

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



Jennifer Kallay , Chair
Elton Prifti , Secretary
Sharon Daly
Thomas Boettcher
Lili Allen

Peter D. Dion, General Manager

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

September 9, 2026

IN ATTENDANCE:

Commrs., Chair Jennifer Kallay
Elton Prifti, Secretary
Thomas Boettcher
Sharon Daly
Lili Allen

Peter Dion, General Manager
Mark Cousins, Finance Manager
Dave Polson, Engineering and Operations Manager
Joe Collins, Business Analyst
Olivia Tully, Business Analyst
Mike Capraro, 1st Class Lineman
Sylvia Vaccaro, Minute Secretary

Nicohle Magnifico, CPCU Executive Director, PURMA
Nicole Fina, CELT Municipal Fellow

PLACE:

480 North Ave Wakefield, MA & Zoom Meeting

CALL TO ORDER:

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

CHAIR REMARKS: Commr. Kallay mentioned that she attended the Planning Board meeting. It was reported that there is support for scheduling a public forum, planned for October 27th from 6:00pm to 7:00pm. The forum will most likely be held in a hybrid format, allowing for both in person and virtual attendance. The

agenda has not been finalized. Commr. Daly mentioned that she was also in attendance. Commr. Kallay informed the Board that the Municipal Light Commissioners Association meeting will be held on Thursday, September 24th at 4:00p.m. and will focus on balcony solar. It was noted that balcony solar is a relatively new application and may be addressed in upcoming legislation, the meeting will provide an opportunity to learn more about the topic and hear the perspectives of other municipal light commissioners and communities.

She also noted that there is an upcoming presentation regarding municipal wastewater energy recovery. Drew Thompson, a public official involved with a sewer heat recovery program in King County, Washington will provide the presentation on Tuesday, September 29 at 2:00p.m. Pete Dion indicated that he plans to attend along with Commr. Kallay. She suggested that this information be shared with the Wakefield Department of Public Works (DPW), as they may be interested in participating. The meeting and registration information will be shared with the Board. She mentioned that she received a notice from Connected Homes stating that her Sensibo device is no longer an eligible device. Joe Collins stated that he was not aware of any notifications but will contact Zoe Eckert at MMWEC and investigate the matter.

Commr. Kallay requested an update regarding a recent customer outreach. The first being a question on the legality of the payment of credit card fees by customers. Pete stated that the Department is awaiting legal opinion to provide to the customer and noted that the applicable language had been clarified, the fee must be identified as a "convenience fee," which is collected at the time of the transaction and paid directly to the bank rather than to the Department. She requested that the matter be added to the customer issues log to ensure appropriate follow-up.

The second item was a suggestion to improve the transparency of the Department's meeting agendas. It was noted that much of the descriptive information regarding agenda items is currently contained in the Board book rather than on the agenda itself. Suggestions included providing additional description on the topic areas to be discussed directly in the agenda and providing greater specificity for Executive Session items, including identifying the applicable statutory rationale for entering Executive Session.

Regarding public comment, Commr. Kallay advised public participants that general comments will be limited to two minutes due to the length of the agenda and the number of items carried over from the previous meeting. Members of the public wishing to comment on the large load policy were asked to provide those comments during that agenda item so the Board could engage in a more detailed discussion of the policy.

COMMISSIONERS REMARKS: Commr. Allen mentioned that the Wakefield ESC (Environmental Sustainability Committee) would like to hold the EV showcase and pumpkin pickup on Sunday, November 8, using the department's two parking lots at 480 North Ave. Pete stated that Sunday, November 8 would be fine. It was noted that vendors would be contacted, including potentially a vendor that could provide EV test drives. Commr. Boettcher thanked the Department for again

sponsoring this year's Porchfest and noted the importance of the event and community sponsorships. He reported on his attendance at the Northeast Public Power Association (NEPPA) Annual Conference. Sessions included winter resiliency and reliability of the New England electric grid, data center policy and planning, fusion energy, decommissioning costs and legal and federal policy updates. Commr. Allen noted that some of the information presented relied on pre-COVID data. Pete commented that the new head of ISO New England provided a clear and informative overview of the complex challenges facing the region. Of particular interest was the suggestion that regional energy planning be considered in approximately seven-year increments to address immediate reliability and affordability needs while continuing to work toward longer-term 2050 goals. Commr. Prifti informed the Board that the Healey-Driscoll administration had issued an Executive Order regarding data centers, which may have implications for local governments and electric utilities. The order will be distributed to the Board for review.

Town Council Liaison

Not present

Public Comments

None

Secretary's Report

Approval of July 15, 2026, minutes came before the Board for approval. Commr. Daly provided minor edits.

A motion to approve the July 15, 2026, minutes as amended was made by Commr. Prifti and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Insurance Discussion- Nichole Magnifico – PURMA

Nichole Magnifico from Public Utilities Risk Management Association (PURMA) provided an overview of the Department's insurance coverage and annual risk management review process. She noted that recent recommendations for WMGLD resulted in the addition of cyber insurance, enhanced public officials and employment practices liability coverage, and increased property insurance limits. She also noted that the Department achieved significant premium savings, particularly on auto insurance, which offset the cost of the additional coverage for WMGLD. Nichole will provide the Board with the Department's annual insurance checklist, including any recommendations or areas of concern. PURMA's captive insurance programs are not-for-profit, net-zero budget and are limited to public utilities. She reviewed Employment Practices and Public Officials Liability coverage and explained the process for reporting potential claims. She noted that an allegation generally must include a demand for a remedy to constitute a claim and that notice may be provided by any insured party. Commr. Kallay requested a

copy of the current Public Officials Liability policy. Nichole Magnifico agreed to provide it and will remind members to distribute updated insurance policies to their Commissioners following renewal each year. She clarified that PURMA staff serve as the Department's risk managers.

Old Business

General Manager's Report

Pete noted that some items will be discussed under the mid-year review.

Project Updates

A. Energy Park

Pete reported that the Northeast Metro Regional Vocational school successfully opened last week and that all project objectives necessary for the opening were met. Work has begun to remove the old school, and remaining Energy Park work primarily consists of punch list items, continued testing, and coordination with the school regarding their new building management systems. Pete commended Vinnie McMahon, Dave Polson and team for their work on the microgrid, noting the complexity involved in coordinating the battery, generator, solar, switchgear, and other components under various operating scenarios. Dave added that Vinnie had done an excellent job coordinating the various vendors and technical teams. Commr. Daly noted it would be beneficial if Vinnie and the team would provide a more detailed presentation on the microgrid during the January electric presentation.

Pete also noted the success of the Energy Park Open House held in conjunction with the APPA (American Public Power Association) National Conference, which was attended by approximately 40 people from around the country. Representatives from Milton CAT, Lightshift, and the department's technical team participated, the Board recognized the Department's efforts to share information about the Energy Park with others in the industry and increase awareness of the project. Pete further explained that the Line Department performed the physical electrical work associated with the project, including installing duct banks, pulling cable, making connections, and installing switches, rather than contracting out that work.

B. Educational Program Development- Nicole Fina

Nicole Fina provided an update on the Energy Park fellowship project, which focuses on developing educational and workforce opportunities with Wakefield Memorial High School and Northeast Metropolitan Vocational High School. She met with school leadership and faculty to identify hands – on learning tools and classroom resources related to the Energy Park, electrification, energy management, and careers in the energy industry. The next phase will include Energy Park tours, classroom activities, and development of an interactive dashboard using Energy Park data to demonstrate energy demand, load management, peak demand savings,

and other concepts. An educational toolkit and fellowship report will also be developed to document the project and support future partnerships and grant opportunities. The Energy Park project poster received the People's Choice award at a Boston University fellowship showcase, and WMGLD was selected as the first municipality to participate in a fellowship extension. Pete commented that the APPA (American Public Power Association) grant funding will also be used to help purchase educational tools, potentially including small-scale demonstration boards for vocational students.

Gas Moratorium

The Board discussed the residential gas service moratorium and the need for a policy governing new gas services for existing residential properties. Pete confirmed that customer of focus in the last Board meeting was connected and agreed to be placed on Heat Pump Rate B and Gas Rate A. The existing gas service request list is frozen at 77 customers. For future requests from existing single-family homes, customers using heat pumps as their primary heating source and gas as their backup would receive Heat Pump Rate B and Gas Rate A, consistent with the recently connected customer with a heat pump. The Board discussed maintaining the existing gas rate structure rather than creating an additional rate. Given concerns regarding peak demand and whether the Gas Rate B discount remains appropriate, the Board agreed that a gas cost of service study should be conducted. A new study would likely be undertaken in 2027. The proposed October policy review will therefore not move forward at this time. The Board confirmed that the moratorium on gas service for new residential construction remains in effect. Existing home requests will continue to be tracked, and customers will be connected as appropriate using the applicable existing rates.

A motion to unfreeze the customer gas waiting list and return administration of the list and customer connections to the Department, with connections made on an as needed basis when work is being performed on the customer's street was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Prifti

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Employee Survey Discussion

The Board discussed potential custom questions for the employee survey, including employees' experiences, areas for improvement, and opportunities for growth. GreatBlue has been engaged and is awaiting any additional questions before proceeding. The Board agreed to move forward with the survey as soon as possible.

Large Load Discussion

Pete clarified that no decision on the draft Large Load Policy was intended at this meeting. The draft was provided to identify areas requiring clarification and any significant topics that may be missing, with a broader public discussion planned as a major agenda item for the October meeting. He discussed the importance of maintaining flexibility in the policy and avoiding overly detailed provisions. He also recommended against establishing a new rate at this time because the appropriate rate structure would depend on an individual large-load customer's characteristics and profile. Factors such as whether the load is consistent or variable, seasonal demand, capacity requirements, and overall system impacts would need to be considered as part of a large load service agreement with each customer. The policy's primary objective is to ensure that serving a large-load customer does not negatively impact existing ratepayers. Depending on the customer's load profile, the applicable rate structure could include different combinations of capacity, energy, and delivery charges.

Commr. Boettcher clarified that the proposed Large Load Policy is not a marketing plan or an invitation or blueprint for the development of a data center. Rather, the policy is intended to proactively establish safeguards, requirements, and guidelines for entities that meet the large load threshold, which could include data centers, manufacturing facilities, or other large electric users. It was further explained that if an entity satisfies all applicable town and state building codes, zoning requirements, bylaws, and other regulatory requirements, the Department is generally obligated to provide interconnection to the electric grid. The Department can, however, establish policies and tariffs governing the requirements and conditions under which that interconnection occurs. The Board's role is not to determine which entities may locate in town, as that is outside the Board's current scope and authority.

The Board noted that the Governor recently signed Executive Order 658, Establishing Requirements for Responsible Data Centers, Data Center Development and Operations in Massachusetts. The draft Large Load Policy has not yet been evaluated in light of the new Executive Order and may require significant revisions. The Board discussed the need to determine whether Executive Order 658 supersedes the Executive Order currently referenced in the draft policy. It was further noted that the state is developing guidance for evaluating large-load proposals in Massachusetts, similar to the framework being developed by the Department at the local level. Because additional state guidance is anticipated by the end of December 2026, any Large Load Policy adopted by the Board may need to be revised as state requirements develop, the Board agreed that moving forward with a local policy in the interim would help protect the Department and allow it to remain ahead of these developments. The Board discussed whether the Department has the authority to dictate a potential customer's backup generation requirements. The Department will consult with legal counsel, Mike McCarthy, and report back to the Board.

Commr. Boettcher inquired whether the policy should prohibit Department employees from entering into nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) with entities seeking to work with the Department. The Board agreed that counsel should review the legality and appropriate scope of such a provision, including whether restrictions should apply at all stages of a potential project. The remainder of the draft policy was reviewed, and the Board agreed to review and discuss further changes to an updated version of the policy during the October Board meeting. It was decided to make the initial draft policy available on the Department's website through a separate link. The Board also suggested using social media to direct interested members of the public to view the draft policy.

New Business

Goals and Objectives Mid-Year Update

Pete reported that facility safety audits will begin this month, with specialists assigned to the office, line, gas, and substation facilities. The first audits will be announced, with future audits conducted randomly. De-escalation training is planned for the fourth quarter. Year-to-date statistics were reviewed and are generally on target. The three-year capital plan will be addressed in November. The gas emergency plan has been completed, and the electric emergency plan is being updated. An inventory of major systems and inspections is also underway. Pete reported that a company, YAXAY has been engaged to develop a gas stranded cost analysis tool to evaluate the cost impacts of various gas-load scenarios. Pete reported that he will provide updates on succession planning at the next Board meeting as senior personnel approach retirement.

Customer outreach continues through the Senior Center and the Farmers Market. An employee Community Service Day is scheduled for October 14 and will include yard cleanups and assistance with the food pantry. Commissioners are welcome to participate.

Mark Cousins reported that capital and operating budgets remain on target. Delinquent receivables increased slightly, likely due in part to higher summer electric bills, but have begun to decline and will continue to be monitored. Energy Park financing has been completed, bringing cash flow back on track. Pete noted that legislative activity remains ongoing through the end of the year. He reported that he will facilitate a roundtable discussion with House Chairman Cusack at an upcoming MMWEC conference. Staff continues to advocate for passage of mutual aid legislation, which has remained unresolved through several legislative sessions.

Olivia Tully provided an update on public power education and customer engagement efforts. MMWEC is developing materials to educate employees about public power and assist utilities in communicating its benefits to customers. Once finalized, the materials will be customized for the Department and initially shared internally. She will provide the Board with representative materials when available.

Any other matter not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Executive Session – MMWEC Special Project 2026A, Discussion of Offshore Wind Power Supply Opportunity, , pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(10) - Trade secrets / proprietary information

A motion to leave open session and enter Executive Session, and return to Open Session solely to vote on Project 2026A and then adjourn the September 9, 2026, meeting was made by Commr. Prifti and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

A motion to exit Executive Session and return to Open Session was made by Commr. Prifti and seconded by Commr. Boettcher.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

A motion to participate in Project 2026A as recommended by Pete Dion for 2 Megawatts at \$0.125/kWh was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Daly.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Commr. Boettcher and seconded by Commr. Daly.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 p.m.