



WMGLD

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Peter D. Dion, General Manager

John J. Warchol, Chair

Philip Courcy, Secretary

Kenneth J. Chase, Jr.

Jennifer Kallay

Thomas Boettcher

WAKEFIELD MUNICIPAL GAS & LIGHT DEPARTMENT

BOARD OF GAS & LIGHT COMMISSIONERS MEETING

February 5, 2020

MINUTES

IN ATTENDANCE: Commrs, John J. Warchol, Chairman
Kenneth J. Chase, Jr.
Jennifer Kallay
Thomas Boettcher

Peter Dion, General Manager, WMGLD

Maureen Mata, Executive Assistant
Mark Cousins, Financial Manager
Sylvia Vaccaro, Office Manager

Julie Smith-Galvin, Town Council Liaison

PLACE: WMGLD Conference Room, 480 North Avenue

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Warchol called meeting to order at 6:31 P.M. and informed the Board the meeting is recorded and that we have a sign in sheet for the members of the public.

Chair Remarks: Nothing to report.

Commissioner Remarks: Commissioner Kallay questioned as to why we require electricians to pick up the electric vehicle chargers for the participants in WMGLD's EV program. Pete Dion responded that the chargers need to be installed by electricians and need to be inspected. She also inquired if WMGLD would accept old solar panels that were not going to be utilized any longer. Pete Dion stated that he is not sure how we would use them, but there may be a secondary market for them soon. Commr. Boettcher suggested that perhaps the customer would be able to trade them in towards their new panels. Lastly, Commr. Kallay wanted to confirm that WMGLD does bid our gas supply. Pete did confirm that Sprague is the agent that does that for WMGLD.

Town Liaison Comments: Julie Smith-Galvin informed the Board that she asked to have the Water Department garage solar project added to the town Council's February 24, 2020 agenda. She also noted that it maybe informative to have tours of the project during the process, or perhaps an app to show its performance.

Public Comments: Nothing to report

Secretary's Report: Nothing to report

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of minutes from the January 8, 2020 was before the Board. Commissioner Boettcher offered minor corrections.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January meeting with the proposed edits was made by Commissioner Boettcher and seconded by Commissioner Kallay.

Vote: the motion was approved unanimously

General Manager's Report:

Water Department Garage Solar Project

The 23.8 kw solar project is in the final design and cost estimate stage. The Town of Wakefield will be the customer of record to qualify for the rebates with WMGLD providing support. The contractor will be BlueSel Solar. They will begin by completing the application on behalf of the Town for the DOER Rebate. The project should be completed before the end of June.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

The level 2 charger at the Americal Center was installed today, as well as the concrete pad at Veterans Field. The charger will be mounted within the next few days depending upon the weather. The level 3 charger at the municipal parking lot at Water and Lincoln streets will be installed soon after. All should be installed and operational by the end of February.

Tree Trimming Program

This program began this week and will continue over the next six weeks. In addition, 25 utility friendly trees will be planted in the spring with an additional 25 being planted in the fall again this year.

GIS System

An intern from Northeast Vocational School has been hired for this semester to assist the Engineering department in editing the GIS system. An additional student may be employed this semester and possibly continue thru the summer. The Substation has also employed an intern from Northeast Vocational School to assist them in their duties.

Update on Major New Customer Projects

Commr. Chase inquired about a time frame for Hopkins Street project. Pete Dion stated that there has been no update. The most active project now is Foundry Street.

Commr. Boettcher inquired if there were anything on the radar for the Converse site changing from a lab space to possibly apartments. The General Manager replied that from a supply perspective there would be no issue. He also said that it would not qualify for gas service because any changes that require a building permit for a multi-family would disqualify it for gas. It would have to be heat pumps. He noted that the first Foundry Street project has been grandfathered.

Gas Department

The class 2 leaks are now in the single digits

The dead main bid is going out next week and the project is slated to start in March. WMGLD has met with Joe Conway from DPW and have prioritized the streets for paving this year. WMGLD has shared our 3-year plan with them. Currently we are installing new main on a few small streets that recently became a priority to the DPW.

Old Business

Project Updates

345kv Project

All manholes have been installed as of 1/31/20. Active street work is at Mill River Crossing on Salem Street. Remaining work for the rest of the winter will be at the railroad right of way and access road off Montrose Street up to their substation. Starting in April NRGRID will have to connect the 12 manholes together with all the conduit required.

WMGLD will be involved in the railroad project at Broadway. Over a 72-hour period during a weekend in May, the tracks will be cut out and WMGLD will be putting in several conduits for sleeves as well as a new gas main. There will be water, sewer, gas, and the 345 project all going in that right of way during this 72-hour period. United Civil is doing all the physical work.

Legislative Update

The Governor, during his State of the State outlined a climate goal of Net Zero by 2050. The Senate released a series of 3 bills including Net Zero by 2050, followed by the House Speaker endorsing Net Zero by 2050. Our bill, H2863, was refiled yesterday to adopt the language and goals of Senate bill, with the omission of the double counting language. It was released from Committee and recommended for favorable improvement. It will probably be merged into some other compromise bill reached by the House and Senate. The General Manager stated that there will be a press release either tomorrow or Friday on the changes to our bill and our endorsement of the goals of 50 percent by 2030, 75 percent by 2040, and 100 percent by 2050.

Commr. Kallay asked Pete Dion if he thinks that it will come in the form of municipals not being exempt, but the clarifying language will come under another bill that states municipals are included and not exempted.

Pete Dion stated that we are different, and the contracts we have will still count. The double counting language has been dropped. Most existing contracts pertaining to RECs will be retired by 2030, so we will be looking at 2030 goal and not a 2022 goal. This is better for all municipals to support.

Municipals will not be giving up exemptions to the Net Zero by 2050 target and will meet the common goal with the inclusion of projects they own. However, Municipals will still be governed by Chapter 164 and will be separate from IOU's in all other ways.

The General Manager informed the Board that MMWEC has switched their audit software to Snugg Pro. This is the same software being utilized by MASS SAVE and ENE. This will provide our customers with a more comprehensive audit report including thermal imaging (when weather permits), paybacks, scorecard, and our rebate and incentive information.

Commr. Boettcher asked for further clarification on the compatibility issues MMWEC is experiencing with the NEST smart thermostats. Both Pete Dion and Mark Cousins explained that the software managers for the smart thermostat companies are now realizing the value that their software will have for load management programs and are now wanting to implement fees for this. MMWEC is looking into perhaps paying one fee for all the municipalities in the state that want to participate in load management programs. Pete stated that NEST initially led the charge, but now Ecobee and others are following suit.

Solar Projects- Public Buildings

Commr. Kallay inquired as to what percentage of the load will be served by this site. Pete Dion explained that each service is a singular service, and the Water Department has 3 separate services at this site. The garage building has a minimal load, so any excess will come back onto the system and the town will receive a credit based on the solar program. The other building was not selected because of the multiple exhausts on the building's roof. Julie Smith- Galvin asked as to why the other water buildings could not be connected so the excess could service their other two buildings. The General Manager explained that the separate services cannot be interconnected because you would have to put a power supply between the two and it is not safe to do so. She also inquired if the project would count toward the 183 kw cap in the DOER program. General Manager Dion explained that the pumping station would bring the total commitment to date to 165kw, leaving room for approximately 3 more residential projects. He also informed the Board that he met with MMWEC today and they stated that PON#2 would potentially get us another 10-12 residential size projects once it is approved.

Strategic Planning

Pete Dion shared with the Board the information that Commr. Kallay forwarded to him. She stated that the Comprehensive Energy Plan might lend itself more to topics than the IPCC report that illustrates where the current state of climate sciences is or the blog which summarizes where all the states are in the country and the corporations that have joined.

Commr. Kallay asked in terms of topics what will be the process of establishing topics? General Manager Dion stated that in terms of power supply we need to see how the bill unfolds. His recommendation is if the goal is 2030 then perhaps set 2025 goals for WMGLD with step increases to 2030. He explained that a lot of municipalities are apprehensive to make commitments or goals until they see the final bill. It has been stressed to Representative Golden that we need to include this somehow and get to a resolution, so we can get started.

Commr. Warchol inquired as to when the annual MMWEC meeting was going to be held? Pete stated that the MMWEC meeting is in May and they would more than likely be willing to discuss where things are now but will be reluctant to discuss anything else until the rules are established. He also stated that tremendous progress has been made by all the municipalities agreeing to Net Zero by 2050. All relationships have been leveraged, so that everyone (MMWEC, MEAM, & ENE) is now pushing in the same direction. He stated that in the interim, the low income topic could be discussed. Commr. Warchol suggested that Board members send specific items to him and he will discuss with Pete and add them to the agenda for the next full Board meeting.

The next meeting will be on February 25, 2020 at 7:45 a.m. The general Manager is finishing up the 2019 results and will forward them to Ken & Phil for discussion and then send to rest of Board.

Julie Smith Galvin offered an update on remote participation in Board meetings. The issue had been dropped and just recently brought back up to Town Council. The consensus was that it is not for all bodies, but for small well-connected bodies such as WMGLD. Steve is looking at a handful of communities that have done this. She did state that there would be specific rules that would apply as to why you cannot be in attendance and it would be up to the discretion of the chairman of the Board. Julie is hopeful it will come back up in the next two Town Council meetings. Ed will be sending out a list of questions to all the chairs of boards in town. Julie suggested WMGLD may want to write a letter as a Board that this would work well for us. She also recommended that it be for voice only at this time, in hopes of it passing quickly.

New Business

Light Up Navajo Update

During the month of May three linemen were scheduled to go for 2 weeks with another three going upon their return. During the process of making sure all details were covered, a municipal requested clarification from the

state retirement board as to what would happen if someone was hurt while on this project. Would they still be eligible for retirement benefits? The answer was no. It would not be considered as Mutual Aid because the utility would not be getting paid. WMGLD cannot send anyone in good faith because of this. General Manager Dion explained that we are now attempting to file legislation thru the budget process that would allow and amendment to prevent situations such as this. CT & NH are sending crews because their retirement wording is different. It would have been a great training opportunity for the younger lineman and great leadership training for our veteran lineman. Hopefully we can participate next year.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:25p.m. by Commissioner Boettcher and seconded by Commissioner Chase.

Vote: Unanimously in favor of adjournment.