

WMGLD
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Peter D. Dion, General Manager

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

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

March 4, 2025

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

Peter Dion, General Manager
Mark Cousins, Finance Manager
Joe Collins, Business Analyst
Olivia Hayes, Business Analyst
James Brown, Gas Superintendent
Paul Robertson, Gas Street Foreman
Raven Fournier, Senior Gas System Engineer
Sylvia Vaccaro, Minute Secretary

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Commr. Daly called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and advised the meeting was being recorded.

CHAIR REMARKS:

None

COMMISSIONERS REMARKS:

Commr. Kallay noted that there was a meeting of the Massachusetts Light Commissioners Association's group that included a discussion of the Interagency Rate Working group. She will make the recording available to the Board. The key takeaway from this meeting was the seasonal rate structures. Pete stated that there may be a possibility for WMGLD to have a Heat Pump rate for customers that completely convert to all electric heating and cooling. Joe Collins is gathering information for a future discussion.

TOWN COUNCIL LIASON:

Not present.

Public Comments

None

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of February 12, 2025, minutes was before the Board for approval. Commr. Daly provided an additional edit.

A motion to accept the February 12, 2024, minutes as amended was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Gas Department Annual Report- Jim Brown, Paul Robertson, Ravin Fournier

Paul reviewed completed DPW Coordination Project 2024 which included replacing 6810 feet of steel main on Oak St. and numerous neighboring side streets. He explained that PHMSA FY22 Grant Project in the Water and Crescent Street areas is 75% complete with remaining construction being mains and services on Water St.

Jim explained that as of December 2024 all cast iron on the WMGLD system has been replaced. He stated that coated steel, which must be cathodically protected and requires testing every 3 years, is being replaced with plastic. The test points for coated steel have been reduced to 17 in 2025 down from 33 in 2021. Plastic pipe makes up 88.73% of our system and will be over 90% by the end of 2025. Class 3 leaks have gone down to 13 with 2 more being eliminated with the current grant project. All leaks left are non-significant which means the reads are under 20%. Jim said that we are required to change meters every seven years, so we are moving the inside meters to the outside. These meters now have a bypass on them, so service is not interrupted if the meter needs to be changed in the future.

Raven noted that the major project for 2025 will be the southern portion of Main Street located in the Greenwood section of town. The gas main work is now out for bid and will hopefully start at the end of March or beginning of April. Once the

gas main work is complete, WMGLD staff will start the service work. Not only will this project resolve three leaks in this area, but it will also fix pressure issues. She mentioned that this aligns with the DPW paving plans. Raven provided an update on the PHMSA NGDISM Grant Program as follows:

2022 Application – Water St & Crescent St Project ~replace 1.37 miles

- Application submitted August 2022
- Awarded April 2023
- Environmental Assessment – July through December 2023
- Engineering & Planning – Spring 2024
- Bidding Materials & Labor – Spring 2024
- Construction – Present

2023 Application – Main St Replacement Project ~replace 3.61 miles

- Application submitted August 2023
- Project would replace 3.61 miles of existing infrastructure on 14 street in Greenwood
- Did not Receive Funding

2024 Application – Morrison Road Replacement Project ~replace 1 mile

- Application submitted June 2024
- Awarded October 2024
- Awaiting instruction due to change in Presidential Administration 24

Old Business

Project Updates

Energy Park

Pete noted that work is progressing despite the weather and water runoff issues. The manholes have been set, and the conduit work is being performed by WMGLD crews. The priority for the conduit work is from the battery portion, so it can be up and running by June 1st. The conduit work for a temporary piece of switch gear will be done in the next few weeks. The battery contractor has been on site for about 3 weeks working on putting in the foundations. Everything is moving along schedule. Weekly coordination meetings are ongoing to ensure progress continues. The solar bid for both the Tech and High School will go out at the same time next month with the roofs anticipated for completion next year. Pete mentioned that the bid may also include more public buildings if possible.

Commercial Time of Use Rate

Joe Collins reviewed the proposed rate with the assumption of 300 KW capacity. He stated the recommendation would be a rate savings of 5 cents on off peak with a premium of 9 cents for on peak. In looking at the level III chargers in town, we found that they are being used 66% of the time during off peak and 34% of the time during on peak. Based on the rate we are going to offer, we are not sure how much behavior change will occur. Joe provided three different behavior change scenarios over a 3-year period. He shared both Concord and Holyoke's Commercial Time of Use Rate with the Board for review and discussion. Pete stated it is best to keep the rate structure simple. Page 45 in the Board book is the proposed Commercial Time of Use Rate. Commr. Warchol stated that the proposed revenue neutral rate could be approved and evaluated in six months to a year and tweaked if needed. Pete said that we will write up a rate sheet to be reviewed at the next Board Meeting in April with a public hearing at the beginning of the May Board meeting.

WMGLD Website Development Update

Olivia Hayes explained that during a recent meeting with the Website Developer a few templates were reviewed to ensure that the design works on smartphones as well as a tablet. Pete stated that other industry websites were researched and a few ideas from Reading, Taunton, and Hingham were incorporated into the design. He clarified that the website would utilize an updated version of WordPress.

Board Letter to the State Re: Clean Heat Standard Regulations

Commrs. Daly and Warchol worked on a revised letter for the Board to review and comment on tonight. A discussion ensued and edits were incorporated into the letter. The Board letter will be mailed out to Commissioner Bonnie Heiple, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and copied to Representative Donald Wong, Representative Kate Lipper-Garabedian, and Senator Jason Lewis.

General Manager 2024 Results and 2025 Goals

Pete provided the Board with a detailed review of his 2024 performance versus goals (included in the Board book). The Board also reviewed 2025 goals and will finalize the goals at the April meeting.

New Business

None

Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Board.

Executive Session if necessary

A motion to go into Executive Session was made by Commr. Boettcher at 9:50pm to discuss labor negotiations and management performance and to come

out of Executive session to inform management staff of findings and to adjourn was seconded by Commr. Warchol.

Roll Call Vote

Commr. Daly	Aye
Commr. Kallay	Aye
Commr. Prifti	Aye
Commr. Boettcher	Aye
Commr. Warchol	Aye

The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Executive Session

A motion to come out of Executive session and back into General session was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Prifti.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Commr. Prifti thanked Pete Dion and the WMGLD team for their efforts in 2024. He mentioned some notable 2024 accomplishments as follows: PHMSA Grant award, 100% of cast iron on the system being replaced, Website focus group, and strategic planning work with Jon Wortman. Commr. Prifti also noted some future areas of focus: putting strategic plan into action, additional communication in connection with the Commissioners on legislative matters.

A motion to award Pete Dion a 6% bonus for 2024 was seconded by Commr. Warchol.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 10:34 pm by Commr. Warhol and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.