

MINUTES
LIGHT BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Wednesday, October 13, 2021
7:30 A.M.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: November 10, 2021
TIME: 2:59 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER. Chair Travis Franck called a meeting of the Light Board Advisory Committee (LBAC) to order at 7:32am.

Present for LBAC was Chair Franck, Vice Chair Michael Macrae, Members Jonathan Abe, David Beavers, Steve Klionsky, and Alexandra van Geel. Absent was Member Robert Forrester.

Present for Belmont Light was General Manager Craig Spinale, Assistant General Manager Sam Osmanovic, Communications Coordinator Aidan Leary, and Energy Specialist Ben Thivierge.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes for approval.

III. TIME OF USE (TOU)

Discussion on TOU pilot program: Mr. Spinale gave the group an update of the feedback from the last Time of Use (TOU) public forum, pointing out that only 1 attendee spoke out “against” the proposed plan, but that person wanted the price to be higher to encourage faster change. Mr. Spinale shared the different types of customers who had applied to participate.

Belmont Light was particularly happy with the 32 “regular” customers, who have no distributed energy resource (DER) devices, who wanted to participate in the pilot. Belmont Light would reach out to the others who previously expressed interest in joining the pilot. He highlighted the lower-than-expected number of solar customer applications. They were about at their goal of 100-150 total participants. There was a discussion of how to get more participants, and what was required to apply.

Mr. Spinale asked if the Committee had an opinion on whether they should limit the number of non-DER participants. He feels there should be no limitations placed on any customers. The Committee discussed this issue and the mix of participants.

Ms. van Geel asked if they knew what portion of the participants are low-income customers. Mr. Thivierge explained that they had not done anything with low-income customers, only Rate A customers. He did help 2 low-income customers with TOU estimations but found they would experience significant losses if they participated so they chose not to sign up. Ms. van Geel thinks the effect on low-income customers needs to be considered.

Ms. van Geel asked if there would be a low-income TOU rate. Ms. Spinale said they are currently doing analysis of this, including “shadow billing” just to see what the customers would experience if they participated in the pilot. There was a discussion of this issue and how to consider, and possibly include low-income customers.

Mr. Spinale said TOU should be ready to go in mid-November but because of the holidays they will wait until January 1, 2022, to roll-out the program. They also need to file a new rate with the DPU which will be done immediately after the Municipal Light Board approves the proposed recommendation.

There was a discussion of the start date and issues/questions. Mr. Spinale asked if the Committee had views on how strict the one-year participation agreement should be. There was general agreement that it should be informal. Mr. Franck asked what would happen if someone chose to leave the program before the end. Mr. Macrae said there needs to be good communication so customers look at this as a year-long program regardless of unexpected monthly fluctuations. Mr. Klionsky prefers that customers be educated about the need for the year-long commitment, although some participants will be lost to moves, etc.

Mr. Klionsky asked about language that would be used for the DPU tariff filing regarding length of participation. Mr. Spinale said he will have to think that through.

Mr. Beavers suggested participants be sent an interim report, so they know what is happening in the pilot. Mr. Spinale said they plan to reach out to participants regularly, and liked this idea.

TOU recommendation to Light Board: Mr. Spinale said the recommendation will be presented as being from LBAC and Belmont Light. Ms. Keane is finishing up the recommendation memo that will be presented to the Municipal Light Board on Monday. He will send the final memo to LBAC for review.

Mr. Franck confirmed that the recommendation will include weekends. The Committee thanked Mr. Spinale and the Belmont Light team for their hard work on this effort.

IV. POWER SUPPLY

Hedge discussion: Mr. Spinale clarified that they are at a 76% hedge for 2022 but want to be at 80% to meet the Power Supply Policy. Belmont Light will purchase 4% to achieve this. He mentioned that the cost of gas has gone up significantly, so they bought a 37-month hedge which gets them to 80% for 2022, 67% for 2023, and 55% for 2024. There were no significant impacts in costs.

Mr. Beavers asked for information at the end of the heating season on what the hedging did for us. Mr. Spinale thinks it will be upwards of \$100,000 if the market continues to climb.

General Discussion: Mr. Spinale explained that if Commonwealth Wind (aka Vineyard Wind) wins the state bid, there will be 25-32 megawatts of off-shore wind available for Massachusetts MLPs. Belmont Light is tied to Commonwealth Wind through ENE. There was a discussion of wind projects.

V. CHENERY SCHOOL SOLAR PROJECT

Mr. Osmancevic reported that it was agreed to remove one layer of modules and reposition the second layer from vertical to horizontal which will allow any masonry repairs to be made. This is a net loss of 13 modules (from 91 to 78), and a 32 to 27.5kwh reduction.

He also advised that he had met with the principal and the facilities director to review logistics of the project, including CORI checks and constructions details. The fire chief was also consulted, and some minor adjustments were requested. The electrical inspector wants to have a third-party inspection take place for safety reasons.

The preliminary construction start is November 15, 2021. If everything goes well it will be completed in about 2 weeks.

The ENE Audit Application was submitted in August, and they are waiting for an appointment for the audit (required for the DOER grant to be released). Staffing issues have caused delays.

Resident Phil Thayer asked if the School Committee will be notified of the construction schedule. Mr. Osmancevic said absolutely.

Other Discussion: Mr. Spinale said the TOU effort had taken an enormous amount of time and once it is approved and launched, they expect to give attention to other issues, such as battery storage at the incinerator site and behind the meter storage. He gave an update of the incinerator site situation, including an issue regarding whether Belmont Light is eligible to use the site. There was a discussion of this issue.

Mr. Spinale said he will present the 3rd quarter financials to the MLB on Monday and apologized for not having it available for LBAC to review at this meeting. Mr. Franck said they schedule LBAC meetings so they can review items and be prepared to discuss at the MLB meetings and asked that the documents be ready in the future.

Mr. Franck asked if there was anything to discuss about Ventana. Mr. Spinale said they have not been able to look at this because of the TOU work. Mr. Franck also asked about the Survey results and Mr. Spinale said this would be discussed at the November meeting.

There was a discussion about the possible impacts of the proposed Reconciliation Bill currently being considered in Congress, as well as battery storage and the potential for solar at the incinerator site.

Mr. Franck asked if the EV charging rate was decided by the MLB. Mr. Spinale said it had been approved, but that he has to follow up on the existing sites and also the sites being constructed.

Mr. Macrae said he would like the residential battery storage project to be revisited when there is bandwidth at Belmont Light.

Resident Phil Thayer said the Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN) issued their MLP scorecard, and Belmont Light was in the top 2. He thanked Mr. Spinale and Belmont Light for their work and support.

VI. FUTURE MEETINGS

- November 10, 2021
- December 15, 2021

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Abe moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:13am.

Respectfully submitted by,
Susan Peghiny