

DATE: May 22, 2023
TIME: 2:39 PM

MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
Remote Meeting via Zoom
April 12, 2023

Present for MLB was Chair Stephen 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 Osmanovic, Energy Specialist Ben Thivierge, Energy Finance Manager Maria Makar-Limanov, Communications Coordinator Aidan Leary; and Susan Peghiny, Recording Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER. Chair Klionsky called a meeting of the Municipal Light Board to order at 7:32am.

BOARD REORGANIZATION & ELECTION OF OFFICERS

There was a discussion of establishing a system for rotating leadership. Mr. Franck suggested following the Select Board model, although members could still indicate if they are interested in being an officer. Mr. Beavers indicated his willingness to be Chair and asked if anyone else was interested in the role. There was a discussion of the roles and expectations of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Motion: Mr. Beavers moved to appoint himself as Chair. Mr. Franck seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Motion: Mr. Franck moved to appoint himself as Vice-Chair. Mr. Beavers seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Beavers took over as Chair of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 15, 2023: Mr. Macrae asked that the discussion of an IRP (Under the Power Supply Discussion agenda item) be corrected to “there was a discussion around an IRP process and agreement that this was not the Board’s objective”.

Motion: Mr. Frank moved to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2023 Regular Session of the Municipal Light Board meeting as amended. Mr. Macrae seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT – there was no public comment.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

- a. Permanent Audit Committee Meeting April 26, 2023 @ 9:00am: Mr. Spinale said the Permanent Audit Committee would like a representative from the Board at its meeting. Mr. Beavers said he would attend.
- b. MEAM Managers Meetings, May 18 & 19, 2023: Mr. Spinale invited members to attend and asked that they let him know if they planned to so that he may assist with their registration.
- c. Leonard St. Transformer: Mr. Spinale updated the Board on the situation, saying that Belmont Light had met with other Town officials. He explained that there is a plan to put a permanent pad-mounted transformer at the corner of Leonard Street and Alexander Avenue. He will take the plan to the Select Board when it is ready. There was a discussion of this proposal. Mr. Spinale expects this project to begin early to mid-Summer and explained the scope of the work.
- d. Letter from MLP Commissioners Group: Mr. Spinale said there is an effort from a group of MLP commissioners to create more regular meetings of commissions to discuss common issues. Mr.

Beavers shared more specific information about the group and previous discussions. He said the next meeting of this group is May 11, 2023. He asked that members let him know if they want to attend. There was discussion on attendance at the meeting and agreement that Mr. Macrae would speak on the Board's behalf.

POWER SUPPLY DISCUSSION

- a. Evaluation Tool Discussion: Mr. Spinale explained that Belmont Light discussed this tool with Energy New England who provided information on their process, and he has invited them to the next Belmont Light meeting. He is continuing to look into finding or creating a tool. Any questions for that meeting should be sent to Mr. Spinale.
- b. RECs Discussion: Mr. Spinale shared a chart showing the cost trends for Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). He pointed out that the price of Class II RECs has been steadily increasing. He explained why this is happening and the impact it might have on Belmont Light.

Mr. Franck pointed out that the spending on Class II RECs shown on the chart includes the increased number of Class II RECs as well as the increased price of these RECs. He asked that in the future the chart only shows the cost.

There was a discussion of the information presented and Belmont Light's REC purchases. Mr. Beavers recommended that the Board meet with the Energy Committee to complete this discussion.

DEMAND SIDE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS PRESENTATION

Mr. Thivierge reviewed Belmont Light's demand side management (DSM) programs and the changes made 2023. There was a discussion of the program and the level of rebates.

Mr. Thivierge then reviewed the 2022 DSM Budget vs. Actuals, pointing out that they are over by about 45% mostly due to air-source heat pump installations, weatherization, and yard equipment.

There was discussion regarding the future of an energy storage rebate. Mr. Macrae asked about creating a self-funding program through savings from residential energy storage, augmented by Time of Use arbitrage. Mr. Thivierge said one issue with the Connected Homes program is that there are only 14 battery storage systems enrolled, compared to over 400 solar PV systems in town. A program could be developed and explained the challenges of doing this. This was discussed.

VOLTAGE COVERSION PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Spinale reviewed the status of the voltage conversion project. He explained that the construction fund has just over \$9,000,000 in it, and he estimates that it will take about 9 years to complete the conversion work and get out of Station 1. He provided a study that details the estimated cost and work hours needed to complete the project. It shows a total estimated cost of \$14,400,000 to \$20,500,000. He expects the cost to be somewhere in between these numbers and explained the factors that would impact this. There were some questions and discussion about this information, possible funding mechanisms, and next steps.

FUTURE MEETINGS DISCUSSION

Mr. Spinale explained that the Governor had extended the Open Meeting Law exemption to allow for remote meetings into 2025 and asked if the Board would like to remain remote or meet live. After a discussion of this issue it was decided to hold the May 17, 2023 meeting remotely and the June 21, 2023 meeting in person.

FUTURE MEETINGS

May 17, 2023 at 7:30am, remote
June 21, 2023, in person

Public Comment – there was no public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: To conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel (General Manager).

Motion: *Mr. Macrae moved that the Municipal Light Board go into Executive Session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel (General Manager) and will not return to public session. Mr. Machado seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.*

The Municipal Light Board went into Executive Session at 9:25am am.

The Board adjourned in Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary