

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
OPEN MEETING
Hybrid Meeting via Zoom &
BMLD Conference Room
October 6, 2025**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: December 3, 2025
TIME: 9:29 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 Steve Klionsky and Michael Macrae. Member Jessica Harrison was initially absent; she later joined the meeting at 7:34am.
- **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, and Executive Assistant Erin Lenzing.
- **Documents/exhibits used:** Draft minutes as outlined below; COSS presentation slides; and APPA article (*How Load Research Informed Belmont Light's Rate Design*)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Session for September 11, 2025

Mr. Beavers moved to approve the minutes of the September 11th, 2025 Regular Session of the Municipal Light Board. Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed 4-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Macrae, and Mr. Machado all voted aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT – There was none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss collective bargaining strategy; litigation strategy; and trade secrets or confidential information (power supply)

Mr. Beavers moved to enter into Executive Session to: 1. 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 this body; 2. discuss strategy with respect to litigation, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of this body; and 3. discuss trade secrets, confidential, or other proprietary information provided in the course of this body's activities as an energy supplier; and then return to open session.

Mr. Klionsky seconded, and the motion passed 4-0 by roll call vote. Mr. Klionsky, Mr. Beavers, Mr. Macrae, and Mr. Machado all voted aye.

The Municipal Light Board went into Executive Session at 7:33am and returned to Regular Session at 8:14am.

COST-OF-SERVICE STUDY OVERVIEW

Ms. Makar-Limanov provided a recap of the Cost-of-Service Study (COSS) by Daymark Energy Advisors, originally based on 2023 data. She updated the analysis with 2024 actual data to reflect more recent results. As 2025 data was still being finalized, this agenda item served as a preliminary discussion ahead of incorporating 2025 actuals and 2026 projections.

Ms. Makar-Limanov reviewed the cost allocation process, explaining how costs were grouped into categories like generation, transmission, and distribution, with each customer class assigned its proportional share. These allocations were compared against financial results to determine how each class aligns with its cost of service (COS). Daymark's initial findings, based on 2023 data, indicated an overall rate increase of 5.3% for 2026.

In response to a question from Ms. Harrison, Ms. Makar-Limanov noted that Daymark had found the 2023 Time of Use (TOU) rates to be under-collecting. Mr. Spinale added that the rate had been adjusted in 2025, so updated figures would be presented in future.

Ms. Makar-Limanov then described her use of Daymark's modeling tool with 2024 data. Her findings thus far were that rates were still under-collecting compared to COS. Preliminary calculations suggested the overall increase needed would remain around 5.3%, but further refinements would be made as more data becomes available. She noted that she is developing 2025 actuals and 2026 projections, including detailed TOU analysis.

In response to a question from Mr. Klionsky about street lighting, Mr. Spinale summarized the changes to that rate, some effective 7/1/25, and the rest planned for the Town's next fiscal year. Mr. Beavers asked about load profile impacts; Ms. Makar-Limanov explained that consumption patterns and annual variability affect the model's sensitivity, so projections are still being refined. Mr. Spinale added that the utility's revenues continue to meet expenses and that, despite normal variations by customer class and weather, the utility remains in strong financial health.

The discussion closed with an agreement that no immediate action was needed from the Board. Next steps include finalizing 2025 data, monitoring financial performance through year-end, and revisiting the COSS and potential rate adjustments at future meetings.

ELECTRIFICATION FUND

Mr. Spinale began by noting that the new Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) tariff language effective 11/1/25 will allow more flexibility in allocating funds for power supply projects. He announced that BMLD would be collaborating with Greenbridge Labs, an MIT-affiliated organization, to evaluate options for those funds such as solar, battery storage, and other approaches using AI to assess criteria like cost, emissions, reliability, equity, regulatory risk, and financial sustainability. The study is expected to take a couple of months and results will be shared with the Board. In meantime, Mr. Spinale asked if the Board would prefer to hold off on fund allocations until the study is done or continue buying Class II Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) as in previous years.

There was a brief discussion about the estimated funds, which are expected to be roughly \$500K. The conversation then focused on whether to hold the funds in reserve or spend them on Class II RECs. In total the Board expressed strong opposition to spending electrification funds on Class II RECs, with members favoring investment in solar programs, residential storage, and other impactful initiatives instead; they emphasized the need for a strategic approach guided by the upcoming Greenbridge study and agreed to carry the funds forward while awaiting study results to prioritize future investments.

Mr. Macrae left the meeting at 8:56am.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Spinale updated the Board on the following:

- **BMLD Open House:** Is being held October 8th from 3pm-6pm at the Belmont Light office.
- **Substation maintenance:** Substations 2 (Oakley Rd) and 3 (Hittinger St) require maintenance to the load tap changers in the transformers that includes draining and replacing oil as well as replacing worn parts. Although costly, the work is less expensive than new equipment and will extend the life of the transformers by another 10+ years. Lower operating voltages in these substations contribute to faster internal breakdown of components, but this maintenance is considered end-of-life rebuilding rather than premature failure. While the focus remains on Station 1's eventual retirement, Substations 2 and 3 will remain operational for at least another decade, and the expenditures are justified to maintain reliable service for the community.
- **RECs agreement with Town:** The Town Administrator is still working with the Library Board of Trustees to answer their questions on how RECs will be valued. She plans to put the agreement on the Select Board's agenda in October so they can finalize it.
- **American Public Power Association (APPA) article:** Mr. Spinale announced that Mr. Bleau, in collaboration with Daymark, wrote an APPA article outlining the process of the load analysis, COSS, and how it informed TOU rate changes. The article is available on both the APPA and BMLD websites.

- **Dragos implementation:** He confirmed that Dragos had been deployed. This is a cybersecurity measure that was discussed during the 5/8/25 MLB meeting and strongly supported by the Town's Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC). BMLD is working with APPA to receive funding for the first year of Dragos under an initiative the APPA offers small- to moderate-sized utilities.
- **Miscellaneous:** BMLD received the first of two new hybrid bucket trucks, which use battery power to operate instead of running the diesel engine, reducing noise and greenhouse gas emissions; the second truck is expected to arrive within a week. Two older trucks will be retired and sold at auction to recover funds as part of the fleet replacement plan. The Arrears Management Program (AMP) now has five customers enrolled, following the adjustments approved at the 7/10/25 MLB meeting to forgive 10% every six months and waive late fees upon enrollment; these changes have already eliminated about \$78K in late fees and are expected to yield positive results for both customers and the next yearly audit. The Leonard Street transformer is still on schedule to be done by end of October. Lastly, Mr. Spinale shared some details of his schedule for the next few weeks.

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 9:20am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Erin Lenzing, Executive Assistant