

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
OPEN MEETING
Hybrid Meeting via Zoom &
BMLD Conference Room
March 13, 2025**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: April 14, 2025
TIME: 9:11 AM

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 Osmanecvic, Finance Manager Maria Makar-Limanov, Energy Resource Manager Kevin Bleau, and Executive Assistant Erin Lenzing.
- **Documents/exhibits used:** Draft minutes as outlined below, memo and excel sheet on TOU/streetlight rates, preliminary 2024 financials and voluntary payment memo, review documents, and staff survey.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular and Executive Sessions for December 19, 2024
- Regular Session for January 16, 2025
- Regular Session for February 10, 2025

Mr. Klionsky moved to approve the four referenced minutes of the Municipal Light Board. Mr. Machado seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Machado, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Franck, and Mr. Macrae all voted aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT – There was none.

PROCLAMATION

Mr. Macrae read a proclamation recognizing Mr. Franck for his invaluable contributions to BMLD and the Board over the past ten years.

FOLLOW UP ON RATE DISCUSSION

The Board reviewed and confirmed the final numbers for the TOU rate that was approved at the 2/10/25 MLB meeting. They also discussed whether to start the rate on May 1 or June 1, 2025. Overall, they leaned towards June 1 which is the start of the TOU summer hours.

The conversation then moved on to the streetlight rates paid by the Town. Mr. Spinale stated that the Town had asked for some leeway on the planned increase as they had already prepared their budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Specifically, they asked if the increase could be implemented in two steps, one to take effect on July 1, 2025, and another to take effect on July 1, 2026.

There was some general discussion about the cost of service (COS) for the streetlights, the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) formula for lighting, the savings the Town had enjoyed due to the conversion of streetlights to LED bulbs, and the depreciation rate. In response to questions from Mr. Franck and Mr. Beavers about grant money for the LED conversion, Mr. Osmanecvic explained that while BMLD had won a grant at one point, the money had not been used because of restrictions on what type of lights could be used.

Mr. Spinale suggested that if the Board was comfortable with the two-step implementation proposed by the Town, they could have a rate hearing at the next MLB meeting; the Board agreed. The Board also decided to call a vote on the start date for the TOU rate.

Mr. Franck moved that the approved TOU changes start on June 1, 2025. Mr. Beavers seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Machado, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Franck, and Mr. Macrae all voted aye.

VOTE ON VOLUNTARY PAYMENT TO TOWN

Ms. Makar-Limanov gave a brief overview of some high-level preliminary year-end financials for 2024. She stressed that the numbers wouldn't be final until the auditors completed their work, but the preliminary numbers were being presented to give the Board a sense of BMLD's fiscal situation before they voted on a voluntary payment to the Town.

Ms. Makar-Limanov then answered few general questions from the Board on rate of return, what was included in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and so forth. She and Mr. Spinale also confirmed that the previous payment agreement with the Town had expired.

Mr. Machado moved to transfer a voluntary payment of \$650,000.00 from the Municipal Light Department Operating Cash Account to the Town's General Revenue Fund. Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Franck, Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Machado, and Mr. Macrae all voted aye.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REVIEW PROCESS

This was a general overview of the process for the Board to deliver Mr. Spinale's annual performance review.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Spinale updated the Board on the following:

- **4-10 schedule:** A decision was needed on whether to keep the current schedule of four days a week (ten-hour days) or revert to the previous five-day schedule. Mr. Spinale presented an employee survey plus spending and overtime data in support of keeping the current schedule. After asking a few questions about the prior summer schedule, Friday availability, and the impact on employees, the Board did not object.
- **Storms:** The past month had two high wind events, one on 3/7-3/8, which did not cause issues, and one on 2/16-2/17, which did cause outages. Mr. Spinale gave a short review of the February storm.
- **Energy tariffs:** Due to recent talk of tariffs on energy imports from Canada, the Independent System Operator (ISO) of New England has asked the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for guidance on payments, reimbursements, etc.
- **Leonard St transformer:** This is an ongoing issue as the vendor who won the contract was unable to meet the specifications for a round transformer. BMLD will be moving forward with using a pole-mounted transformer on Alexander Ave as an alternative to the pad-mounted one currently on Leonard.
- **Recognition of Eversource's help:** Mr. Spinale highlighted the fact that the CEO of Eversource has been very helpful to BMLD, both with the Leonard St transformer, and with sourcing other transformers.

EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with IBEW Local 104

Mr. Franck moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with IBEW Local 104, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of this body, and to adjourn in Executive Session. Mr. Machado seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Machado, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Franck, and Mr. Macrae all voted aye.

The Municipal Light Board went into Executive Session at 9:00am and adjourned in Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted by,

Erin Lenzing, Executive Assistant