

**Belmont Municipal Light Advisory Board and
Government Structure Review Committee
Conference Room 4, Belmont Town Hall
Monday, March 25, 2012
5:00 PM**

ATTENDEES:

Ashley Brown, Municipal Light Advisory Board (MLAB) Chair
Bob Forrester, Municipal Light Advisory Board Vice Chair
Ralph Jones, Municipal Light Advisory Board
Tim McCarthy, Municipal Light Advisory Board
James Palmer, BMLD General Manager/CEO
Jennifer Murphy, BMLD Executive Assistant to the General Manager
Bob McLaughlin, Government Structure Review Committee
Andrew Levin, Government Structure Review Committee
Rebecca Vose, Government Structure Review Committee
Paul Solomon, Government Structure Review Committee
Anne Marie Mahoney, Government Structure Review Committee
Edward L. Selgrade, BMLD Legal Counsel

CALL TO ORDER:

The joint meeting of the Municipal Light Advisory Board (MLAB) and the Government Structure Review Committee was called to order at 5:05 PM by Paul Solomon, Government Structure Review Committee.

GOVERNANCE of the BELMONT MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT:

Mr. Solomon started by congratulating the Belmont Light Department on the approval of the substation project. It was stated that the aim is to have a group of individuals that have a background in electric field instead of having just the Board of Selectmen. It was presented that a group be selected by the Board of Selectmen, called a Governing Board.

Mr. Jones stated that during the 115kV process there was a very important role that the Selectmen had to play, which is part of the job as an elected official. However, he stated that the Board does not need to get into the day to day functions of the Light Department. Those duties remain solely with the General Manager. Rebecca Vose asked Mr. Jones if a member of the Board of Selectmen has to serve on that board. Mr. Jones responded that he does not feel that a Selectman has to serve on the board. He stated that the light's stay on in town due to the men and woman who work at the Light Department. Mr. Jones agrees that they should not change the governance and to stay with the Light Board and redefine the roles.

Mr. Selgrade stated that there are three options on the table.

- 1) Board of Selectmen (currently in place).

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- 2) Elected Light Board members (elected every year).
- 3) Create an Appointed Board (which would have to be a drafted legislation).

Mr. Forrester stated the approval process of the 115kV project would never have been such a huge success without the support of the Board of Selectmen and Mr. Jones. During the meeting with the Warrant Committee many issues and questions came up. The funding of pensions and post retirement health benefits was a concern. Another issue is the manager's role reporting to two boards, which can be confusing at times. Mr. Jones stated that in Massachusetts only seven municipalities are governed by Selectmen, thirty three are majority elected. Nationally, 41% are independently appointed. Mr. McLaughlin stated that he doesn't want to see an elected board or appointed board, and should just stay with the Selectmen.

Since there was a shift in opinion with the Structure Committee and the Light Board in regards to the Governance, Solomon suggested having a document drawn up outlining the status quo and stating enhanced duties of the Light Board. Mr. Brown stated that he will work with Ed Selgrade on a proposal and it will be presented at the next meeting.

Adjournment:

The joint meeting of the Municipal Light Advisory Board (MLAB) and the Government Structure Review Committee was adjourned at 6:15 PM by Paul Solomon, Government Structure Review Committee.
