

# WEST BOYLSTON MUNICIPAL LIGHTING PLANT

4 Crescent Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

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## **Board of Light Commission, Regular Session Meeting Minutes, 5:00pm, January 2, 2024**

**Present:** Commissioners Win Handy, Tony Meola, and Jim Pedone were present. WBMLP GM Fitch was present.

The meeting started at 5pm.

**Agenda:** The Board approved the agenda without any changes or corrections.

**Meeting Minutes:** The Board reviewed and approved the attached meeting minutes from September 12, 2023.

**Customer Issues:** No customer issues were discussed.

**2023 Municipal Liens:** GM Fitch gave the Board an update on the customer lien discussion that took place at last month's Board meeting. Last month WBMLP staff submitted (19) customer liens to the Town's tax collector for approximately \$23,346.02. Consequently, WBMLP decided not to lien any customers this year due to the billing conversion project. We will use the new billing system to collect overdue payments from property owners, set up payment plans, or disconnect services as a last resort. WBMLP will continue to use liens again next year.

**Financials:** GM Fitch updated the Board on the ongoing 2023 financial audit. It will be delayed due to the billing and accounting software conversion. The audit should be completed in late spring/summer 2024.

**Clean Heat Standard:** GM Fitch provided the Board with an overview of the Clean Heat Standard (CHS). MassDEP is considering imposing a new regulation called the Clean Heat Standard (CHS) on all utilities, delivered fuel companies, and MLPs. The CHS would require MLPs to fully electrify the HVAC systems for a required number of homes annually to meet the standard and reduce GHG's. See attached compliance calculator.

The CHS could potentially start in 2026 and require WBMLP to electrify (21) homes. The requirement would increase to approx. 60-70 homes annually from 2034-2050. WBMLP submitted the attached comments (WBMLP letter dated December 21, 2023) to MassDEP related to the draft CHS regulations.

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WBMLP already provides incentives and rebates for ASHP (mini-split) conversion. See attached ASHP flyer. For example, (26) customers in 2022 installed ASHP's. The following chart highlights all our ASHP related incentives in 2022 and 2023 (1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr.). WBMLP's low electricity rates make converting to ASHP economical, and our low energy supply emission rate means converting from fossil fuels reduces GHG emissions.

ASHP CONSULTATIONS	2022	2023 thru 3rd QTR
# ASHP Consult	24	13
# Gold Manual J	14	6
# Gold Design Consult	0	0
# Gold Design Review	2	2
# Gold Verify	0	0
	40	21
	\$ 5,570.00	\$ 3,735.00
COOL HOMES	2022	2023 thru 3rd QTR
Central AC	0	2
Air Source Heat Pumps	2	4
Ductless Mini Splits (Single Zone)	11	15
Ductless Mini Splits (Multiple Zone)	13	0
	26	21
	\$ 10,300.00	\$ 23,700.00

**APPA's Legislative Rally:** The annual legislative rally is scheduled for February 26-28<sup>th</sup>, Washington D.C. WBMLP is not attending this year.

**Electricity Rates:** The Board and staff discussed getting a quote from Utility Financial Solutions, LLC for a rate study. With our new billing solution, we have numerous rate options to consider. WBMLP expects the rate study to provide guidance on how our electric rates as designed and what they cost our customers over the next 3-5 years. The main points to discuss through the study include early payment discounts, increasing fixed customer charges, consolidating line items, etc. The Board discussed the need for a rate study and will discuss it again at a future meeting.

**Project 2015A:** The Board and staff discussed the ongoing project to construct and commission project 2015A, a natural gas balancing resource and peaking plant. Tentative commercial operation date is February 1, 2024. The first fire of the turbine/generator is on January 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>. Synchronization to grid is January 11<sup>th</sup>. Final testing and start up till end of January.

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**New Garage:** The Board and staff discussed the ongoing garage construction project at 29 Prospect Street. The project is going well and there are no significant schedule delays or budget changes.

**Fast DC Level III Charger:** The Board discussed the EV charger project at Goodale Park. The chargers are fully operational as of December 1, 2023. About (200) charging sessions occurred and generated approximately \$500 in monthly revenue since it became operational. Commissioner Pedone requested a cost analysis comparing the cost to charge on a level II versus level II charger.

**NISC Enterprise Software:** WBMLP staff let the Board know that our new Billing and customer service goes live January 3, 2024. NISC staff will be present on-site the week of January 8<sup>th</sup> to assist and train staff. See attached SmartHub flyer sent to every customer.

**Battery Energy Storage System (BESS):** The Board and staff briefly discussed the 3MW/9MWh BESS project that is under construction and expected to be completed in fall 2024.

**Municipal Fiber Network:** The Board and staff discussed submitting a design and cost estimate for the Municipal Fiber Grant program. This grant program supports municipal networks. WBMLP expects the grant to assist in the provision of fiber and equipment to each municipal building with headend equipment at WBMLP. We want to future proof the headend design at WBMLPs office to serve both municipal buildings and future residential and commercial customers.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

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Win Handy

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Jim Pedone

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Tony Meola