

FINAL

Light Board Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

2019 OCT 21 PM 2:07

Minutes of Meeting held on September 11, 2019
Belmont Light Conference Room
7:30am

Attending LBAC members: Chair Steve Klionsky, David Beavers, Travis Franck, Bob Forrester, Michael Macrae

Belmont Light (BL) attending: General Manager Christopher Roy, Energy Specialist Ben Thivierge

Selectmen Roy Epstein was present

I. CALL TO ORDER

- Convened at 7:35am
- Announcements:
 - Congratulations to Becca Keane on the birth of her daughter.
 - Roger Colton (Co-Chair, Energy Committee) is forming an unofficial group (not a formal Town Committee) to review the Town's zoning bylaws from an energy perspective, identify possible adjustments to make more energy efficient.

II. APPROVAL MEETING MINUTES

- April 10, 2019: Two spelling mistakes noted. Revised minutes were approved unanimously.
- June 12, 2019: Correction of the acronym MMWEC. Revised minutes approved unanimously.
- August 7, 2019 minutes were approved unanimously.

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS – VICE CHAIR

*Motion: To appoint Travis Franck as Vice Chair of the Light Board Advisory Committee.
(Motion passed unanimously.)*

IV. SPARKPLUG POWER, INC. PRESENTATION ON ENERGY STORAGE OPPORTUNITES

- Sean Becker (Founder of Sparkplug Power) gave a presentation on the company's battery storage product. Beavers had encountered Becker at Greentown Labs, a partnership of energy innovation companies in Somerville. Sparkplug had conducted a pilot project with the MLP in Holyoke.
- The company's business model was to partner in a battery storage project by establishing a contract similar to a PPA, i.e. no capital investment required on the part of Belmont Light. A standard term was for 10-20 years with guaranteed continuous operation provided by Sparkplug. Estimate provided by Becker on a 2MW project would be net savings in the range of \$150k-\$300k per year – Roy noted this was similar to other quotes he had obtained from

other larger companies. An additional feature of Sparkplug's product was that the software was open source and could be integrated with Belmont Light's systems to manage and optimize the power supplied by the battery.

- Becker offered that Sparkplug could serve as the sole service provider for a battery storage project or act as a consultant on an open RFP process. With an available site a project could be up and running within a 4-6 month timeframe.

V. DISCUSSION ON PILOT PAYMENT

- Roy provided an update from a recent meeting he had with Town Administrator Garvin and Select Board Chair Caputo, regarding the level of PILOT provided to the Town by Belmont Light. Roy presented data showing PILOT for comparable MLPs, as well as estimates of what taxes would be if Belmont Light were a private entity. Based on this analysis, it was his sense that the \$650k PILOT was fair. He added that he was working on potential other ways (still unresolved) that Belmont Light could help alleviate pressures on the Town budget.
- Kliensky thought the level of PILOT was fair and it was not appropriate to raise at this time. He noted the case of Danvers, where a compliant had been filed against the MLP by citizens accusing the MLP of raising rates to fund town infrastructure projects.
- Forrester thought there was merit to the fact that the optics were bad, i.e. that the payment had remained unchanged since 2006; he proposed incorporating a 2% per year increase going forward. Kliensky, Franck and Epstein opined that for the time being the analysis showed the level was already at an appropriate level
- Epstein suggested Roy obtain a letter from the Board of Assessors, providing a third party calculation of the amount of taxes Belmont Light would pay as a private entity.

[Forrester and Epstein left the meeting.]

VI. HEATSMART PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Thivierge provided background on the grant program, sponsored by DOER and administered by Massachusetts Clean Energy with advising by Cadmus Group. Four technologies were covered under the grant, of which Belmont had chosen to focus efforts on air source heat pumps. The program provided \$5k in funds to Belmont Light for marketing and the technical assistance of Cadmus.
 - Since launch in April, number of events had been held (e.g. meet the installer, open house); upcoming (September 26) was an event discussing the impact of climate change on public health: "Can a heat pump save your life?"
 - 150 leads noted > 58 quotes provided > 22 contracts. The number of contracts was for the official installer (Mirfield) - there may be additional installations performed using a different installer. The goal for the program was 50 installs total.
 - Rebates were based on the cooling load of the installed system. To date, most installs were augmenting an existing heating/cooling system, with a few full system replacements.
 - Plans to increase marketing efforts in the fall.
- Thivierge noted an issue with certain homes having 100A service requiring an upgrade to 200A – this had also come up as an issue for electric car charger installs. Cost to upgrade was in the

range of \$2k-\$3k. Beavers would connect Thivierge with a contact from Mass CEC to look into potential low income grants to help customers cover these costs.

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS

- October 16, 2019 @ 7:30am.
- November 6, 2019 @ 7:30am.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

To discuss confidential and competitively sensitive information provided in the course of activities conducted by a government body as an energy supplier.

Motion: To enter into executive session, as described above. (Roll-call vote: Steve Klionsky, David Beavers, Travis Franck, Michael Macrae)

Motion: To leave executive session. (Roll-call vote: Steve Klionsky, David Beavers, Travis Franck, Michael Macrae)

IX. ADJOURNMENT

- Adjourned at 9:50am.