

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
OPEN MEETING
Hybrid Meeting via Zoom &
BMLD Conference Room
January 15, 2026**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: March 12, 2026
TIME: 2:33 PM

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 Jessica Harrison and Steve Klionsky. Member Michael Macrae was absent.
- **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, Customer Care & Billing Manager Gina Smith, and Executive Assistant Erin Lenzing.
- **Documents/exhibits used:** Draft minutes as outlined below; Belmont x GreenBridge presentation slides; GreenBridge AI options comparison; and DSM 2026 Program Update presentation slides.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Session for December 11, 2025

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – There was none.

GREENBRIDGE PRESENTATION

This was a presentation by Solangel Fernandez from GreenBridge Lab, an MIT-based group specializing in AI tools for utilities. Ms. Fernandez presented the results of an initial pilot program that GreenBridge undertook in collaboration with Belmont Light to train AI agents to support data-driven decision making.

Ms. Fernandez began by explaining the scope of the pilot, which spanned approximately three months, including data preparation, system training, and scenario testing. The system is built as three specialized agents: CarbonBridge, which calculates carbon emissions and reductions; ValueBridge, which performs financial sustainability and return on investment (ROI) analysis; and TrustBridge, which focuses on public sentiment and stakeholder perspectives. She emphasized that their AI system is trained on Belmont Light's internal data and uses Python programming for the backend calculations, ensuring that outputs are grounded in precise, verifiable calculations. The AI interface then translates these calculations into user-friendly insights, providing rapid analysis of multiple investment options.

Ms. Fernandez then demonstrated the system, showing how it evaluates investment options such as renewable energy certificates (RECs), solar and battery incentives, utility-scale solar arrays, and Time-of-Use (TOU) rates. The CarbonBridge and ValueBridge agents rank options based on carbon reduction, financial impact, and capacity benefits, while also providing the underlying formulas and assumptions for review. The TrustBridge agent, still in an early prototype phase, provides initial insights into public sentiment, identifying neutral, positive, and negative opinions about different strategies.

The Board discussed nuances such as the expected lifetime for each treatment, the potential integration of tax credits into the analysis, and the effect of residential vs utility or third-party battery/solar ownership. Identifying risk factors, examining reliability and resiliency, and adding customer impacts were discussed. Regarding TrustBridge, the Board suggested improvements such as weighting and filtering by relevance, geography, and

timeline to better reflect a Belmont Light-specific context. Additionally, the Board suggested conducting sensitivity analysis using different assumed lifetimes for power supply options. Finally, the Belmont Light team was invited to test the system further and submit follow-up questions.

DEMAND-SIDE MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION

Energy Specialist Jordan Webster presented on BMLD's Demand-Side Management (DSM) programs, provided an update on residential and commercial energy programs, highlighting recent activity, planned 2026 incentives, and strategic considerations. The conversation began with the HER program, clarifying eligibility, income verification, and permissible measures, with emphasis on pairing high-impact upgrades like heat pumps and insulation with smaller improvements to maximize incentives. Board members shared personal experiences with heat pumps, raising concerns about actual savings, rate structures, and the importance of marketing incentives effectively to ensure both engagement and customer benefit.

The discussion then turned to battery storage and demand response. While incentives were designed to maximize utility-side ROI, uptake has been low, particularly among solar customers, prompting questions about usage, infrastructure constraints, and potential solutions such as virtual power plants or curtailment agreements. Technical challenges, including transformer capacity and service panel limits, were noted as potential future considerations as distributed energy adoption increases.

Commercial programs were also reviewed, with historically low participation. Surveys and interviews indicated businesses have limited operational flexibility and uncertainty about efficiency and electrification measures. Plans for 2026 include expanded energy audits, targeted outreach, and marketing, with findings from these audits expected to guide 2027 program design.

Throughout the meeting balancing financial ROI, customer experience, and operational feasibility was discussed. The conversation highlighted the complexity of scaling distributed energy resources, the need for careful planning, and the importance of education and clear communication. The Board and BMLD staff affirmed ongoing commitment to residential DSM programs and initial steps for commercial engagement, with strategic integration of state and federal programs seen as key to future success.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Spinale updated the Board on the following:

- **Substation maintenance:** The work on the tap-changing transformers at Hittinger Street and Oakley Road substations is complete; all equipment is back in service, improving reliability. This work was complex and specialized, requiring out-of-state technicians and careful timing, but the operations staff handled the delays and challenges well.
- **Clean Energy Connect:** The Clean Energy Connect transmission line from Canada is now complete and entering service, providing up to 1.2 GW of hydropower to support programs.
- **Misc:** A billing error resulted in a 38-day cycle for some customers. The next bill will correct this with a 22-day cycle.

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 9:24am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Erin Lenzing, Executive Assistant