

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
Remote Meeting via Zoom
December 14, 2022**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: January 18, 2023
TIME: 2:56 PM

CALL TO ORDER. Chair Stephen Klionsky called a meeting of the Municipal Light Board to order at 7:30am.

Present for MLB was Chair Klionsky, Vice-Chair David Beavers, and Members Travis Franck, Andrew Machado, and Michael Macrae.

Present for Belmont Light was General Manager Craig Spinale, Assistant General Manager Sam Osmancevic, Finance & Procurement Manager Maria Makar-Limanov, Communications Coordinator Aidan Leary, and Energy Specialist Ben Thivierge.

Others Present: Roy Epstein, Select Board Liaison.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 15, 2022 Regular Session: Mr. Macrae clarified his statement on page 2, 3rd paragraph after Mr. Klionsky's motion to read: "*Mr. Macrae reiterated his concerns and frustrations about how the rate study process did not address or explore issues and concerns raised throughout the entire process that are directly related to Belmont Light and the Town's Strategic Energy & Climate Goals such as his request to evaluate a declining rate model for allocating distribution charges for high kWh consumers. Concerns related to these issues were repeatedly raised and Mr. Macrae stated these have not been addressed or studied and this is why he will be abstaining from the vote today.*"

Mr. Epstein corrected his statement page 2, 2nd paragraph after Mr. Klionsky's motion to: "*Mr. Epstein said the EFR rate was not justified on the basis of generation and transmission charges and that if it was increased as in the proposal he hoped it would remain unchanged for a long time.*"

Mr. Klionsky asked if the last bullet under Proposed Generation & Transmission Rate Changes saying that the EFR would increase "*to over 13 cents*" is what was said at the meeting, although he thinks that number is incorrect. Mr. Spinale said this might have been said because of the adder, although this might not have been the intent of the discussion. It was decided to strike out the word "*over*".

Motion: *Mr. Macrae moved to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2022 Regular Session of the Municipal Light Board as amended. Mr. Beavers seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.*

November 15, 2022 Executive Session: To be discussed at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT – there was no public comment.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

MEAM-CES Communicator of the Year Award: Mr. Spinale announced that Aidan Leary, Communications Coordinator, has received this award. He congratulated Mr. Leary and thanked him for his work.

ISO-NE Press Release: Mr. Spinale explained that there has been a lot of discussion at the markets level about possible rolling blackouts this winter. Mr. Spinale had distributed to the Board a press release from ISO-NE that said that they believe this will not happen if the winter is moderate. However, if there is an extended period of less than 10 degrees there could be some issues. He outlined some of the possible impacts to Belmont Light if this were to happen and why it could happen.

Mr. Franck pointed out that this is not only a Belmont Light issue, but rather a New England-wide system issue and it would not be Belmont Light's fault if there is a blackout. There was a discussion of what Belmont Light would do if asked to curtail generation.

Mr. Machado asked if Mr. Spinale has worked with Seasonal Forecast and, if so, has this been valuable. Mr. Spinale said they have to some degree, but they pay more attention to the ISO.

Mr. Epstein pointed out that there are several facilities that have oxygen-dependent residents and suggested compiling a list of locations where power is essential so there is a plan in place should there be a blackout. Mr. Spinale said there is already a list, and Belmont Light staff was reviewing it to see which circuits will be prioritized.

Belmont Light Rates vs. Other MLPs: Mr. Klionsky was asked at a recent Select Board meeting how Belmont Light rates compare to other municipal light departments (MLPs), and he had responded that it was hard to compare rates although based on what he has been seen lately Belmont would no longer be the third highest rate but would perhaps be lower than that. He wondered if it is possible to actually compare rates.

Concord Avenue Substation Easement: Mr. Klionsky said Mr. Epstein had asked that when this facility is decommissioned that the Belmont Police continue to have access to the rear of their building. Mr. Klionsky sent an email to the Town Administrator to start the process to get this going. Mr. Epstein explained that the driveway between the buildings is on Belmont Light property. He prefers that the driveway be conveyed to the Police Department rather than having an easement. Mr. Spinale said his understanding is that once the building is deemed surplus by Belmont Light it reverts back to the Town to decide what to do with the property, so at no time does the property leave the Town's ownership.

Charging Stations: Mr. Spinale said that as of today Belmont Light will have the Flo charging stations upgraded and installed in the McLean Hospital parking lot and Claflin Lot, and he reviewed each station. There is no news on the Level 3 charger other than it will be installed in the spring.

New Bucket Trucks: He also reported that there was a bid put out for several new bucket trucks with battery-operated PTO (the device that allows the bucket to go in the air). That device alone is going to cost a little over \$105,000, on top of the price of the truck which is just over \$330,000. This was discussed, including whether this extra expense was worth it to avoid diesel idling.

POWER SUPPLY POLICY DISCUSSION

Mr. Spinale said he wanted to get documentation out to the board to encourage members to think about this topic for future discussion. Mr. Beavers and Mr. Macrae had prepared a draft proposal for comments, and Mr. Spinale asked that other members send their comments, suggestions, etc. to him or Mr. Leary for the next meeting.

Mr. Franck said he does not see why the current power purchase policy does not work and asked that this information be provided since it would help him in future discussions.

Mr. Machado said the "Benchmark Price" that is part of the draft proposal is very helpful as well as other KPIs or other scores that go into a resource/obligation to make it easier to understand the loss if an opportunity does not occur.

Mr. Macrae asked about how to share this information without bumping up against the open meeting law, which was discussed, and the Board decided that Belmont Light staff can compile comments and then send them out (without inter-Board discussion).

Mr. Franck asked if Mr. Spinale could identify where Belmont Light is having difficulty executing the plan. Mr. Spinale said in general there are no real issues with the policy, although updates are needed. He highlighted the holes in the plan for the next several years. He said Belmont Light would like some "guard rails" so that when opportunities occur, they can move faster.

There was a discussion of how to share comments and information so as not to breach the Open Meeting Law.

Mr. Macrae asked to liaise with Belmont Light Energy Specialist Ben Thivierge, who is a member of the Energy Committee to create dialog around looking at energy targets, what the objective of the original request of Belmont Light was and visit this in a bigger context. This was agreed.

FUTURE MEETINGS

January 17, 2023
February 15, 2023

EXECUTIVE SESSION To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive or other proprietary information (Power supply & battery storage). The Board will adjourn in Executive Session.

Motion: *Mr. Klionsky moved that the Municipal Light Board go into Executive Session to discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive or other proprietary information (Power supply & battery storage). Mr. Franck seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.*

The Municipal Light Board went into Executive Session at 8:21 am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary