

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
BELMONT LIGHT CONFERENCE ROOM
40 PRINCE STREET
Thursday, January 29, 2015
8:30 A.M.**

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I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rojas called a regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board (MLB or Light Board) to order at 8:45 A.M.

Present:

MLB- Chair Rojas, Vice Chair Baghdady, Member Paolillo

Belmont Municipal Light Advisory Board (MLAB)- Chair Brown (no quorum)

Belmont Light- General Manager Palmer, Staff Keane

II. AUDIENCE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

A resident asked when the updated tariff for Residential Rate APV for solar distributed generation would be filed with the MA DPU, and Palmer responded that this would happen in April.

Another resident questioned the secrecy of wind RECs. Palmer replied that information about RECs is not secret, but that details on power supply contracts are always confidential. Brown and Rojas confirmed that this is not a Belmont Light decision, but something mandated by wholesale energy suppliers to help them negotiate contracts and pricing with utilities. If Belmont Light were to disclose certain details, the contracts would be void.

Another audience member asked why Belmont Light's cost of service study had been delayed. Palmer clarified that no study had been delayed; that information was inaccurate. The next cost of service study would be done after the completion of the substation and transmission project and the last one was conducted in 2013.

III. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

a. Update on substation & transmission project

Palmer provided an update on the progress of the project. Following a thorough bidding process, Boston Building & Bridge Corporation had recently been selected as the vendor to construct the

new substation building. Rojas stated that the firm has done other work in Belmont and is reputable.

The group further discussed the project's bidding and award processes, along with some details about construction. Palmer then stated that the project team will issue an RFP in February soliciting vendors for the transmission part of the project. Construction work for the transmission line is expected to begin in July. Palmer foresees some challenges in coordinating with external stakeholders and government agencies before work commences, but is confident the project team will continue their impressive progress. Late May 2016, or potentially early June, remains the target date for energization of the substation.

Palmer will likely present a project update at Town Meeting in May.

a. Update on billing system

Palmer said that Belmont Light worked closely with staff from the Town Administrator's Office and the Treasurer's Office in selecting NISC to provide the new billing and financial system. The project team is confident that NISC is the best vendor.

a. Communications

The group discussed developing communications pieces to help convey how much green energy Belmont Light currently purchases and what future goals on this subject are. Belmont Light, is by many measures a leader in renewable energy supply, demand-side management, and energy efficiency, and this message needs to get out. Belmont Light will also work on a succinct flyer to summarize the new solar rate.

IV. UPDATE FROM MLAB

a. General Manager's annual performance review

Brown reported that MLAB is working on an annual performance evaluation for Palmer. Baghdady stated that he would like the Light Board to be more involved in evaluating the General Manager. MLAB will formally present the Light Board with the results of its review at its next meeting.

b. New England energy prices

Brown is hopeful that New England supply costs over the next few years will not be as high as originally expected because global oil and natural gas prices have dropped. The natural gas pipeline issue will continue to impact New England energy prices in the winter, but increases might not be dramatic as initially projected. Belmont Light is constantly evaluating trends in energy prices.

c. Logistics for solar payments for existing customers

The Board briefly discussed the administrative logistics for issuing bill credits to existing solar customers, as approved by the Light Board in November and December. Belmont Light will finalize its plans for implementing the payments and will discuss them with the Board at the next meeting.

d. Energy efficiency and carbon reduction programs

Brown explained that because of all the attention and focus on the solar policy and pricing issue, Belmont Light is running behind on updating its energy programs. With the policy decided upon, Belmont Light can now focus on developing programs to incentivize new residential solar installations and on assessing the carbon reduction impacts of different energy efficiency programs. An update on this topic will be provided at a future board meeting.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved: into Executive Session at 10:02 A.M.:

- a. To protect trade secrets, confidential, competitively sensitive or other proprietary information provided in the course of proceedings when a municipal lighting plant board determines that such disclosure will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling, or distributing electric power and energy pursuant to section 47D of chapter 164.
- b. To conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The board re-entered Open Session at 10:32 A.M. to adjourn.