

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

**Hybrid Meeting via Zoom & BMLD Conference Room
May 15, 2024**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: June 17, 2024
TIME: 6:20 PM

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

- **Present for the Municipal Light Board (MLB, Board)** were Chair Macrae, Vice Chair Andrew Machado, and Members David Beavers, Travis Franck, and Steve Klionsky. No member was absent.
- **Present for Belmont Municipal Light Department (BMLD)** were General Manager Craig Spinale, Assistant General Manager Sam Osmanecic, Finance Manager Maria Makar-Limanov, Marketing & Communications Manager Aidan Leary, Energy Specialist Kevin Bleau, and Executive Assistant Erin Lenzing.
- **Documents/exhibits used:** minutes as outlined below, presentation slides, EVAL certificate and benefits, and meeting memo.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular and Executive Sessions for April 26, 2024

Mr. Macrae moved to approve the minutes from the April 26th 2024 Municipal Light Board meetings, Regular and Executive Sessions. Mr. Machado seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Macrae, Mr. Machado, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Klionsky, and Mr. Franck all voted aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT - There was no public comment.

PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE BY BELMONT VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Mike Callanan, Chair of the Belmont Veterans Memorial Committee, presented BMLD with a plaque to thank them for their work in lighting the Belmont Veterans Memorial Park by Clay Pit Pond. There was a short pause in the meeting to take a few photos.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ITAC) INTRODUCTION

Dave Goldberg, co-Chair of ITAC, gave a short overview on the committee's purpose, background, and makeup of nine appointees. He explained that ITAC is exploring updating their charter so that the Light Board appoints at least one member, possibly two, in lieu of appointees from the Select Board and/or School Board. ITAC would need to agree on the changes among themselves and then send the new charter to the Town for approval. He was looking for feedback from the Light Board.

Mr. Spinale pointed out that applications to serve on a municipal committee currently go to the Select Board, so how the process would work between the Select Board and Light Board would need to be clarified.

Mr. Franck briefly left the meeting at 7:48am. There was some general discussion about what kind of person could be appointed (i.e., member of the Light Board, member of the public, or BMLD staff) and possible next steps, and the need to work with the Select Board on process. Mr. Franck returned to the meeting at 7:58am.

POWER SUPPLY POLICY DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE

Mr. Spinale stated that this was a continuation of previous discussions on power supply, particularly on Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), which are issued when 1 megawatt-hour of electricity is generated and delivered to the grid from a renewable source. The outstanding question was how the funds from BMLD's generation charge could be spent if not on RECs. To that end, Mr. Spinale asked Ms. Makar-Limanov and Mr. Bleau to research and present on the topic. Also present was Stan Farniarz from Daymark Energy Advisors, the vendor that is running BMLD's cost-of-service study.

Cost Analysis

Ms. Makar-Limanov began with a cost analysis. She summarized the non-carbon emitting requirements for municipal light plants, REC costs from 2018-2023, and walked the Board through two scenarios for 2024 that depended on what class of REC was purchased. In scenario I, BMLD would purchase a mix of Class I and Class II RECs, which would cost just under \$1M. In scenario II, BMLD would purchase Class II RECs only for about \$234K, creating a savings of roughly \$700K that might be reallocated elsewhere. Mr. Spinale clarified the plan was to stay a 100% non-emitting; the two scenarios were just different ways of getting there.

Ms. Makar-Limanov then summarized a legal opinion on reallocating any savings, which can go to reducing transmission, capacity, or energy costs but cannot go to Demand Side Management (DSM) programs. Therefore, the recommendation would be to use any savings toward a utility-scale project.

There was a short conversation on how shortages in the DSM budget are covered (from the general fund), 2024 vs 2025 budget, adding a charge to the power supply cost to go to RECs or storage, and timing limits.

Project Analysis

Mr. Bleau then presented possible projects that savings on RECs could be used for, giving an overview (prs/cons, estimated cost) of three options: utility-scale battery storage, utility-owned residential batteries, and utility-scale solar.

In response to a question from Mr. Beavers, Ms. Makar-Limanov and Mr. Spinale confirmed that the residential batteries would need to be utility-owned because of where the funding was coming from under current rates. There was discussion about if it would be possible to change this in future, which Mr. Farniarz confirmed could be possible in 2025 after the cost-of-service study (COSS). Mr. Spinale also raised that another funding piece to be aware of was BMLD's actual rate of return, which the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) caps at 8%. There was short conversation about this 8% return and the rate stabilization fund.

Mr. Spinale and Mr. Bleau gave some information about a recent program set up by Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) in conjunction with Duracell to provide residential batteries at a lower price than retail. There were a few questions about the \$3.6K fee that MMWEC charges their customers; Mr. Spinale explained that this is to cover infrastructure upgrades needed to support the batteries. If BMLD adopted a similar program, they would likely need to charge a fee for similar reasons, amount to be determined. Mr. Bleau then gave some details on the solar panel option, which would have the benefit of generating energy BMLD would own.

The general consensus from the Board was that the project options as presented were of interest, but no definite decision was made. Mr. Franck outlined some additional questions about the impact to the distribution system, who would install what, the upfront charge for the MMWAC/Duracell program, and Duracell's integration. Mr. Machado asked about using electric buses as a battery source.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- **Scheduling the Daymark meeting:** An additional Light Board meeting was scheduled for June 3, 2024 at 7:30am to meet with the vendor for the cost-of-service study (COSS), Daymark Energy Advisors.
- **4/10 work schedule:** Mr. Spinale announced that BMLD would be running a pilot four-day workweek, with ten-hour days. He highlighted the benefits to having a longer afternoon, such as being able to complete construction work and stay open later Tuesday-Thursday. Due to low customer traffic on Fridays, he did not expect a large impact on the community. The pilot would be for the summer, from roughly Memorial Day through Labor Day. Mr. Franck asked about the hours in the union contract; Mr. Spinale explained that there was a Memo of Agreement (MOA) with the union for the summer hours. He also confirmed that crews would still be on call and a call center available for off-hours emergencies. There was a conversation about metrics to measure the impact of the schedule change.
- **Service Employees International Union (SEIU):** Mr. Spinale stated that due to vacations and other factors, there was no change to the contract negotiations with the SEIU Local 888 at this time.
- **Electric Vehicle Adoption Leadership (EVAL) Gold Level Certification:** Mr. Bleau gave some background on the EVAL certification process and announced that BMLD had been awarded Gold Level (the second highest after Platinum) for their adoption of electric vehicle (EV) chargers.

- **Miscellaneous items:** Mr. Spinale stated that BMLD was hiring a seasonal part-time worker in Customer Service. He also advised that BMLD had sent a letter of support regarding the relicensing of FirstLight's facilities to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MASSDEP). Lastly, he reminded the Board about the upcoming summer safety event at BMLD.

FUTURE MEETINGS

There was a short discussion about adding the August, September, and October dates. The next meetings are scheduled for:

- June 17, 2024 | 7:30 a.m.
- July 17, 2024 | 7:30 a.m.
- August 21, 2024 | 7:30 a.m.
- September 18, 2024 | 7:30 a.m.
- October 16, 2024 | 7:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Franck moved to adjourn the meeting of the Municipal Light Board. Mr. Macrae seconded, and the motion passed 5-0. Mr. Macrae, Mr. Machado, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Klionsky, and Mr. Franck all voted aye. The meeting was adjourned at 9:48am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Erin Lenzing
Executive Assistant