

FINAL

Light Board Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

2020 MAR 16 AM 9:14

Minutes of Meeting held on February 12, 2020
Belmont Light Conference Room
7:30am

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

Select Board Member Roy Epstein.

Belmont Light (BL) attending: General Manager Christopher Roy, Rebecca Keane, Ben Thivierge.

I. CALL TO ORDER

- Convened at 7:34am

II. GENERAL MANAGER'S UPDATE

A. Update on voltage conversion activities:

- Replacing the 4kV system with newer and more efficient 15kV. Priority of the work is to be able to decommission Substation 1 (Electric Light building).
- Work this past year included: Waverly Square – upgrade of cable and transformers; Belmont Center – 5000 feet of cable replacement, replacement of oil switches, other infrastructure work on customer premises; substantial work at Belmont Hill School, leveraged to upgrade infrastructure in the area including 4000 feet of cable.
- Work into 2020: wrap up Belmont Center cutovers; cable replacement on Concord Ave.; duct banks on Belmont Hill; work on Lower Common; overhead work on Hamilton Rd.

B. Update on LED lighting conversion:

- Reached the 1500 mark at end of 2019, leaving 1000 left to go.
- Next steps include getting the streetlight control system implemented – this will allow for dimming, keep track of consumption, serve as data point for outages.
- Rough estimates are that the replacement would reduce the streetlights from 100W to 50W; dimming could further improve efficiency savings.
- Klionsky relayed a request from Myron Kassaraba to put information on the BL website concerning the decision process for selecting the type of light emitted by the LED bulbs.

C. Update on energy initiatives:

- Received a Smart Energy Provider award from APPA in October.
- Heat Smart program: 111 site visits with 42 contracts signed. Peak reductions rewards program: 31 customers helped pilot. Air source heat pump rebates: 60 in 2019 amounting to \$66k, 46 of these came after the campaign. Appliance / smart device rebates: totaled ~\$16k. Solar rebates: 23 customers applied in 2019 amounting to ~\$90k approved.
- Macrae commented he had personally used some of the rebates and found the process to be seamless.

D. Update on power supply activity and pursuit of climate targets

- On track to meet climate targets; forecast for REC pricing on high end but within the model. Still on track to meet 100% target by 2022 via green charge of \$6 per customer per month.
- Hedging update: Ended 2019 at target of ~89% hedged; on track for 2020 as well, but still open positions into 2021/2022. Recent spot pricing came in favorable.
 - CT River Valley solar project still in discussions. Continuing PPA talks for ME solar project.

Macrae requested an update on the PILOT to the Town for FY21. Roy had worked with Town Administrator Garvin to provide an increased PILOT to support the FY21 budget, which would then be offset by reduced payments in subsequent years.

III. DISCUSSION OF EV CHARGING STATIONS/RATES

- Roy was looking for direction on whether and how much to charge in fees for publically available EV charging stations. Historically, chargers that had come on the market due to a certain grant program were not allowed to implement charging; Roy had also experienced negative feedback over a past effort to introduce fees. Keane noted the Claflin St. chargers were not restricted from implementing fees; also, the Cushing Square chargers could be set up as fee-based, and were coming online in the near future.
 - Epstein advocated for introducing a fee, mainly to provide an incentive to disconnect once charging was complete. He had conducted analysis on the Claflin St. chargers and would prepare a memo for the Committee. He noted that Ipswich, another municipally owned utility, had a \$1/ hour fee in a municipal lot.
 - Forrester and Kliensky were also supportive of implementing some sort of fee.
 - Franck, Macrae and Beavers were neither supportive nor opposed to a fee at the present time. Franck indicated his view was partially dependent on what the overall plan was for chargers throughout Town, e.g. if there are only a few chargers is it really worth introducing a fee? Macrae said there was not enough information to assess whether a fee was warranted. Beavers asked about the goals of the program, e.g. to bring business to Belmont Center?
- A further open question was how to implement the fee, e.g. kWh vs time-based.
- Kliensky requested that a document be prepared outlining the plan for EV charging station rollout.

IV. EVALUATION OF APPROACH TO TOU RATES

- Kliensky expressed that, in his view, immediate large-scale deployment of time of use rates was simply not feasible. He recommended thinking of a small pilot or opt-in approach, which would provide the added benefit of obtaining data for possible expansion of the program.
 - Epstein agreed with this approach – makes sense to set some reasonable parameters, try it out on a small group and then tweak if necessary.
 - Beavers advocated for conducting analysis first and then determining whether time of use rates would be difficult to implement. He had proposed a framework for evaluating different time of use proposals and was developing a corresponding Excel-based assessment tool.

- Klionsky proposed holding additional meetings to dedicate more discussion specifically to working through the details of time of use – this was supported by the Committee.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- May 7, 2019: Minutes were approved unanimously.
- November 6, 2019: Minor spelling correction. Minutes as amended were approved unanimously.
- December 4, 2019: Minutes were approved; Franck abstained.

VI. FUTURE MEETINGS

- March 5 and March 26, 2020: Regular meetings.
- March 11 and April 8, 2020: Dedicated time of use discussions.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

- Adjourned at 9:42am.