

Belmont Net Metering Working Group Meeting Minutes

6 July 2015

Town Hall Conference Room 2

2015 JUL 15 AM 8:56

Present: Tony Barnes, Roy Epstein, Robert Gallant, Steve Klionsky & Henry Jacoby

The meeting came to order at 7:30 p.m.

Committee operations opened with a brief self-introduction by the members and alternates, and by 15 public observers and two member of the press in attendance.

Election of Officers

The following officers were voted by the Committee members:

Roy Epstein, Chair

Steve Klionsky, Vice-Chair

Henry Jacoby, Clerk

Establishment of Committee Timing and Procedure

Chair Epstein announced that there will be an attempt to hold meetings to two hours maximum. Members of the public are welcome, but will not participate directly during the Committee's deliberations. However, the final 15 minutes of each meeting will be reserved for questions, statements or other comments from the public.

Review of the Open Meeting Law and the Charge to the Committee

Chair Epstein led a review and discussion of pertinent portions of the Open Meeting Law. The Committee's charge was discussed, and it was anticipated that the first two meetings would be devoted to getting up to speed. Also, it was agreed that, among the two components (pricing structure and programs to assist Belmont Light (BL) in reducing carbon emissions), the Committee's main focus will be on the pricing issue.

Discussion of General Goals and Criteria for a BL Tariff

An opportunity was provided for members and alternates to express their views of the task before the Committee. Mr. Klionsky gave a brief summary of the history of the net metering question. Mr. Epstein emphasized that the Committee must be clear in defining terms, and stated his view that there likely is a solution acceptable to the broad middle of the Town. Mr. Gallant commented on the June 19, 2014 BL memo and other proposals. Mr. Jacoby said he felt the Committee is not tied to the set of proposals previously proposed in Belmont, and called attention to the issue of short-run vs. longer-run issues in the design of a pricing structure. In addition, there was general committee agreement that simplicity (making the procedure understandable) is a desired attribute of the tariff policy.

Review and Discussion of Solar Tariff Documents

Chair Epstein distributed a set of documents of relevance to the Committee's deliberations and each was discussed. These included:

1. Belmont Municipal Light Department Net Metering and Buyback Tariff for Emission-Free Renewable Generation Facilities Serving Customer Load (the current BL tariff document)

In this discussion it was requested that the Committee obtain a description of the capabilities of the advanced metering infrastructure (smart meters) being installed in Belmont.

2. Sustainable Belmont's Energy Working Group, Comments on Belmont Light's/MLAB's Current and Proposed Renewable Energy Net Metering/Buyback Tariffs, July 31, 2014.

Discussion covered issues of tariff design, "values" questions and equity concerns, and included the introduction of tariff systems adopted in Concord and Groton that differ from the BL proposals.

3. Ashley Brown, Valuation of Distributed Solar: A Qualitative View, *The Electricity Journal*, December 2014.

A Committee member commented that this article identifies valid issues for discussion, but much of the context is more appropriate for an environment like California than Belmont, and we need to focus on our specific situation. An additional suggested reading was Linvill, C., J. Shenot and J. Lazar (2013), Designing distributed generated tariffs well: Fair compensating in a time of transition, The Regulatory Assistance Project (a URL is provided in the references of the Sustainable Belmont paper above.)

4. BL memorandum, Proposed fixed for recovery of costs from residential solar PV distributed generation, October 29, 2014.

Discussion included a concern for the appropriateness of the term "cross subsidy" in descriptions of the effects of various solar PV tariff regimes.

5. Two slides presented at the May 2015 Town meeting, each titled "Lowering the Subsidy at the Right Time".

The Committee expressed interest in receiving additional detail from Belmont Light to help us better understand the calculations used in this approach

Pubic Contributions

At 9:15 the floor was opened to public contributions, and the following were received:

Darrel King offered information about the meters being installed in Belmont.

Claus Becker observed that BL could not explain clearly how the new meters work.

Mark Davis explained the Concord tariff, and Claus Becker offered additional details.

Roger Wrubel commented further on the Concord tariff. He further stated that estimates of solar penetration ignore the value of solar PV in reducing BL capacity and transmission charges.

Phil Thayer requested that two speakers be allotted time to address the Committee. Chair Epstein said the Committee was not open to guest speakers at this stage, but stated that the two suggested persons were welcome to attend and participate in the public comment period.

Mark Robbins found the Committee cynical in its concern for the small total subsidy in net metering compared to the effects of SRECs and other policies.

Erin Rollins observed a lack of transparency in how BL has handled information, leading to a breakdown of trust.

Travis Frank decried the too-great focus on the bottom line focus of BL and the lack of an overall picture of the role of solar—pushing for a holistic policy

Final Announcements and Adjournment

Chair Epstein announce that the next meeting will be held on 8 July 2015 at 7:30 p.m. in Town Hall Conference Room 2 and that meetings for the coming week will be announced shortly.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.