

DATE: September 17, 2020  
TIME: 9:18 AM

## **Light Board Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020  
7:30am

Attending LBAC members: Chair Stephen Klionsky, Vice Chair Travis Franck, David Beavers, Robert Forrester, and Michael Macrae.

Belmont Light (BL) attending: General Manager Craig Spinale, Becca Keane, , Aidan Leary

Municipal Light Board (MLB) Chair Roy Epstein

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Convened at 7:30am.

### **II. REPORT ON GOVERNANCE**

- Klionsky and Epstein discussed that the Light Board had not yet held discussion on BL's governance structure. Epstein said the August Light Board meeting could focus on governance and that if there was agreement on restructuring the Light Board between members, the Select Board could bring the issue as an article to Town Meeting in September. If Light Board members did not agree, the issue would have to wait.

### **III. DISCUSSION ON TOU RATE DESIGN**

- Klionsky, Epstein, and Spinale discussed the Light Board and LBAC's previous discussions around TOU. All agreed that progress on the matter had stalled with the impacts of COVID-19.
- Keane posted the goals of the January 2020 TOU memo put together by Beavers. The goals were: align customer savings with savings for BL, support strategic electrification, protect low-income customers, support energy efficiency and solar, ensure BL revenue sufficiency and stability, and provide for easy implementation. Klionsky suggested having a greater discussion around the listed goals.
- Klionsky and Keane discussed the transmission and capacity peaks and charges, and ideas for how TOU rates would address them. Macrae pointed out that transmission peaks would be much more complicated to target than capacity peaks, as capacity peaks would happen much less frequently.
- Epstein brought up Fort Collins, CO and Sacramento, CA, which each used TOU rates for all customers. Epstein said that contacting other municipalities who have successfully instituted TOU could be helpful. Franck brought up California's state-wide mandate for TOU options throughout municipalities. Keane said more research could be done on successful TOU programs and agreed that reaching out to other municipalities to set realistic targets and goals for TOU was a good action item. Klionsky said that looking into TOU discussions at conferences would be useful as well.
- Epstein and Klionsky briefly discussed that many municipalities aimed their TOU programs at industrial customers. Spinale pointed out that Belmont's customer base was mostly residential, and that it would be important to keep the residential customers' needs in mind. Spinale agreed that looking into comparable programs was crucial.
- Macrae brought up his own change to his consumption since moving to Belmont and how behavior change could produce savings with TOU. Klionsky discussed the importance of customer education and encouraging motivated customers with TOU. Beavers added that there was a misalignment in the current rate structure and suggested a change to the structure to pay for costs around the time they accrued, instead of months later.
- Forrester and Franck brought up other examples around TOU. Discussion ensued about the elasticity of demand and what elements could be used in conjunction with basic TOU to motivate and involve customers.
- Keane explained the current Virtual Peaker program which was in its second year and had 50 customers. A peak call had gone out earlier that week and received great compliance. Franck and

Keane discussed Franck's recent participation and that the program was going well so far and providing credits to participating customers' bills.

- Franck asked about the next steps and efforts around TOU. Beavers explained that there were several efforts taking place amongst members around researching TOU. Epstein and Spinale discussed that to get input from the Light Board, it would be important to figure out what TOU would work best and how to present the benefits that TOU could give Belmont.
- Epstein said he was concerned about the TOU rates becoming too different from the current rate structure. Keane brought up that some literature suggests that without a significant change in on- and off-peak pricing, many customers would not pay attention to TOU. Epstein said that he would be interested to know why TOU rates were so different throughout different municipalities and which model might best align with BL's goals. Macrae shifted the discussion to producing a model so that customers could predict or track their potential savings with TOU. Further discussion ensued about elements of the rate structure and incentivizing customers, as well as clarification between members about some of the data and opinions around the rate structure.
- Franck said he wanted to keep the same list of TOU goals and said aligning customer savings with BL's savings and supporting strategic electrification were most key. Beavers said he and Keane would continue to look at TOU models and rate structures and offered the information he had already collected.
- Kliensky brought up that it would be crucial to keep the Light Board involved in the TOU discussion. The plan was for Epstein to stay on as the Light Board liaison for continuity.
- Keane shared UFS's current rate proposals and pointed out that UFS could likely show justification of the proposals at a meeting. Beavers suggested presenting the options of TOU proposals at a future LBAC meeting. Spinale and Keane agreed that UFS could be brought in for an LBAC meeting to further discuss their model. The group decided that looking at the possible TOU schemes at the next LBAC meeting before making bigger decisions about the model and recommendations for implementation.
- The group discussed evaluating the different TOU options for low-income customers, as there was some disagreement about how the time commitment of TOU and benefits of TOU would impact low-income customers.
- The group finalized next steps, which were: for Beavers to present possible TOU scenarios at the next LBAC meeting, Keane and Epstein agreed to talk with other municipalities with TOU programs, and Keane would tentatively reach out to UFS to set up a meeting for mid-September.
- LBAC agreed on Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup> as the next meeting date.

#### **IV. BRIEF DISCUSSION ON GOVERNANCE**

Epstein left the meeting so that LBAC could discuss matters that Kliensky had discussed with Select Board and Light Board member Adam Dash.

- Kliensky said that Dash expressed that he felt LBAC was moving too quickly on governance, although changes could be made to the governance structure in a different time frame. Kliensky also got the impression from Dash that there were possibilities to change the functioning of governance, without changing the current governance structure.
- Kliensky said that Dash reported feedback from others, which was that with more direction from the Light Board, LBAC could function differently, and the governance structure would not have to be changed.
- Macrae asked if the issue around governance could be pursued by an approach other than going to Town Meeting through a Select Board article. Kliensky said that the other option would be through a citizen petition for Town Meeting, but it would be difficult to move forward that way at Town Meeting without the support of the Select Board.
- Spinale spoke to the employee perspective, which was that in the short term there would be some disappointment if there was no change to the governance structure of BL. In the long term, though, there might be greater fallout and turnover within the BL staff. Spinale emphasized that no matter how

the Light Board's discussion of governance went at their next meeting, the potential changes to BL's governance needed to stay top of mind.

**V. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

- July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020: Small edits needed to be made to correct "Light Board" to "Select Board". Minutes were approved unanimously, as amended.

**VI. FUTURE MEETINGS**

- August 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30am.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:47am.