

**MINUTES  
Of The  
LIGHT BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Remote Meeting  
Wednesday, April 7, 2021  
7:30 A.M.**

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: August 13, 2021  
TIME: 11:15 AM

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Frank called the meeting to order at 7:31am. Present were Chair Travis Franck, Vice Chair Michael Macrae, and Board Members Jonathan Abe, David Beavers, Bob Forrester, Ralph Jones, and Steve Klionsky.

Also present were Belmont Light General Manager Craig Spinale, Assistant General Manager Sam Osmancevic, Energy Resources Manager Becca Keane, Energy Specialist Ben Thivierge, and Communications Coordinator Aidan Leary.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Franck noted that he had not seen the minutes prior to the meeting, so he would abstain from voting.

a) October 2020 minutes:

Mr. Klionsky pointed out that the minutes indicated Mr. Franck was already Chair although he was not elected Chair until February. The Committee agreed to amend the minutes to reflect that Mr. Franck was Vice Chair and Mr. Klionsky was Chair at the time.

*Mr. Klionsky moved to approve the minutes of October 21, 2020 as amended. Mr. Forrester seconded, and the motion passed with Mr. Franck abstaining.*

b) September 2020 minutes:

*Mr. Klionsky moved to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2020. Mr. Beavers seconded, and the motion passed with Mr. Franck abstaining.*

**III. TIME OF USE**

a. Rate Design Discussion

Mr. Spinale reported that a data problem that he spoke about the previous meeting had mostly been corrected.

Mr. Beavers presented a series of slides on Time of Use (TOU). The first slide showed how the current rate scenarios impacted projections compared to previous rate scenarios. Mr. Beavers reviewed the differences in rates for the summer on- and off-peak and winter on- and off-peak periods and the effects of including weekends in the scenarios. The group discussed all of the options.

Mr. Macrae asked if the Summer Peaker option was still being considered, as he believed it to be simpler than the scenarios being discussed. Ms. Keane said the Summer Peaker misses the bulk of the transmission costs, which is why it was ruled out and it also does not send price signals to induce shifting.

Mr. Beavers next showed a slide that demonstrated the evolution of TOU proposals and the impacts each would have on certain customer classes if customers made no change in behavior. He said that all the proposed rates achieve Belmont Light and LBAC goals and that the Utility Financial Solutions (UFS) scenarios are pretty close across classes, although individual households would be impacted differently.

Mr. Abe asked what percentage of customers would spend more if there is an issue where they might save money in the summer but lose money in the winter. Mr. Beavers said in general people will save money except during the summer, although load shifting could reduce the summer bill. He continued that about half the people would spend less and half would spend more on average. Mr. Abe pointed out that he wants to "do no harm" for lower income customers. Mr. Beavers said that he and Belmont Light staff will run the numbers

for the specific situation of any low-income customers who sign up so there would be clarity about what the impact will be. Ms. Keane explained Belmont Light will really vet low-income customers who want to enroll to ensure they come out ahead. Ms. Keane said there are about 421, or about 4-5% of total customers, on the low-income rate LI.

Mr. Franck asked if savings add up if you add electrification devices on top of each other. Mr. Beavers said generally not, but it really depends on how customers control their loads and shifting their loads would increase savings.

Mr. Forrester pointed out that the slide showed that electrification customers (EVs, heat pumps, etc.) would save money, while Rate A was neutral, giving the impression that it was negative and not revenue neutral. Also he said, Rate A is much bigger as a proportion of the customer base. He felt this point should be clearer, especially for public sharing. Ms. Keane and Mr. Spinale agreed that work was needed on reconfiguring communication for a Public Forum. Ms. Keane reminded the group that the slide showed projections without behavior change and was designed to be revenue neutral.

Mr. Macrae asked if heat pumps and PV can be added as a category. He felt these were worth considering. Also, he encouraged that this be framed to also indicate that there are customers who are 'subsidizing' others and these proposals are more fair since customers like him pay a flat rate for capacity and transmission which is unrelated to when and how he uses electricity.

Mr. Beavers then showed a series of slides demonstrating the load profiles and bill reductions that would result from load shifting in Rate A and with the electrification technologies discussed above. Mr. Beavers said the load shifting slides should line up with Belmont Light cost savings making it revenue neutral since customers reducing their costs will reduce Belmont Light's costs.

Mr. Macrae applauded the setup of the slides but said there should be better descriptions of the measures taken to reach certain reduction thresholds. Mr. Klionsky asked about the revenue neutrality for Belmont Light. Mr. Beavers responded that with load shifting by customers, Belmont Light would also save because they don't have to buy expensive power (capacity, distribution and energy included). He confirmed that using data from other years may show different numbers but shifting load should be the same.

Discussion continued on the impacts of TOU rates on customers with EVs, whole-home heat pumps, and solar PV systems.

Mr. Beavers displayed a graph showing a hypothetical mandatory TOU rate, as well as different scenarios for the solar buyback rate, and the next steps to take in the process.

Mr. Beavers said that he and Belmont Light staff were working on a calculator tool to help with public outreach. He explained that the goal of outreach is to give people an individual number – how their bill is impacted.

#### b. Public Forum Discussion

Mr. Klionsky reminded the group that there will be some people who are very familiar with this topic and then many more who are at a basic level and that it would be necessary to include definitions of capacity, transmission, etc.

Mr. Forrester felt there should be information about payback and benefits and this information should include the cost of purchase and installation of electrification technologies. He said over-emphasizing load shifting does not take this into account. Also, he feels the presentation was aimed at people already using devices and not at the 90% who did not. Mr. Spinale explained that the presentation was designed to show that Belmont Light will not be negatively impacted by TOU and it is not designed for public presentation.

Mr. Macrae suggested that Belmont Light make a simple graphic of heat maps showing peaks during summer months, etc. He feels the focus should be on people who want to and can engage but that rates should not harm people who cannot.

Mr. Spinale explained that they had met their six goals with UFS Scenario 1 and that it was the right one to move on as a pilot. He said it was time to pull in MLB and flesh out what was needed for a Public Forum.

He explained that the timeline for a TOU rollout had become an issue. The meter data has been investigated, and it is in much better shape than originally thought. He had fewer concerns moving forward with this data.

However, the person who was at the forefront of the integration of the data had recently resigned and he was concerned about how this would impact the pilot. He felt a July timeline was probably too aggressive given the preparation needed for a Public Forum and other needs.

Mr. Spinale said he would do a preliminary presentation to MLB the following Monday to outline the current status and what still needs to be completed. His goal is to provide a recommendation to the MLB in the near future, followed by a recommendation after the pilot on how to proceed. Mr. Spinale asked for a recommendation from LBAC regarding which scenario they prefer.

Mr. Franck asked if there was any public comment. There was no comment.

Mr. Macrae asked if distribution rates might be tweaked in the future. Mr. Beavers believed that the next cost of service study should include looking at electrification technologies and what their impact is on distribution.

*Mr. Franck moved that LBAC recommend Scenario 1 for the pilot, the UFS scenario that includes weekends for the pilot program only. Mr. Abe seconded it.*

Mr. Klionsky said he's comfortable with Scenario 1 for purposes of the pilot.

*The motion passed unanimously (7-0).*

*Mr. Beavers moved that, for the pilot, the solar buyback rate be the time of use rate minus distribution. Mr. Macrae seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).*

#### **IV. HYDRO POWER CONTRACT EXTENSION**

Mr. Spinale explained that an existing hydroelectric power contract for the Brown Bear II/Worumbo project would come to an end at the end of May. He described the contract terms, which he said made up about 3% of Belmont Light's portfolio. The developers were offering a four-and-a-half year contract to expire in November 2025. Mr. Spinale said the dollar values would be the same as the previous contract, so there would be initial cost savings. Renewable energy credits (RECs) would be included in the contract, including 5% Maine Class I RECs and 95% Maine Class II RECs. Mr. Spinale needed to give the vendor an answer that day and was seeking LBAC's support on the extension.

Mr. Klionsky stated his support for the extension.

Mr. Macrae said he supports the extension, but raised his previous position that Maine Class II RECs are not ideal. Ms. Keane said they will be able to claim all the Maine Class II RECs under the new Municipal Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) since Belmont Light was signing a purchased power agreement (PPA).

*Mr. Franck moved to continue exploring the extension of the hydro contract with Brown Bear/Worumbo. Mr. Jones seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).*

#### **V. GM UPDATE**

##### a. Operational update

Mr. Spinale said Belmont Light had been trying to fill a procurement position, and there was an offer currently out. However, two employees have recently left - a 16-year lineman left for Eversource, and the Customer Care & Enterprise Resource Manager (previously mentioned) had left to go to the Shrewsbury Electric Light Company (SELCO). Ms. Keane was taking over the customer service group but there was still the enterprise resource piece to be covered.

##### b. Legislative update

Mr. Spinale said that under the new state climate legislation, municipal light plant were now subject to the RPS requirements for emissions, as noted above. He said that Belmont Light is already well ahead of the requirements, but the legislation does now hold municipal utilities accountable. The group discussed that Belmont Light was on track to have a 100% non-emitting energy portfolio by 2022.

Mr. Franck asked that Belmont Light review their Power Supply Policy (PSP) to ensure that it follows the new legislation. Mr. Spinale said Belmont Light staff had already had discussions about doing this. Ms. Keane

noted that the PSP's timeline only ran through 2022 and that it tied Belmont Light to a different standard than the new RPS, so it should be revisited.

c. Certificate for Excellence in Reliability

Mr. Spinale said Belmont Light was recognized by the American Public Power Association (APPA) for being in the top 25% of all public utilities for system outage duration performance.

Mr. Macrae noted that the streetlights on his street had recently been upgraded to LED heads, which the neighborhood thought was too bright at first. After contacting Belmont Light, Mr. Macrae said staff was able to turn down the brightness easily. He suggested that Belmont Light do outreach regarding the implementation of LED lights since his neighborhood recently got them and they were very bright. Mr. Spinale said there is a whole page on the website dedicated to this, and there will be a link put on the home page so it's easier to find. Mr. Spinale outlined some of the things Belmont Light can do to customize these lights.

**VI. UPDATE FROM STRUCTURAL CHANGE IMPACT GROUP**

This discussion was tabled.

**VII. FUTURE MEETINGS**

a. May 12, 2021 | 7:30 A.M.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

*Mr. Klionsky moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Franck seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (7-0). The meeting was adjourned at 9:40am.*

Respectfully submitted by,  
Susan Peghiny