

Minutes

Town of Belmont

2019 NOV 26 PM 2:45

Belmont Municipal Light Board

Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall

Monday, August 12, 2019

6:00pm

I-CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Light Board was called to order at by Chair Tom Caputo. Vice Chair Adam Dash and Board Member Roy Epstein were present. Belmont Light General Manger Chris Roy was present.

- Announcement: As of Monday September 9, Belmont Light will be using the Smart Hub platform for electric bill payments. Please sign up on the Belmont Light website. Users can also explore electric/water usage on Smart Hub.

II-CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF MLB ENDORSEMENT OF CLIMATE LEGISLATION

Caputo noted the situation had evolved since previous discussions; the Light Board Advisory Committee had taken up the matter in the meantime.

Roy provided the background context: initially supportive of HB2863 (back in February/March), but presently would like to pull support as the clean energy targets had been watered down and the bill was stalled in the State Legislature; HB832 was a bill with more aggressive climate targets that were closer in line with Belmont Light's Power Supply Policy / climate goals; recently HB832 had gained traction (moved to House Way/Mean Committee) and was rebranded at HB3983; the downside of HB3983 was that it incorporated language that would impose State regulation of MLPs.

Roy had shared a draft letter he wished to send which conveyed support for positive aspects of HB3983, while stating there was no valued added to include State oversight of MLPs.

Caputo asked LBAC Chair Klionsky to comment on the matter. Klionsky stated the LBAC had not come to a decisive conclusion after much discussion. Certainly it was positive to have aggressive climate targets reflected in State Legislation; however, Belmont Light values its independence, and setting a precedent for the State to regulate MLPs could be unwise.

Points of discussion amongst the Light Board included the following:

- Epstein was against an endorsement of HB3983 due to the prospect that it could open the door to State regulation; he considered Roy's letter to be not sufficiently strong statement in this regard. He also suggested a better approach would be to have Roy testify at the State House with respect to Belmont Light's clean energy efforts and position on various bills.
- Caputo endorsed the efforts to bring other MLPs along in climate goals, but also shared some concern about State regulation. As a practical matter, he questioned whether it was sensible to

have the Light Board devote time to weighing in on every piece of legislation that comes up – e.g. now changing the endorsement of 2863, what if the other legislation changes down the road?

- Dash viewed public comment as simply part of the legislative process and thought it was valuable/necessary to stay on top of current legislation and make voice heard at the State House. Light Board is supposed to drive policy; previous iterations did not take steps towards addressing climate change, and this was partially why State level targets were good. He supported Roy sending the letters.
- There was consensus that withdrawing support for 2863 at this time was advisable.

Motion: To oppose House Bill 2863 and to authorize Belmont Light General Manager Chris Roy to send a letter to this effect. (Vote passed 3-0)

[Open public comment.]

- *Michael Macrae:* His understanding was that the language of HB3983 provided flexibility with respect to the State oversight, e.g. ‘Secretary shall consult’ with MLPs – this was unheard of when talking about investor owned utilities. In his experience in the industry space, such a letter from Belmont Light can have a disproportionate impact – multiple people have brought up similar letters as points of leverage.

[Close public comment.]

Caputo agreed he could support the letter re: HB3983 as written. However, he requested consideration by the Board on some sort of process for more efficiently dealing with relevant legislation.

Epstein did not support letter in its current form – if something was to be done, should be more thought out and detailed, including strategic approach with ENE and other partners to engage State representatives.

Motion: To support and sign the letter dated July 22, 2019 to be submitted to the State Legislature, to the recipients as stated, with amendment of changing House Bill 832 to 3983. (Vote passed 2-1; Epstein opposed)

III-INTRODUCTION TO VIRTUAL PEAKER

Roy gave background on the Peak Production Rewards Pilot Program. A group of ~20 EV customers had been recruited to sign onto the Virtual Peaker platform, which allows monitoring of high usage devices (in this case EV chargers); Belmont Light can send behavioral prompts to the customers during peak power events to encourage their limiting use of such devices. Down the road the Virtual Peaker platform could be integrated to other devices as well, in fact one of the benefits of the product is that it is not tied to a particular manufacturer but integrates with a range of devices. Big picture results is that the pilot program has been successful and will continue with marketing in part via Heat Smart campaign.

Dash commented that this may be a policy issue for the Board to look into down the road, i.e. the extent to which Belmont Light should participate in these peak reduction schemes, behavioral versus controlling devices of end user.

IV-GENERAL MANAGER UPDATE

- a) *Update on fiber expansion:* Increased activity last several weeks; main goal was to connect Blair Pond to Chenery Station 2 to support the new High School project. The fiber being installed was designed to be expandable for future possibilities of Belmont Light as a broadband provider. Work expected to continue through fall.
- b) *Blair Pond System conversion status update:* Making good progress over the summer. Recent work on Leonard St. has benefitted the Chenery Station 2 on peak power days.

V-APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion: To approve the following Belmont Municipal Light Board minutes: regular session of April 22, 2019; executive session of April 22, 2019; regular session of May 6, 2019; executive session of May 6, 2019; regular session of July 15, 2019. (Vote passed 3-0)

VI-FUTURE MEETING DATES

September 23, 2019 – added to the agenda was an item to transfer Chair-ship.

VII-ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn. (Vote passed 3-0)