electric Fleets gave a presentation about electric school buses. She said she contacted them and arranged for a meeting on May 14, with the WMGLD, the School Department and Highland that will include discussion of electric buses and other fleet options in greater detail. I

TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:

Not present.

Public Comments

None

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of April 8, 2025, minutes was before the Board for approval. Commr. Warchol provided one edit.

A motion to accept the March 4, 2025, minutes as amended was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Old Business

Project Updates - Energy Park – Financing

Financing options for the Energy Park were discussed and it was recommended by Pete and Mark to delay long-term financing of the Energy Park for now. A chart of the cash position was presented and discussed. It was noted that the goal of 3 months cash on hand would most likely not be met at June 30. Pete indicated that makes business sense to finance the Energy Park in the fall as one round of financing rather than have a construction loan then a term loan.

Pete said self-funding the Energy Park for now was possible because initially the intent was to bid the entire project as a whole and finance the project incrementally, instead we are completing a substantial amount of the work with WMGLD labor and paying for construction materials & site work which has been more cost effective.

Mark mentioned two options to remedy cash deficiencies. Short-term financing option with MMWEC line of credit and also a draw on the OPEB investment. The OPEB investment was 112% funded at last year's audit

and we had originally intended to draw on the investment to get closer to 100% OPEB funding. It was recommended that for now we hold off on drawing on the OPEB investment due to on-going market volatility

Commissioner Kallay raised a concern about economic uncertainty and the cash position as bills increase because of the summer weather and customer's ability to pay. Mark was asked to update the board monthly on the cash position so that the cash could be monitored. It was agreed that for now we will delay OPEB draws and delay long-term financing of the Energy Park and continue to monitor the cash position. Commr. Daly inquired if not meeting the three months cash on hand would be a concern for the auditors. Mark said that the auditors would be satisfied with the reason why it is not three months, and that management had informed the Board. Pete advised that he apprise the Board throughout the summer.

Commercial Time of Use EV Rate

Joe Collins provided the Board with the minor edits that were made to the peak hour language in the draft tariff sheet. Commr. Kallay inquired as to what the peak hours were. Joe stated it would be from 4pm to 9pm. Pete said the plan would be to begin the June Board meeting with the public rate hearing immediately followed by the Board meeting. Both meetings will be posted for the public. Pete noted that staff will reach out to existing customers to see if they are interested in this new rate.

New Business

Town Administrator Maio's Retirement Celebration

WMGLD has been invited to participate in Town Administrator Steve Maio's retirement celebration on Sunday, June 1, 2025. The Board decided to showcase the WMGLD projects that were completed during Steve Maio's tenure as Town Administrator. Staff will man a table with pictures and information about these projects. Commr. Daly was going to respond to the Town's invitation for the Board.

MMWEC Annual Meeting – Review of key topics discussed

Commr. Daly commented about the presentation on integrating the bidirectional EV chargers into Connected Homes as well as some talk on grants the Massachusetts CEC Pilot Program. Pete explained that there are only 11 vehicles that qualify for this and WMGLD only has the Ford Lighting that qualify. He noted that paperwork for this grant is being submitted. Joe further explained that on the residential side only three vehicles would qualify: Ford Lighting, Nissan Leaf, and the Kia EV9. Olivia explained that this grant program is only for level 3 chargers. Pete noted that this would not be economically feasible for WMGLD because we would have to run a whole new service to our building. Commr. Daly commented that it was

mentioned this would be a good project for Muni fleets. Commr. Kallay stated that it may be applicable for bus fleets. Commr. Daly said that for the Connected Homes portion they were talking about a \$10 per kilowatt incentive. Pete said that there was push back on this number and that WMGLD should wait to participate in this program. Commr. Boettcher commented that the ISO New England forecasting presentation was fascinating. He said ISO New England has walked back some of their previous forecasting and data modeling that was based on future electrification and needs. He noted that it is now more in line with the growth they have seen over the last few years. Pete informed the Board that our battery vendor Lightshift has asked him to attend the APPA national conference this June in New Orleans to give a presentation on the batteries. He also commented that he will also be attending the ESCC meeting while in New Orleans.

Electric Bus/Vehicle Fleets in Wakefield

Commr. Kallay said that she has been participating in discussions with different groups over the past year about electric buses and other types of electric fleet vehicles. Both the Environmental Sustainability Committee and School Committee have discussed whether the town would be able to lease electric school buses or specify electric vehicles in the bid process. She said that Erin Kokinda, the Economic Development Coordinator for the town has been thinking about adding an electric shuttle service within town. Pete said that for fleet charging there is extra capacity readily available down on Audubon Rd. Commr. Kallay stated that she has talked to Highland Electric, who offers turnkey solutions for school bus electrification a meeting has been set for tomorrow, May 14th from 4pm-5pm via Zoom to brainstorm about these three topics: lease electric school buses, EV shuttles, and WMGLD charging stations for fleet vehicles. Pete said we would not take the lead in building the charging station but we could supply the capacity and a time of use rate. Discussion ensued.

Board Reorganization

Commr. Daly stated that Commr. Boettcher is next in line for Chairperson. Following the regular succession plan would mean that Commr. Kallay is up for the the Secretary position. Commr. Prifti acknowledged that he did not want to step back into the rotation. 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 stay on as the liaison.

A motion to go into to reorganize the Board was made by Commr. Warchol and was seconded by Commr. Prifti.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0

Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Chair.

Executive Session if necessary

A motion to go into Executive Session was made by Commr. Warchol at 8:10pm and was seconded by Commr. Prifti.

Roll Call Vote:	Commr. Boettcher	Aye
	Commr. Kallay	Aye
	Commr. Prifti	Aye
	Commr. Warchol	Aye
	Commr. Daly	Aye

The motion was approved unanimously

A motion to come out of Executive session and back into General session to adjourn was made by Commr. Warchol at 8:56 pm and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.