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**MEETING NOTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
TOWN HALL
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
Monday, September 11, 2017
5:30 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dash called to order a regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board (MLB) at 5:32 P.M.

Present:

MLB – Chair Adam Dash, Vice Chair Mark Paolillo, Member Jim Williams

LBAC – Chair Steve Klionsky (no quorum)

Belmont Light – Acting General Manager Craig Spinale, Staff Aidan Leary

Chair Dash began the meeting by notifying the public of a Belmont Drives Electric Ride & Drive event to celebrate National Drive Electric Week on September 17th.

The Board then observed a moment of silence in observance of September 11th and for the victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Dash noted, with this being the Municipal Light Board, how fortunate it was to have electricity when so many others did not.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved to enter Executive Session at 5:35 P.M. (Paolillo aye, Williams aye, Dash aye):

- a. To conduct strategy sessions in preparations for negotiations with non-union personnel**
- b. To conduct collective bargaining sessions in contract negotiations with non-union personnel**

The Board moved to return to open session at 6:26 P.M. (Paolillo aye, Williams aye, Dash aye).

III. ACTING GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Spinale reported that Belmont Light had sent a line truck with two employees down to Homestead, Florida as part of the recovery effort following Hurricane Irma. He said this is part of a large contingent from the Northeast Public Power Association (NEPPA). The employees will be there for a two week period, after which the situation will be reevaluated to determine

whether the employees will continue there or if they will be sent back. The American Public Power Association (APPA) had also reached out for assistance in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

a. Status of substation crossovers

Spinale gave an overview of the latest developments in the Blair Pond Substation and Transmission Line Project. Over the month of August 2017, Belmont Light conducted a series of four planned power outages in order to cut over the supply of the old substations from the Eversource lines to the new Blair Pond Substation. Spinale said that the cut overs went smoothly and all Belmont customers are now served by the Blair Pond Substation.

Paolillo remarked that he experienced an outage and it was amazing to see how the outage began at the exact time set out and power was back on within forty five minutes. Spinale said that outside of some notification overlap, there were no issues that arose during the outages.

Williams asked about the configuration of the lines feeding town. Spinale said there were previously six 13kV distribution lines being fed into town by Eversource, which served the three existing substations. With the cut overs, Belmont Light removed those six lines from Eversource and reconnected them to the Blair Pond Substation. All distribution lines are underground.

IV. DISCUSSION ON EDWARD J. COLLINS CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL

Dash stated that there was discussion before on whether to have the Collins Center from UMASS Boston perform a governance analysis and provide advice on how to run the MLB. The Board sent out the proposal and received a proposal back.

Dash said there had been a lot of change with Belmont Light and the MLB and he was not looking to create any new chaos or change until things settle out. He added that he was not sure whether the problem had been the governance or the people involved, so it might take some time to let things play out before making any change. Dash said another proposal would be to keep the current membership of the MLB the same, but add the Chair of the Light Board Advisory Committee (LBAC) and the Chair of the Energy Committee as Members. He said this way, there would still be an elected majority with the expanded expertise from the two other boards.

Paolillo said he liked the idea but would have to give it more thought. He said he's always felt that the MLB does not have the expertise or time to deal with the day-to-day operations of Belmont Light. Paolillo is in favor of an appointed MLB. He said across Massachusetts Municipal Light Plants (MLPs), only four out of forty have the Board of Selectmen act as the Light Board. Dash said that it would be a good idea to retain the elected control so that there is public accountability. He said this would remove politics from the Board while still keeping the public in control.

Williams said he strongly favored have the Collins Center come in because the cost was only \$18,000. He said over the past seven years, there have been a number of changes with regard to

LBAC, the General Managership, and the Board of Selectmen. He said Dash's idea may be a good idea but he would rather hear from a group that can survey the marketplace and see how things are being done elsewhere. He said there are a number of challenges going forward and he is concerned about the Board of Selectmen overseeing both Belmont Light and the Town.

Paolillo said that there was still the need to do a search for the permanent General Manager and the Board had agreed on hiring the Collins Center to do that search. He wondered whether a component of that search could be to provide some thoughts on governance. Dash said that Interim Town Administrator Phyllis Marshall (not present) had reached out to other MLPs to see what those municipalities used for similar searches. Dash said that the Collins Center has also not performed a search for an MLP General Manager before, so they may not have contacts in the industry who they could call on to apply for the position.

Paolillo said that the Board already had the information that the Collins Center would gather. Dash agreed and asked what the Collins Center would be doing that the Board couldn't do. Paolillo said this would also require a bylaw change. Williams said if the Board moved to an appointed Board, it would but according to Town Counsel, an elected Board would not. Paolillo said it would be an expansion of the bylaw to reflect the new Members. He said that he would only go to an appointed MLB, not an elected one. Williams said that this discussion is why the Board needs someone like the Collins Center to advise them.

Paolillo asked if the Board could defer a decision until the next meeting. Dash said he hadn't planned to vote yet but wanted to open discussion. He said it would be necessary to determine whether to work on the governance first or the General Manager search first. Williams said that the governance should be in place before bringing in a General Manager. Dash said that the new General Manager could help with the governance issue.

Klionsky stated that the Board of Selectmen is spread thin by also acting as the MLB. He said that the fact that only four of forty municipalities have the Selectmen act as the Light Board suggests that another model is preferable.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular session minutes dated 7/17/17, 7/18/17, 7/31/17, & 8/7/17

Paolillo noted that he was not present at the meeting on July 18, 2017, and therefore would not vote on those minutes.

Paolillo moved to approve the regular minutes for July 17, 2017.

Williams commented on a section on page three of those minutes that contained the term "Controls Street". Leary confirmed that this was an error that should read "Controls Stress" and the term would be amended.

Paolillo moved to approve the minutes for July 17, 2017 as amended above. Williams seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of all in favor (3-0).

Williams moved to approve the minutes for July 18, 2017. Dash seconded the motion. Dash and Williams voted in favor of the motion, Paolillo abstained, and the motion was approved with a vote of 2-0.

Paolillo moved to approve the regular session minutes for July 31, 2017. Williams seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of all in favor (3-0).

Paolillo moved to approve the regular session minutes for August 7, 2017. Williams seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of all in favor (3-0).

b. Executive session minutes dated 7/31/17 & 8/7/17

Williams moved to approve the Executive Session minutes for July 31, 2017.

Paolillo said that he had not been able to review these minutes and asked to defer a vote until the next meeting. Dash agreed.

Paolillo moved to approve the Executive Session minutes for August 7, 2017. Williams seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of all in favor (3-0).

VI. DISCUSSION ON DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS POLICY

Spinale said beginning around April 15 of every year, for any customer bill that is over \$50 and over forty-five days overdue, Belmont Light sends a reminder notice. After another ten days, a termination notice is sent to the customer. After another five days, the customer is subject to termination. Paolillo asked if Belmont Light could terminate service after sixty days. Spinale responded that it is a ninety day process, because it begins forty-five days after the bill's due date. He said this is a Department of Public Utilities (DPU) regulation. Spinale said that there are a few new Belmont Light employees in the Customer Service Department, so he has asked DPU to come in to review their regulations.

Dash said that this issue came up with the liquor license regulations as a way to ensure that everyone is up to date in their payments before they come before the Board of Selectmen to get a license. He said the question had been what the policies were for Belmont Light and whether they needed to be revisited. He said it sounds like DPU regulates this so heavily that there is not much to be done. Klionsky added that protected accounts under the DPU are residential accounts only. Commercial accounts would not be subject to protection.

Paolillo asked how many terminations are done each year. He said that while people need to pay their bills, the ninety-day period was a short amount of time. He noted that there are many seniors in town and some people may be struggling. Spinale stated that Belmont Light works

with any customer on payment plans and in other ways. Klionsky pointed out that the DPU has regulations that are generally customer-friendly.

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS

The MLB will meet on the following dates and times:

- Monday, October 16, 2017, at 5:30 P.M.
- Monday, November 20, 2017, at 5:30 P.M.
- Monday, December 18, 2017, at 5:30 P.M.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Board moved to adjourn at 6:57 P.M.