

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

Peter D. Dion, General Manager

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

May 16, 2023

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

Peter Dion, General Manager, WMGLD
Mark Cousins, Finance Manager
Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager
Sylvia Vaccaro, Minute Secretary

Members of the Public

Karen Johnson, Malden resident

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Commr. Kallay called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm and advised the meeting was being recorded.

CHAIR REMARKS:

Commr. Kallay congratulated Commr. Warchol on his reelection to the WMGLD Board of Commissioners for another 3 years. She reminded the Board that MEAM (Municipal Electric Association of Massachusetts) will hold its annual

meeting this Thursday and Friday, so if anyone is interested, please sign up. She also mentioned that she has the video of the first Statewide meeting of Commissioners, which covered rate design in the 21st century and will be happy to circulate it to the Board. She noted that a survey will be sent out to all Commissioners to get their thoughts about this concept moving forward.

COMMISSIONER REMARKS:

Commr. Boettcher stated that both he and Commr. Kallay attended MMWEC’s annual conference on May 3rd and 4th. He stated that it covered many interesting topics including legislative updates, market trends, updated technologies as well as ongoing projects. He also thanked Pete and Dave for the presentation on our Energy Park, highlighting its innovation, which sparked a lot of questions and discussions.

TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:

Not present.

Public Comments

Karen Johnson stated that she was in attendance to listen to information about the Energy Park.

A motion was made by Commr. Prifti to discuss the DPU report of 2022 out of order and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

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

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

2022 DPU Report

Mark Cousins explained that this report contains both financial and non-financial information. It includes information such as kWh sold, cubic feet of gas sold, number of connected electric and gas meters, detailed plant information, and financial statements. The report is based on a calendar year and filed annually with the DPU. This public information is available on the DPU’s website in their central depository labeled File Room and on WMGLD’s website. Pete mentioned that WMGLD DPU reports for the past 12 years are available on our website. Mark stated that he is asking the Board to execute and sign off on this report so he can file it with the State.

A Motion was made by Commr. Boettcher to approve the DPU Annual Report of WMGLD for year end 2022 and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

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

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of the April 5, 2023, minutes was before the Board for approval. Commr. Boettcher provided amendments for clarification on page 5.

A motion to approve the April 5, 2023, with amendments as discussed was made by Commr. Prifti and seconded by Commr. Warchol.

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

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Commr. Courcy informed the Board that he is relocating outside of Wakefield, therefore he is resigning from his position as a Commissioner. He stated that he has enjoyed working with everyone and wished all well and continued success. Both the Board and staff thanked Commr. Courcy for his service.

OLD BUSINESS:

Project Updates

Energy Park

Pete said the appraisal and the alternative analysis has been completed and submitted to the State. Both documents are available to the public on WMGLD's website. He noted that the bid and procurement process of major equipment has begun. The generator bid came in last week and will be evaluated. He stated that the generator does have the longest lead times. Pete mentioned that Dave Polson is working closely with Mike McCarthy to ensure that before we sign any contract, we minimize our financial risks in terms of losing deposits, if for any reason this project does not continue.

He said that we are in discussions with the battery vendor. However, with 11 other Municipals involved in other battery projects our risks are lower. The next step will be working on other major equipment and switch gear. On the regulatory side we are working with the State, and we are still waiting on an assignment of a DOER legislative liaison. Commr. Boettcher asked to be kept up to date on both the State and legislative side.

Karen Johnson asked if there has been a public announcement that WMGLD submitted a request to the State for the Energy Park. She also inquired when the public will be able to submit comments. Pete mentioned that the Home-Rule petition was filed in January of 2023 and that the State has not submitted a calendar for public comment yet. She asked when and how this would be announced. Pete said that it will be on the State's website as well as WMGLD's website. He explained that WMGLD does not control this calendar, the State does.

Winter Supply Update

Pete said the rates have been held constant from January. He stated that the gas rate will be lowered next month. He mentioned that he received positive results from the assignment of capacity from National Grid. The reassignment of capacity did come in at the expected levels and hopefully we will see the benefits of this next season. Mark Roberts will review these benefits for the up coming heating season at a Board meeting this Fall. Commr. Boettcher inquired if there will be a carryover of some of the winter rates. Pete said there is an assignment of capacity that has to be paid throughout the year. Commr. Prifti asked if we will be starting the price change early in the season. Pete said we try to levelize the rate for the whole season. Commr. Warchol stated that we will just monitor the situation to try to avoid fluctuations for next year. Commr. Boettcher requested an update on the 480 North Ave. solar project. Dave Polson responded that equipment has been coming in and is being stored at WMGLD facilities. Site walks have also been conducted. He said that the project has an early Fall start date. Commr. Boettcher said we still need to address how the mechanics of the Community Solar project rates will work and the dedication of this project. Pete mentioned that Florida Power and Light as well as some utilities in the western states have models, we can review to help assist us in establishing rates for this community project. All agreed that discussions about models should occur over the summer, over the next two Board meetings.

2023 Strategic Planning Discussion

Pete said that he and Commr. Kallay discussed that it may be best to wait until the new Commissioner has joined the Board before starting this discussion. He spoke to Jon Wortman about targeting the September - October timeframe to have this separate Strategic planning session. Commr.

Kallay inquired about what the output would look like. She said that perhaps a more public-facing output would be more beneficial. She would like to see a sample of the deliverables, so the Board can review what options are available and decide which would be best.

Collective Bargaining- Contract Amendments

Pete confirmed that a Memorandum of Agreement has been reached with both Associations on a cost-of-living adjustment and very limited market-based adjustments. This agreement stands alone and does not establish a precedent. This acknowledges that due to the market and economic factors in the region the following compensation adjustments will be made for all employees effective July 1, 2023: a market-based adjustment will be made to the First-Class Lineman hourly rate of \$1.20 and a market-based adjustment will be made to the Lead Lineman hourly rate of \$1.00. Effective July 1, 2023, a cost-of-living increase of an additional 1% of the contractually agreed upon hourly rate will be applied for all. Effective July 1, 2024, the cost-of-living increase will be increased by an additional 0.5%. Commr. Prifti asked for clarification that the linemen would receive both the market-based adjustments and the cost-of-living adjustments. Pete noted that they would. Commr. Warchol inquired if this was reviewed by Mike McCarthy to which Pete noted it was.

A motion to accept the memorandum of agreement was made by Commr. Warchol and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

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

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

New Business

Discussion of MMWEC & MEAM Annual Conference

Pete mentioned that the agenda for the upcoming MEAM conference is included in the Board book. Commr. Kallay asked Pete if he would be able to describe the difference between the focus of the MMWEC and MEAM conferences. Pete said that MMWEC looks at emergent technologies and projects specific to MMWEC, while MEAM represents all 40 municipals and tries to incorporate a broader scope, such as the energy market and governance. In the past, MEAM conferences have covered topics such as legal issues and

collections. This year they will discuss the roles of Boards and General Managers. There will also be a discussion on the gas markets and how they will affect electric utilities in the coming years. He stated that MEAM cuts across both groups. Commr. Kallay pointed out that both conferences are held in the same month which may make it difficult for members of Boards to attend both. Commr. Warchol asked Pete if handouts from the conference can be made available for those that cannot attend. Pete stated that he will certainly make available any information from the conference. Pete mentioned how MEAM members recently rallied together to gather, organize, and share crucial information with the town of Merrimac, when the proposition of selling the town's electric utility was up for vote. Eighty-eight percent of the registered voters of the town came out to defeat this with a vote of 972 to 6.

Commr. Boettcher mentioned that there was good information at MMWEC's meeting on transmission. Commr. Kallay noted that there was discussion about phasing in new smaller scale nuclear technology on existing nuclear sites. Commr. Boettcher stated that the new technology requires a smaller footprint and offers better safety mechanisms. He also explained that some municipalities are now offering energy efficiency rebates based on the actual reduction of carbon instead of a flat rebate. He noted it will be interesting to see the data on these sliding scale rebates. Commr. Kallay commented that at the MMWEC conference people were fascinated at the simplicity of the payment streams for the Energy Park. Pete said it is simpler because the host customer doesn't charge WMGLD (or its ratepayers) for the land, WMGLD doesn't charge the host customer for the solar panels, the host customer receives the output that can directly offset its energy use in real time, and generation that is more than the host customers use is given back to WMGLD ratepayers. Commr. Kallay said that because it is so simple people can understand and see the value they would receive.

Board Reorganization

Commr. Prifti deferred his role as Chair and will remain as secretary. Commr. Warchol is next in line for Chairperson.

A motion for Commr. Warchol to be Chairperson and Commr. Prifti to continue in the secretary role for the next year was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

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

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

Commr. Boettcher inquired if anyone wanted to take over for him as the liaison for the ESC (Environmental Sustainability Committee). This matter was postponed until the new Commissioner is on board. Commr. Kallay mentioned that perhaps the June 7, 2023, Board meeting should be rescheduled to allow time to review and evaluate resumes for the vacant Commissioner position. A discussion ensued and it was decided that the Board meeting would be rescheduled to June 21, 2023. Pete will talk to Steve Maio about having a joint meeting with Town Council on June 26, 2023, to review and evaluate resumes of potential candidates.

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:54 pm by Commr. Kallay and seconded by Commr. Boettcher

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

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 4-0.