

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
IN JOINT WITH MUNICIPAL LIGHT ADVISORY BOARD
MULTI PURPOSE ROOM, BEECH STREET CENTER
266 BEECH STREET, BELMONT
Tuesday, September 23, 2014
7:00 PM**

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RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Andres Rojas called a regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board (BMLB) to order at 7:00 PM.

Vice Chair Forrester called a regular meeting of the Municipal Light Advisory Board (BMLAB) to order at 7:01 PM.

Present:

BMLB- Chair Rojas, Member Paollilo

BMLAB- Vice Chair Forrester, Members Jones, Klionsky, McClain

Belmont Light- General Manager Palmer, Staff Keane, Consultant Joseph

II. SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION PROJECT UPDATE

Chair Rojas introduced General Manager Palmer, who provided a presentation on the progress of Belmont Light's substation and transmission project. Palmer began with a history of the project, explaining that the project was approved by town meeting in February of 2012. By May 2013, it was decided that the best option for Belmont is a new substation with a 115-KV single-loop transmission line and that Belmont Light should partner with NSTAR on the development and ownership of the project.

Palmer then described the project as having three ongoing phases: 1) the substation site and building; 2) the transmission route; and 3) the regulatory/permitting process. Regarding the substation, work is well underway at the 20 Flanders site. All associated plans and approvals are in place, demolition work has commenced, and the design for the substation building is complete. For the transmission route, the route has been identified and negotiations have been completed with Massachusetts transportation agencies. The regulatory and permitting process is also in progress, with proceedings NSTAR, ISO-NE, and MA Department of Public Utilities (MA DPU) begun.

Palmer said that recent project milestones also include receiving approvals from the Belmont Planning Board and the City of Cambridge Conservation Commission, and issuing an RFP for substation construction. In terms of next steps, demolition at the substation site; the contract award for the new substation; procurement of major equipment; and an RFP for the transmission route should all be expected to happen during fall 2014. He also stated that the project team does face some significant challenges ahead, including the scheduling of a MA DPU approval process, enduring changing market conditions, and interfacing with a major Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line project.

To conclude the presentation, Palmer said that he was proud to report that the project team maintains the expectation that energization will happen in 2016 and that the \$53.7 million capital bond limit will not be exceeded. In just two short years, tremendous progress has been made and Palmer is confident that this momentum will continue for the duration of the project.

Paolillo then asked for clarification on what the MA DPU approval process entails. Palmer responded that though municipal utilities are not usually required to follow standard MA DPU protocols, because Belmont Light is partnering with NSTAR on the project, Belmont Light must file with MA DPU to get certain permissions. Kliensky further described some of the steps that the MA DPU filing process involves and commented that he does not expect any kinks to occur when Belmont Light files.

III. AUDIENCE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Rojas asked for questions and comments from the audience. Points discussed include:

- Requests for more details on how the partnership with NSTAR works. (Palmer and Rojas explained that Belmont will own the substation and NSTAR will own the transmission line and the switchgear. Paolillo and Palmer also added that the joint agreement with NSTAR helps save Belmont almost 50% of the capital bonding limit, which amounts to millions of dollars.)
- If there are overruns on the budget, will Belmont run the risk or will the purchaser (NSTAR) be responsible? (Palmer, Jones, and Rojas confirmed that though it depends on where and how the overrun occurs, it is most likely that Belmont residents would not endure the overrun.)
- A request for an explanation of how power from the new substation will be transmitted to residents' homes.
- How does cost sharing through ISO-NE work?
- Is putting solar panels on the substation still being considered? (Palmer said that Belmont Light is not opposed to doing so, but that it would involve working closely with NSTAR and that adding solar panels would add a layer of complexity to this already complex critical infrastructure project.)

- How the project design addresses flooding concerns.
- An update from Palmer providing details about the demolition that was currently happening at 20 Flanders Road.
- Excitement that the demolition is visibly underway and that the project is going well.
- A comment from Rojas that the project will have a positive impact on businesses and amenities in the Flanders Road area.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The Boards moved to adjourn at 7:40 PM.