

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
OPEN MEETING
Hybrid Meeting via Zoom &
BMLD Conference Room
June 12, 2025**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: July 14, 2025
TIME: 8:54 AM

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

- **Present for the Municipal Light Board (MLB, Board)** were Chair Machado, Vice Chair David Beavers, and Members Michael Macrae and Steve Klionsky. Member Jessica Harrison joined the meeting at 7:32am.
- **Present for Belmont Municipal Light Department (BMLD)** were General Manager Craig Spinale, Assistant GM Sam Osmanovic, Finance Manager Maria Makar-Limanov, Energy Resource Manager Kevin Bleau, Energy Specialist Jordan Webster, and Executive Assistant Erin Lenzing.
- **Documents/exhibits used:** Draft minutes as outlined below; DSM presentation slides; legal opinion from Duncan & Allen on the Power Supply Policy, redline policy document, and draft PCA tariff; proposed ME TOU tariff; and audited 2024 financial package and Q1 2025 memo.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular & Executive Sessions for April 10, 2025
- Regular & Executive Sessions for May 8, 2025

Mr. Klionsky raised questions about the 5/8 Executive Session minutes, and approval was deferred until the next Executive Session. Ms. Lenzing confirmed a typo had already been corrected. Ms. Harrison asked about her title in the 4/10 minutes; Ms. Lenzing suggested amending it to “member-elect”, and the Board agreed.

Mr. Beavers moved to approve the April 10th 2025 Regular and Executive Session minutes (as amended) and the May 8th 2025 Regular Session minutes of the Municipal Light Board meetings. Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Machado, Ms. Harrison, and Mr. Macrae all voted aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT – There was none.

DEMAND SIDE MANAGEMENT (DSM) PRESENTATION

Mr. Spinale introduced BMLD’s Energy Specialist, Jordan Webster, who presented an overview of BMLD’s 2024 demand side management (DSM) programs and 2025 plans.

He began by reviewing existing programs and partners, including Energy New England aka ENE (rebates and assessments), Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company or MMWEC (demand response), Abode (heat pump consulting), and BMLD’s self-managed efforts in battery storage and electric vehicle (EV) charging. 2024 highlights included an estimated YTD energy savings of 72,096 kWh, strong engagement with heat pump and yard equipment rebates, and a 12/12 peak prediction success rate. Demand response opt-out rates were lower than MMWEC expected, despite the small EV telematics sample shifting the results.

The presentation then moved on to EV charger utilization. The overall finding was that BMLD’s public EV chargers are being used as expected. Discussion touched on how charging is largely a public service rather than a profit driver, the nature and number of existing/future chargers, and how the hourly rate disincentivizes use after a vehicle is fully charged. The presentation also covered incentive spending in 2024. Heat pumps represented the largest share of incentives, followed by demand response and appliance/yard equipment rebates.

Mr. Webster then outlined the 2025 DSM budget and program adjustments. Notably, yard equipment rebates received increased funding based on high 2024 engagement, and overall administrative costs are being reduced. Overall, BMLD aimed to tie the DSM programs to three goals: electrification (climate), conservation, and peak shaving. Future initiatives include refining the Adobe contract, MMWEC working to add Tesla Powerwalls to demand response, collaboration with RENWAI for commercial account analysis, and promoting MassHousing's Energy Saver Loan. There was a short conversation about the partnership with the library to install EV chargers at their new site. Lastly, Mr. Webster noted the development of new online tools and reporting on large municipal buildings.

POWER SUPPLY POLICY

This agenda item was a follow-up to a previous discussion at the 2/10/25 meeting about seeking a second legal opinion on the policy's definition of electrification and the use of the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) tariff.

Mr. Spinale summarized the second opinion as confirming that the Board has broad discretion in how they use the revenue generated from rates and that outdated language in the PCA tariff was causing unnecessary constraints. The second law firm had also suggested several new edits to other sections of the Power Supply Policy outside the scope of the initial questions. Mr. Spinale asked the Board if they wished to focus only on the outstanding questions (defining electrification and the PCA) or review all the suggested edits.

There was some discussion on the divergence in the two opinions, transparency and rate structure implications, and if the newly proposed edits were needed. Mr. Beavers gave some background context on the initial changes that had prompted legal review and the need for flexibility in using funds, especially in choosing between renewable energy credits (RECs) and other strategic investments. Mr. Osmanecic and Mr. Klionsky raised concerns about some of the new proposed edits related to transparency and contract disclosure, pointing out that some of the suggestions might not reflect the history or intent behind current language.

Overall, the Board concluded that more review of the new edits would make sense. Mr. Spinale suggested appointing a member to work with him one-on-one before bringing a revised policy before the Board as a whole. The Board agreed and Mr. Klionsky volunteered. There was then a discussion about voting on the PCA tariff, which had been reviewed by Legal and the auditors. The Board took turns giving their opinion, with most expressing they would be willing to move ahead but could also wait as it wasn't time sensitive. Ultimately the Board opted to table a vote on the PCA to allow for additional review and to give those members who wanted it more time to better understand the changes.

RATE HEARING

The subject of this rate hearing was to discuss a pilot municipal time-of-use (TOU) rate.

Mr. Machado moved to suspend the Regular Session of the Municipal Light Board and open a public rate hearing. Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Macrae, Ms. Harrison, and Mr. Machado all voted aye. Regular Session was suspended at 8:46am.

Mr. Bleau gave a brief overview of the rate, its design, and confirmed that the proposed tariff included a correction that Mr. Beavers had previously identified. In response to some clarifying questions from Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Spinale suggested amending language in the tariff from "municipal customers" to "municipal accounts". There was some discussion of the timeline, during which an effective date of 7/1/25 was agreed on. Mr. Machado opened the floor for any public comment; there was none.

Mr. Beavers moved to close the rate hearing and return to the Regular Session of the Municipal Light Board. Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Ms. Harrison, Mr. Macrae, and Mr. Machado all voted aye. The Board returned to regular session at 9:00am.

Mr. Machado moved to approve the proposed municipal TOU pilot rate ME TOU with the amended language and effective date as discussed. Mr. Beavers seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Ms. Harrison, Mr. Macrae, and Mr. Machado all voted aye.

There was a brief discussion about the pilot's end date. While none was set, Mr. Spinale noted BMLD had requested a one-year commitment, as with the residential TOU pilot. Mr. Macrae left the meeting at 9:04am.

FINANCIALS

Ms. Makar-Limanov led the financial update, beginning with a brief review of the 2024 preliminary year-end results, which remained stable with only minor changes from earlier projections.

Moving on to the Q1 2025 financials, she noted that the first quarter is typically not representative of annual trends, but several early indicators were discussed. Sales of electricity increased due to a colder winter, and while power costs were slightly lower than anticipated, overall expenses rose because more power was purchased. BMLD requested Department of Public Utilities (DPU) approval for a 5% depreciation to prepare for future capital construction. Revenues were up about 5.3% from the budget and 7% from the prior year, largely due to increased kWh sales.

There was a short conversation around the residential TOU pilot program. Mr. Bleau explained that while currently capped at 300 participants, the actual number had dipped slightly due to customer turnover. He and Mr. Spinale also raised the administrative challenges in managing enrollment and the possibility of shifting to an annual open enrollment model to streamline operations.

In response to a question from Ms. Harrison, Ms. Makar-Limanov explained that since non-operating revenue includes unpredictable sources like scrap metal sales, insurance claims, etc. she budgets conservatively for them, which contributed to a higher-than-budgeted result. Ms. Makar-Limanov then reviewed the overall 2025 numbers and asked if there were any follow-up questions; there were none.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Spinale updated the Board on the following:

- **Power Supply Hedge:** A five-year block of grid power was purchased to increase hedge levels, securing ~52.5 MWh. 2026 is now hedged at 80%, 2027 at 70%, 2028 at 60%, and beyond that primarily through direct contracts.
- **Large Building Energy Reporting:** The Department of Energy Resources (DOER) waived 2025 reporting requirements for municipal light plants (MLPs) after receiving feedback from various MLPs. Concerns included resident data privacy, staff time (~12+ hours per report), and infrastructure limitations. Town buildings will still be tracked to prepare for future compliance.
- **Leonard Street Transformer:** Due to the contracted vendor's failure to supply a specialty underground transformer, the plan is to switch to overhead units with a 14-week lead time. This will avoid costly roadwork and curbing changes and is expected to be completed by the end of summer. Rising demand in Belmont Center was also briefly discussed.
- **GreatBlue Customer Survey:** The biennial customer survey is being finalized, with room for 3–6 custom questions. Suggested topics from the Board included attitudes toward nuclear power, arrears management, and future electrification plans (EVs, heat pump adoption).
- **Phone System:** The Town is moving to a new phone system that won't meet BMLD's call center needs. As a result, BMLD is getting a different phone provider than the Town by end of August.
- **NEPPA Annual Conference:** Is being held August 17–20 in Burlington, VT. The Board is invited to attend; those interested should notify staff to register.
- **Grant Ave Utility Pole:** He reviewed the history of a resident's request to shift the pole at the end of their driveway 6 inches. As the pole is sound and no safety issues were detected, the relocation would have to be at the customer's own expense.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Beavers moved to adjourn the meeting of the Municipal Light Board. Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed 4-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Ms. Harrison, and Mr. Machado all voted aye. The meeting was adjourned at 10:03am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Erin Lenzing, Executive Assistant