



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

January 8, 2020

### MINUTES

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Commrs. John J. Warchol, Chairman  
Philip Courcy, Secretary  
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  
Vinnie McMahon, Senior System Engineer  
Raven Fournier, System Engineer

**PLACE:** WMGLD Conference Room, 480 North Avenue

### CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Warchol called meeting to order at 6:32 P.M. and informed the Board the meeting is recorded.

**Chair Remarks:** Commissioner Warchol nothing specific to report.

**Commissioner Remarks:** None

**Town Council Comments:** Not in attendance.

## **Secretary's Report**

Approval of minutes from the December 4, 2019 meeting was before the Board for approval.

Commr. Boettcher previously mentioned to Pete Dion about a typographical error on page 3 under 2020 Energy Efficiency Program Roll Out paragraph two. The second sentence should read that he also informed the Board (insert that Pete Dion) had let him know that NEST is becoming problematic with demand response programs managed by MMWEC.

Chair Warchol noted that (MMWEC) should be inserted before demand response programs in the next sentence as well.

Chair Warchol noted on page two under the Secretary's report he thought there were additional changes made to the minutes and wanted to be sure all changes were captured. He would like the sentence, No further amendments, be struck and the sentence, Several other minor changes were discussed and agreed to, added. Pete Dion stated he took all the changes and incorporated them into the notes and posted onto the website.

**A motion** to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2019 meeting with the proposed changes was made by Commissioner Courcy and seconded by Commissioner Boettcher.

**Vote: The motion was approved unanimously.**

## **General Manager's Report:**

Pete Dion reported that a great deal of gas work has been completed. The main is installed on White Ave. The service cut overs will be done in the Spring, so the department can now focus on gas leaks. He also informed the Board that OMARK is in the process of conducting the annual gas survey. They are bringing back data improvements enabling System Engineer Raven Fournier to update the GIS system. On the Salem Street project, the gas installations and relocations are 100% complete. Once they begin the installation of the electric conduit duct bank work, it may bring up some new issues, but WMGLD will be able to handle those internally and bill NGRID for anything that arises. NGRID is trying to get all manholes in this winter and has made great progress.

The project will encounter another milestone in the May- June time frame of this year. They need to get across the railroad tracks at Broadway. Over the course of one

weekend (60 hours) the railroad tracks will be cut and taken up. WMGLD and DPW will be involved in this project. Water, sewer, and the new electric duct bank will be installed. WMGLD will install the sleeve for the gas conduit.

Chair Warchol provided an update on The Boys & Girls Club. He explained that the property had some contamination, so the deal did not go through, however, The Boys and Girls Club has the right of first refusal if property is cleaned and goes up for sale again.

## **Old Business:**

### **Project and Program Updates**

Project Updates- Technology Demonstration of GIS, OMS, SCADA, Analysis tools

Vinnie McMahon, Senior System Engineer explained that he went pole to pole in town to build the new GIS system. Prior to this WMGLD was using paper maps and the electronic maps were over 10 years old. He described how it shows every transformer, line, pole, fuse, and how it is all connected. He clicked on the various icons on the GIS system demonstrating how you can see the size wire, and the phase it is on. He stated that WMGLD can now perform all engineering in house saving both time and money. The Load Analysis tool coupled with the automatic meter reading system allows engineering to obtain hourly meter reads to determine how much load is on a transformer in that specific hour period. Thereby, providing the data needed to analyze existing equipment as well as providing data needed to decide on the most efficient replacement equipment.

Comm Courcy asked if the GIS system showed the costs and the assets. Vinnie stated it is not loaded in GIS, but we do have the data in ARCMAP to calculate the costs and that they are tied into sequel databases and our billing systems.

Vinnie continued to explain that GIS is extremely helpful during storms as it is tied to the Outage Management System (OMS). A signal from a meter will give you the exact time it went out and when it went back on. It will also list the category as to why there was an outage.

Vinnie indicated that a meter signal comes in within 2 minutes of going out goes into OMS and Integrator. Once restored dispatch clears the call. He went on to explain the meter reading system (AMR). Meter reading is now an inhouse clerical function which can read meters in a matter of minutes instead of sending someone out with a hand-held device driving by collecting reads. WMGLD has achieved 100

percent connectivity by utilizing repeaters and collectors to obtain the reads. The AMR meter reading system tied with OMS has allowed WMGLD to become more efficient. Pete Dion stated that this system eliminated 3-meter department positions, which were absorbed into other departments of WMGLD

4G tablets have been deployed to the electric and gas field staff to look at integrator and OMS and are now using them daily.

Commr. Boettcher offered accolades to both Vinnie and Raven. He understands what is involved in terms of informational transformation and the ability to utilize and drive value out of the data which is what they have done here and can appreciate the time and effort involved.

Commr. Kallay inquired if WMGLD was integrating new electric load while considering the remaining life of its assets? Vinnie replied that WMGLD knows what their poor assets are. WMGLD utilizes an inspection program for lines and transformers.

Commr. Courcy inquired if GIS automatically generated work orders. Vinnie stated not at this time. It may be down the road.

Pete Dion stated that WMGLD and Braintree partnered with MPOWER to build the OMS system for \$25,000.00 and the WMGLD system is more accurate than the IOU systems in Boston. He also explained that WMGLD's reliability has improved over last 5 years because of this tool. Having the ability to see what transformers are overloaded allows WMGLD to be proactive and target potential issues before they become a problem. He emphasized that the most important component is the connectivity model, which permits WMGLD to efficiently use the information provide in GIS with the information in the OMS and AMR systems. He noted that customer intelligence is still an important component, as it tells us why service was lost, such as, heard a loud bang, squirrel, etc. this way you are only searching a small area.

Raven Fournier, System Engineer discussed how the GIS system has impacted the gas department. In the past WMGLD kept physical copies then progressed to tough books. Everything is now stored live on One Drive. She exhibited that for Dig Safes, a field worker may use GIS to search for a service by address and then zoom into the service and all data that is located on the paper record is located here, such as, swing ties, main with curb ties, service t valves. The paper record is also connected and available to view. GIS has a very high level of detail.

The field person draws the paper record, which Raven enters into the GIS system. This enables the staff to see the whole picture without having to view multiple drawings and allow them to efficiently mark the site. The Service department or street crew can query a phone # for a customer that they are performing a service for. Instead of calling in dispatch for phone #

The Town of Wakefield also uses ESRI for their GIS system, so Town Engineering provided WMGLD with the land base and we integrated the town's data layers, such as sewer, water, hydrants and catch basins, and drain man hole covers. WMGLD also shares our data base with Town Engineering.

If there was an emergency, we would be able to pull up the address and zoom to it and see where the valve and meter is located. Currently, the gas department is using this to pull up drawings daily.

Raven also stated that GIS is also utilized for engineering and planning. The measure tool is used to layout and plan jobs. For example, it will give you the measurement of the section being replaced, and how many services are located on it allowing you to estimate how long this job will take. Another example would be for repairing leaks. If there are 4 leaks on a street it will show you where they are located, so you can determine if it is beneficial to repair the leak or replace the whole main. This tool enables you to see the big picture saving both time and money.

Commr. Boettcher thanked Vinnie and Raven for their hard work and stated that it is a testament to the quality of service the utility is providing. He inquired if there were any stories where this saved the utility dollars to use as positive PR.

Pete Dion stated it is more about time to restoration, but some of the real savings are that WMGLD eliminated 3-meter reading positions and 1 station operator position. The contract engineering expenditure has been reduced and the amount of work that can be done in the field has increased.

The items we are doing that are Best Practice having this technology on the trucks noted in Dynamics Risk. Our model of doing the dead main is being considered Best Practice. We get more pipe in the ground by NEUCO putting the pipe in the ground with only our staff doing tie ins. DPU likes it for multiple reasons, more work is being done, plus only our staff doing the tie ins live.

Commr. Boettcher stated that a customer reached out to Sustainable Wakefield looking for references of solar installers and wondered if WMGLD would publish the list of installers that have completed solar projects in Wakefield. He inquired if DOER still has installer information available to the public. Pete said he was not sure but would reach out to MMWEC to see if there is a list available under the new DOER system.

Commr. Boettcher also inquired that from a utility standpoint would we ask our solar customers if they would potentially be a reference for other people, who are considering solar. Pete advised that he take a look into this matter and get back to him

EV Charging stations have been delivered hopefully within the next month or so the 3 stations will be installed.

## 2020 Goals and Objectives

Pete Dion shared with Commrs. Courcy and Chase the final version based on their last few discussions.

Commr. Warchol asked for clarification on Item 6 on page 5.

Implement community bank financing for energy efficiency and renewables for customers.

Pete Dion mentioned that the banks will be offering the special financing to our customers and WMGLD will market the program through brochures and will have staff available to answer customer inquiries.

Commr. Warchol also inquired if the 19% overtime figure was accurate. Pete Dion stated that the 19% overtime figure is the same as last year. The year end statistics will be available to review at the next month's Board meeting. Mark Cousins stated that historically the number has been in the high teens. Pete declared that he will be willing to discuss another number if the 12/31/19 numbers indicate so.

Comr. Warchol requested clarification on Sustainability/Environment on page 8, #5A

Gather energy use data for customers who convert to heat pumps and purchase electric vehicles to inform future load projections.

Pete Dion explained this is for customers that have installed heat pumps. The concept of beneficial electrification. Are we actually seeing load growth

on these customers as we implement these programs? We need to build the experience database on these technologies, so we are able to make better predications.

Commr. Kallay added that electrification is having an impact on system investments in other utilities. They are having to replace infrastructure at a faster rate or build to different standards.

Pete Dion explained that what WMGLD has been doing on our infrastructure has put us in front of this curve

**A motion** to approve the 2020 Goals and Objectives was made by Commissioner Courcy and seconded by Commissioner Boettcher.

**Vote: The motion was approved unanimously.**

## Strategic Planning Discussion for 2020

During his presentation, Commr. Courcy stated that the Board had discussed strategic planning maybe looking for something a little more long term as we see the industry changing with the electrification of transportation system and how it affects climate change and what we think this timeline might be. Is there a way to breakdown and bracket some of the targets to have some base to look at as the timeline performs? WMGLD buys energy through outside sources and is somewhat a victim to the process. Drawing upon his past experiences while studying where we are at with various energy sources such as, coal, oil, nuclear, renewables, wind, and solar all while taking into

consideration the current political events. Watching the trends to see what our next steps will be and what the industry is doing and how it will affect what we buy and our carbon footprint. Possibly coming up with a couple of categories and trends to see how we can meet 2030 goal.

Commr. Warchol stated that many municipalities are in general agreement with the States goal of getting to 80% renewables by 2050. MMWEC needs to provide some scenarios as how we plan on getting to 80% renewable by 2050. Pete Dion claimed that it is more realistic to look at 2030 instead of 2050.

Commr. Courcy expressed his thoughts that WMGLD is doing everything we can offering incentives and rebates. He said he believes it is going to be up to the individual homeowner to make the necessary investments.

Commr. Kallay shared that the IPCC report from last year indicated a lot of the transformation to renewable needs to happen within the next 10 years. The timeline is getting shorter and the level of transformation is getting much faster. She asked to what extent is WMGLD going to be driving this forward, is it a part our business model? She also commented about the Massachusetts Comprehensive Energy Plans key finding that even if you convert to renewables you are only half way to the 80%, so you cannot leave transportation and heating on the table. She asked do we focus on our supply portfolio or focus on going into homes and changing heating systems?

Commr. Boettcher asked if new financing initiatives are being discussed with MMWEC. Pete said they look around for financing project such as individual utility service related or power supply projects. They are not involved at the customer level. Discussion ensued about getting MMWEC involved in helping its members achieve the 80% goal. Pete Dion noted that he will have this topic added to the agenda for MMWEC's annual meeting held this Spring. Commr. Courcy will continue to gather information and update the Board.

## **Meeting Schedule Update for 2020**

Commr. Courcy will be in Florida part of February and April would like to change April meeting to the first to the 8<sup>th</sup>. Everyone in agreement.

Commr. Courcy wanted to call into meeting in February. Commr. Warchol said we should have Mike McCarthy give a legal opinion on this. Jen to ask Julie to bring up in Town Council meeting and adopt it.

It was decided that the meeting would remain on February, but on there will be a single meeting agenda on February 25, 2019 at 7:45am to discuss 2019 results.



## New Business

### Solar for Public Buildings

Commr. Kallay obtained a list of the public buildings in Wakefield to review for potential solar installation. Pete Dion stated that we may also want to look at WMGLD's Wakefield Ave. building. WMGLD's consultant looked at the two Water Department buildings on Broadway and WMGLD's Wakefield Ave. building. The total cost for all three buildings would be approximately \$300,000 to install solar only. The cost for 100 kw would be \$300,000. Commr. Kallay expressed that the WMGLD building should be separate from the public building, because the incentives and funding from the State may be different.

Pete Dion asked the Board if they wanted to budget money every year for solar projects? Solar installation in public buildings, with a true net (pilot) metering, where WMGLD would keep the excess. There would be no electric bill for the location and what comes back the utility gets.

It was decided that 108 Broadway Bldg#1 (under 25kv) with a cost of \$77,000 along with our rough incentive of one-third would make this an ideal project to utilize the remaining \$50,000 before June 2020. According to preliminary analysis by WMGLD consultant the roof is in decent shape. This project will not be considered as part of the residential bucket.

Commr. Kallay will speak to Julie Smith-Galvin, Town Council liaison about bringing this project to Town Council.

Commr. Kallay suggested that WMGLD complete a full screening of all public buildings for potential solar installation and share this with the public.

Pete Dion asked if the Board wants to look at doing our own building on Wakefield Ave. at our own cost as there is not much usage at this building it would be putting 35 kw back into the system. This would be considered a power supply project. He will review the numbers and bring them to the Board at next month's meeting.

Commr. Boettcher recently had two items brought to his attention. The first being, that the WMGLD consultant doing gas measurements does not have sufficient identification on them. The customer was unsure, so they called the Utility to verify. Pete Dion stated that the consultants have a magnetic sign on their vehicle and an ID on their person. He also strongly advised that customers can always call the Police, as they have the consultants picture ID on file at the Police station. The second item was noted in the Community page on Facebook that there wasn't a lot of time from when customers

received their bill and the bill due date. Mark Cousins stated that it could have been Christmas mail. There has been no change in the billing cycles.

**Adjournment.**

**A motion** to adjourn was made at 9:14 p.m. by Commr. Courcy and seconded by Commr. Kallay.

**Vote:** Unanimously in favor of adjournment.