

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
OPEN MEETING**

**Hybrid Meeting via Zoom & BMLD Conference Room
April 26, 2024**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: June 20, 2024
TIME: 8:21 AM

CALL TO ORDER. Chair David Beavers called the Municipal Light Board meeting to order at 7:30am.

- **Present for the Municipal Light Board (MLB, Board)** were Chair Beavers, Vice Chair Travis Franck, and Members Steve Klionsky, Andrew Machado, and Michael Macrae. No Board member was absent.
- **Present for Belmont Municipal Light Department (BMLD)** were General Manager Craig Spinale, Marketing & Communications Manager Aidan Leary, and Executive Assistant Erin Lenzing.
- **Other Town Staff or Officials Present:** Kelli King, Human Resources Manager
- **Documents/exhibits used:** Helpful Handout on Robert's Rules, past minutes as outlined below, outline of NEPOOL discussion, press release on Certificate of Excellence in Reliability, and meeting memo.

BOARD REORGANIZATION & POTENTIAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS

There was a short conversation about the officer rotation plan and which members would be eligible for and interested in the Chair or Vice-Chair roles. Mr. Beavers then opened the floor for nominations.

Mr. Beavers nominated Mr. Macrae for Chair effective as of 10am 4/26/24, and Mr. Klionsky seconded. There were no other nominations. The motion passed 4-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Franck, Mr. Machado all voted aye. Mr. Macrae abstained.

Mr. Beavers nominated Mr. Machado for Vice Chair, and Mr. Franck seconded. There were no other nominations. The motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Franck, Mr. Macrae, and Mr. Machado all voted aye.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular and Executive Sessions for March 20, 2024

Mr. Klionsky asked about a typo in the Regular Session minutes, which was amended.

Mr. Beavers moved to approve the minutes from the March 20th 2024 Municipal Light Board meetings, Regular (amended) and Executive Sessions. Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Franck, Mr. Macrae and Mr. Machado all voted aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT - There was no public comment.

PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION ON NEW ENGLAND POWER POOL (NEPOOL)

Dave Cavanaugh of Energy New England (ENE) presented on NEPOOL, a voluntary association of market participants from New England, focusing on current major initiatives such as Order 2023 & 2023-A, longer term transmission planning (LTTP), resource capacity accreditation (RCA), and capacity market horizons.

Settled Issues

- **Order 2023 & 2023-A:** These orders, which have already been decided on, focus on shortening the time to study interconnection requests by changing from a serial queue to a cluster study approach. Mr. Cavanaugh highlighted that there would be changes to the study deposits and new withdrawal penalties; briefly reviewed the implementation timeline; and stated that the expectation was that this would unlock previously congested or previously uneconomic interconnections. Overall, he felt the orders should reduce speculative positions, gain efficiencies on studies, and potentially increase the number of resources interconnecting to the regional transmission grid.

- There was a pause in the presentation for some Q&A on recently announced changes by the Department of Energy (DOE), how transmission projects get funded, and how state policy could be incorporated.
- **Longer Term Transmission Planning (LTTP):** Mr. Cavanaugh continued the presentation by speaking on LTTP. Previously, New England's Independent System Operator (ISO or ISO-NE) would use a 10-year planning horizon, but now can go beyond that, as far as 2050. In addition, the six New England states can now request once a year that ISO study a transmission project of their interest. Each requested study would include a Benefit-to Cost-Ratio (BCR) criteria, which would help determine how the project would proceed and costs allocated. Mr. Cavanaugh then walked through various scenarios depending on a BCR of +/-1.
- There was a short discussion on various projects and future billing, with a focus on capacity and transmission, and what a municipal light department could do to help its rate base.

Active Issues

- **Resource Capacity Accreditation (RCA):** Mr. Cavanaugh explained that RCA is designed to ensure capacity resources are available for energy production during the time of system need. He clarified that while the current capacity values are reasonable, in the future, under RCA, they will be more aligned to the system needs, more constrained by fuel availability, and would have a seasonal aspect. He then went into some details about different classes of resources.
- There was also some discussion about how resources would be held accountable if unavailable and the potential impact of the design on the market.
- **Capacity Market:** Mr. Cavanaugh reviewed that the RCA work had highlighted the seasonal aspect of the capacity resources, so the thought was why not move to a seasonal capacity market? For this reason, they have a request before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to delay the old qualification cycle for three years in order to give the region time to look at implementing RCA and moving from a Forward Capacity Market to a Prompt and Seasonal Market.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Spinale updated the Board on several topics, including:

- **New hires:** He announced that BMLD had hired a Lead Electric Mechanic and a First-Class Electric Mechanic. He also gave an update on the search for an Energy Resources Manager.
- **APPA Certificate of Excellence in Reliability:** He also announced that BMLD had been awarded a Certificate of Excellence in Reliability from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for the second year in a row. He highlighted the measurements for the award and how BMLD compared to other public power utilities nationwide. In response to a question from Mr. Macrae, he confirmed that while underground service generally has fewer interruptions than overhead, when there is a problem, it may take longer to find and repair.
- **High School solar online:** He confirmed that the high school's solar installation is complete and had gone online as of March 20, 2024, and clarified that there are two parts to the system – one at the high school and one at the middle school. In comparison to the same period last year (March 20-April 20, 2023) the high school was able to cut their electric bill by about 44%. In response to questions from Mr. Klionsky and Mr. Beavers, Mr. Spinale and Mr. Bleau confirmed the size of the system was 840 total AC (360 on the high school and 480 on the middle school) or about 1 megawatt DC. There was a brief discussion of BMLD's role with the ice rink, where a similar solar array had been discussed.
- **SmartHub redesign:** Mr. Leary updated the Board on the recent redesign of SmartHub, the online payment portal for BMLD. The redesign was initiated by the software company and applied to all their clients nationwide. In BMLD's case, the change happened in February 2024, and while any such change usually has a few hiccups, the new design has not been popular with customers. BMLD had set up a meeting with their rep for the software company to pass on customer feedback and also communicated with their product team in the hope that improvements would be made in future.
- **McLean Hospital fuel cell:** Mr. Spinale reported on his follow-up conversation with McLean Hospital about the gas-fired fuel cell they want to install. He believes that the hospital understands BMLD's position, but they asked him to pass on that they are happy to come in and answer any questions for

the Board. In response to a question from Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Spinale confirmed that BMLD did offer to work with the hospital on an alternative such as a solar array or battery installation.

- **Permanent audit committee:** He explained that because the Town's actuaries had a delay in delivering their report, that in turn has delayed BMLD's audit, which is now scheduled for June 13, 2024 at 9am. Mr. Beavers agreed to be the representative for the Board at the meeting.
- **Summer safety event:** He stated BMLD staff will be having a summer safety training on May 20, 2024.
- **Additional meeting with Daymark Energy Advisors:** Mr. Spinale recommended that the Board add an additional meeting to meet with the vendor for the cost-of-service study (COSS), Daymark Energy Advisors. The Board members suggested the first week of June, date TBD.

FUTURE MEETINGS

There was no discussion of this item. The next meetings are scheduled for:

- May 15, 2024 | 7:30 a.m.
- June 17, 2024 | 7:30 a.m.
- July 17, 2024 | 7:30 a.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION to conduct strategy sessions for collective bargaining (SEIU, Local 888)

Mr. Beavers moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with SEIU Local 888, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the body, and to adjourn in Executive Session. Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Machado, Mr. Franck, and Mr. Macrae all voted aye.

The Municipal Light Board went into Executive Session at 9:17am. The Board adjourned in Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted by,

Erin Lenzing
Executive Assistant