

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,
February 4, 2025,** 29 Prospect Street, 1st Floor Conference Room.

Present: Commissioners Meola, Pedone, and Kingsley. WBMLP staff J. Fitch and C. Trudeau. Stephen Maher from Ripple Fiber. Customers D. Ashwell and Mrs. Kingsley.

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

Meeting Minutes: The Board reviewed and approved the meeting minutes from August 13, 2024 and October 16, 2024.

Customer Issues: The Board and staff discussed the following customer issues.

- Tree trimming along 8 Temple Street on the Maple Street side.
- High electricity consumption in January 2025. Highest ever kWh sales for WBMLP due to colder than average temperatures.
- Customer flyer on rates in Central MA.

Ripple Fiber: The Board discussed the Ripple Fiber proposal (See attached presentation) to provide Internet service in Town as an attachment on our utility poles. WBMLP's attorney is currently reviewing our Attachment Agreement. WBMLP accepted the proposed changes to the Agreement by Ripple and marked up a new agreement with minor edits. Ripple fiber provided the Board with a presentation on their project.

According to our attorney, Ripple Fiber will need to obtain a grant of location from the Board of Selectmen to install its fiber on existing poles owned and maintained by WBMLP. G.L. c. 166, § 22 governs the grant of location process and that statute applies to the installation of wires as well as poles, conduits, and other infrastructure. Ripple will schedule a meeting with BOS to introduce and discuss the project.

New Development: The Board and staff discussed the following upcoming projects.

- Century Dr: Site cleared for 7-9 commercial/industrial buildings
- 235 West Boylston St: Seeking Comprehensive Permit thru ZBA
- Hartwell & Shrewsbury Street. Seeking SPR at Planning Board
- Hartwell St and Beaman Rd. Raise the height of railroad bridges

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- 165 Pierce Street: House being demolished.

Financials: The Board reviewed the attached bank balances and income statement to date. Commissioner Meola asked about the 3% increase for cleaning services and when we will go out bid for cleaning services. GM Fitch will review when the current 3-year contract is up.

Heat Pump Webinar: Staff let the Board know that CET and MMWEC will host a Heat Pump 101 Webinar on February 27th, 2025 from 12PM to 1PM for MLP customers. This webinar will explain how a heat pump works, the decarbonization, energy efficiency and cost saving benefits of a heat pump, payback expectations, and address common criticisms and questions of heat pumps. The webinar will also explain what NextZero incentives are available.

CBA Renewal: GM Fitch let the Board know that WBMLP is beginning negotiations for a new 3-year CBA with our line-workers effective July 1, 2025.

Municipal Fiber Network: Staff provided the Board with an update on this project. WBMLP received all the fiber and associated equipment to interconnect the municipal buildings. WBMLP is coordinating the fiber installation and headend equipment for each municipal building.

WBMLP met with SELCO and Phoenix Communications today to inventory materials, visit sites, and schedule the fiber work. WBMLP is scheduling the fiber installations next week and the school fiber during February vacation.

School requires a CIPA compliant firewall/filter. The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requires certain K-12 schools and libraries to certify that they are enforcing an internet safety policy that includes technology protection measures to be eligible for federal funding and discounts for internet access through the E-Rate program

Regulatory and Legislative Issues: The Board reviewed and discussed the following state regulatory and legislative issues that WBMLP is concerned about. See attached document summarizing each issue.

- **Large Building Energy Reporting:** MA DOER is mandating MLPs report large customer annual energy use. Approx (51) buildings on draft list in West Boylston.

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- **EEA GHG Clearinghouse Proposal:** EEA proposes to manage the Mass-Save rebate program and include MLPs in 2028.
- **ACT Regulation:** MassDEP ACT regulation goes into effect January 1, 2026 (recently extended one year) and phases out the sale of diesel medium- and heavy-duty trucks.
- **Clean Heat Standard (CHS):** Requires WBMLP to fully electrify or convert oil, natural gas, and propane HVAC systems in an increasing number of residential buildings annually.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS): Staff provided the Board with a project update for the 3MW/9MWh BESS project under construction. Convergent submitted a building permit application and will begin their work in March.

Canadian Tariffs/ISO-NE Imports: The Board and staff discussed federal tariffs on our HQ electricity imports from Canada. In 2024, 9% of electricity demand in New England was met through imports from our neighbors in Canada and New York. ISO New England is reviewing the impact on tariffs.

The meeting adjourned at 6:47pm.

James Kingsley

Jim Pedone

Tony Meola