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9:45AM

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board Regular Meeting Minutes January 20, 2021

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Location: Gas & Electric Operations Center, 40 Turnpike Industrial Rd. Conference Room, Westfield, MA

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Roman stated that in accordance with Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting law, G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Municipal Light Board will be conducted in person and once the capacity limits set by the Governor are met, others may participate remotely. The notice for this meeting invited members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting to do so by calling in telephonically to any of the numbers provided in the meeting notice. This meeting will be video and audio recorded and, per the WG+E MLB Video Policy, the recording will be available on the WG+E website within one week. The Chairman asked if anyone, other than the Municipal Light Board, was recording the meeting. Hearing none, the Chairman welcomed the public that may be listening to the meeting.

II. ROLL CALL was taken as follows:

Present:

Ward #1 Commissioner, Kevin M. Kelleher
Ward #2 Commissioner, Ray Rivera
Ward #3 Commissioner, Dawn Renaudette
Ward #4 Commissioner, Francis L. Liptak
Ward #5 Commissioner, Joseph B Mitchell
Ward #6 Commissioner, Robert C. Sacco
Appointed Commissioner, A. Edward Roman

Absent:

Present: 7 Absent: 0

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

IV. READING OF THE RECORD:

The Chairman welcomed Joe Mitchell as the new Ward 5 Commissioner.

On a motion by Commissioner Rivera, seconded by Commissioner Liptak, with Commissioner Mitchell abstaining in that he was not on the MLB on the date of the meeting, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To accept the minutes of the January 6, 2021 Regular Session Meeting as presented.

To accept the minutes of the January 6, 2021 Executive Session Meeting as presented, but not release to the public at this time.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

VI. OLD BUSINESS:

- a) **Sub-Committee Assignments.** At the January 6, 2021 meeting the MLB tabled the discussions on Sub-Committee assignments until after the filling of the vacant Ward 5 MLB seat. The Manager provided a list of the 2020 MLB Sub-Committee assignments and contact information for each commissioner and City Council liaison. The Chairman noted that the MLB by-laws Article 2, section 7 provides that the Chairman makes all committee assignments and serves as Ex-Officio member of each Sub-Committee. The Chairman also noted that due to the Open Meeting Law requirements if a Sub-Committee consisted of more than 3 members it would have quorum of the full MLB and the meetings would have to be posted as a MLB meeting, not just that of the Sub-Committee. The Chairman polled each of the other Commissioners in order of longevity on the MLB as to their preferences for Sub-Committee Assignments. The Chairman then made Sub-Committee assignments as follows:

<u>Rates:</u>	Kelleher(Chair), Rivera, Roman (ex officio)
<u>Finance:</u>	Sacco (Chair), Mitchell, Roman (ex officio)
<u>Human Resources:</u>	Renaudette (Chair), Liptak, Roman (ex officio)
<u>Technology:</u>	Liptak (Chair), Mitchell, Roman (ex officio)

It was also noted that at the MLB meeting of January 2, 2019, Commissioner Roman was elected as the Trustee of the Westfield Gas & Electric Post Employment Benefits Trust Liability Fund to serve until the first Wednesday in January 2022, so no new vote is necessary.

- b) **General Manager Search Process.** The Manager reported that since the January 6, 2021 meeting all members of the MLB have individually reviewed the resumes received for the General Manager position. . The Chairman commended Human Resource Manager Beth Burns on how well the process was organized, which allowed the 54 applicants' resumes to be efficiently reviewed in a relatively short time. Ms. Burns noted that as part of this process, each Commissioner selected up to 10 applicants that felt deserved a second look. The Chairman noted that he picked 3 and that some did not pick 10 applicants. He also felt that interviews of a maximum of 6 individuals were appropriate. It was noted that 1

applicant was selected by 7 Commissioners; 3 applicants were selected by 6 Commissioners; 6 applicants were selected by 4 Commissioners; 5 applicants were selected by 2 Commissioners; and 3 applicants were selected by 1 Commissioner. The MLB then discussed the process to be followed in order to further narrow the field and choose those candidates the full MLB will interview for the position at an open meeting. The Chairman indicated that maybe those that received 2 or less selections should be eliminated. Commissioner Mitchell inquired what could be discussed in Executive Session. Commissioner Sacco indicated that the MLB should only be talking process at this meeting and not individual candidates. Attorney Welch indicated that the discussions could not be held in Executive Session in that it was not one of the exemptions that allowed for an Executive Session, unless it was a screening committee with less than a quorum of the MLB participating. Commissioner Rivera indicated all members of the MLB need to be involved in the process and another round should be held with a narrowing of the candidates to be interviewed. The Manager asked if the individual members were going to prioritize their individual picks during this next round, providing a weighted value for each. Commissioner Mitchell indicated if the MLB doesn't prioritize the choices, the process may not reduce the number. Commissioners Sacco and Kelleher agreed each MLB member should individually prioritize their picks. Commissioner Kelleher indicated there should be a minimum number of candidates offered an interview since last time some of those offered an interview declined. Commissioner Rivera thought 5 would be a good number. Commissioner Sacco indicated 6 would be a good number and consider holding the interviews over 2 nights. Commissioner Mitchell indicated 3-6 would be a good number. Commissioner Rivera asked that the weighted results not be provided to the Board. Chairman Roman asked Ms. Burns to set up appointments for the MLB members to further review the resumes individually of those 18 candidates that received at least one vote in the first round. The MLB inquired if it could be provided a list which indicated the candidate selections each Commissioner made during the first round of resume review. Attorney Welch indicated that a list of who selected whom may be considered a deliberation, much like when the AG found a violation of the open meeting law when a chairman of a select board provided a compilation of each member's individual evaluations outside of a posted meeting. As such sharing such a list would not be a valid option under the open meeting law and considering the AG's prior opinions. It was decided to interview between 3 and 6 candidates, likely over 2 nights, with no vote the night of the interviews. The Chairman indicated that before January 27th each MLB member would individually, and without discussion, come to WG+E's offices to review the applicants and rank those they wanted to interview. After reviewing each Commissioner's selections and calculating the 6 highest-scoring candidates, HR will contact the finalists, notifying each that he or she is a finalist and confirm at that point that they are agreeable to an interview and that their names and resumes would now become public. Interviews will be held the nights of February 10th and 11th starting at 6 p.m. with a discussion and selection on February 12th, also starting at 6 p.m. In the event these dates create a hardship for any of the candidates, it will be communicated to the MLB at their February 3rd meeting. The MLB then discussed salary range, in that the candidates would probably inquire about salary during the discussion to set up interviews. Commissioner Sacco indicated he didn't want to negotiate salary the night of the selection. Discussion was then held regarding salary range. Commissioner Kelleher thought the high end should be \$210,000. Commissioner Sacco indicated that range should be between \$165,000 and \$210,000. Chairman Roman indicated that the

current Manager's salary should be the absolute top. Commissioner Rivera agreed \$210,000 as the top noting that a performance bonus may also be available. Commissioner Mitchell didn't want to set the bar too low. Commissioner Sacco indicated they are setting a range and not offering the high end. Commissioner Rivera asked why give a range that we may not be willing to pay? Remote interviews would be available to any candidate that couldn't or chooses not to travel due to the COVID pandemic. Additionally, it was agreed that travel and lodging costs would be covered by the MLB if the candidate chose to travel. Commissioner Rivera indicated the interview process needed to be discussed. Commissioner Sacco indicated last time the MLB created a set of questions beforehand. Commissioner Mitchell wants to be able to probe each candidate's strengths and weaknesses using individual questions and see how a candidate may react. It was agreed time should be left toward the latter portion of the interview for candidate-specific questions. It was decided to schedule 1 hour interviews which can go over or under the timeslot if necessary. Commissioner Renaudette then mentioned that following the candidate's acceptance of an offer and successful contract negotiation, the individual needs to give notice to their current employer, considering the current GM plans to leave in mid-March, so a decision will need to be made the 12th.

VII. NEW BUSINESS: None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT


On a motion by Commissioner Rivera, seconded by Commissioner Liptak, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Chairman Roman declared the regular session portion of the meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD.

Attest:



A. Edward Roman, Chairman

**Documents Presented at
REGULAR SESSION January 20, 2021**

Municipal Light Board Regular Session Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2021			
Municipal Light Board Executive Session Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2021			
Municipal Light Board Members 2020 – Revised January 22, 2020			