

# Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board Regular Meeting Minutes March 20, 2019



whip city fiber

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

## II. ROLL CALL was taken as follows:

Present: Ward #1 Commissioner, Kevin M. Kelleher  
Ward #2 Commissioner, Ray Rivera  
Ward #3 Commissioner, Vacant  
Ward #4 Commissioner, Francis L. Liptak  
Ward #5 Commissioner, Thomas P. Flaherty  
Ward #6 Commissioner, Robert C. Sacco  
Appointed Commissioner, A. Edward Roman

Absent:

Present: 6 Absent: 0

Chairman Sacco requested that everyone stand and observe a moment of silence for Commissioner Jane Wensley who had passed away earlier this month.

## III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

## IV. READING OF THE RECORD:

On motion by Commissioner Flaherty, seconded by Commissioner Liptak, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To accept the minutes of the February 6, 2019 Regular Session Meeting of the Municipal Light Board as presented; and

To accept the minutes of the February 6, 2019 Executive Session Meeting of the Municipal Light Board as presented, but not release to the public at this time.

## V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Robert (Jeff) Wensley of 3 Lathrop Avenue, Westfield introduced himself to the MLB indicating he was the son of Commissioner Jane Wensley and that he would be seeking her seat on the MLB. Mr. Wensley asked for the MLB's support of his candidacy.



over a six year period. He indicated that the liability is noted on WG+E's balance sheet and is approximately \$2.9m, which includes both sick time and vacation. Chairman Sacco requested the MLB be provided with a breakout of the balance sheet liability between sick time and vacation. He noted there are controls over use of sick leave, which appear to have been lacking in South Hadley. Commissioner Flaherty requested that agenda item h) be discussed at this time and noted that the sick leave buyouts have changed over the years and management and MLB have reduced it in the various collective bargaining agreements. Chairman Sacco noted it was sick leave and asked when it was calculated. Commissioner Roman indicated it is calculated on December 31st of each year for balance sheet purposes and assumes everyone is retiring with their accrued benefits. The Manager noted that the buyout of sick time only occurs upon a retirement. The Manager further noted that a lot of progress has been made over the years to reduce the liability. If the buyouts noted in the IG report had occurred under the new collective bargaining agreements with the latest employment tiers, the payouts would have been reduced by about 70%. Commissioner Rivera indicated that state employees can accumulate sick leave with no limitation but are paid out at 20% upon retirement. Commissioner Flaherty noted that WG+E's current contractual payouts are less than the 20% recommended by the IG. The Chairman discussed each of the recommendations in the IG report and noted that all are covered by WG+E.

- b) **Recording MLB Meetings.** As requested by the MLB and the City Council Liaison the recording of MLB meetings was on the agenda for discussion. City Councilor Matthew Emmershy was present and discussed with the MLB how the City Council committees record their meetings and his experience with such recordings. Commissioner Flaherty indicated it may require one camera and a few microphones, but that a robust conversation was necessary. The MLB discussed the issue and concern was voiced that televising might impact the open dialogue that currently occurs at MLB meetings. After further review, it was decided to assign this item to the Technology subcommittee.
- c) **Quarterly Gas and Electric Rate Comparison.** Jay Kline Finance Manager presented the graphs relative to WG+E rates. He stated that the rates continue to be very competitive and reported during the fourth quarter of 2018, Westfield residents paid 20.48% below the State of Massachusetts average for electricity and, for the twelve month period ending December 2018, the electric rates were 19.6% below the state average. During the fourth quarter, Westfield natural gas residential customers paid 11.23% below the State of Massachusetts average and, for the twelve month period ending December 2018, the natural gas rates were 13.45% below the state average. The commercial electric rates ranged from 16.79% to 15.07% lower for various classes for both fourth quarter and the twelve months ending December 2018. Commercial gas rates were also below the State average for the fourth quarter and calendar year 2018 ranging from 7.12% to 10.50% below average rates. Commissioner Kelleher indicated it was amazing how WG+E has been able to consistently keep its rates well below the state average while funding the stabilization funds at its current levels.
- d) **Energy Stabilization Funds Quarterly Report.** Jay Kline Finance Manager presented the Electric Rate Stabilization Fund which showed that, for the year, WG+E continued to make the budgeted \$25,000 per month contribution to the Electric Rate Stabilization

release of Executive Session Minutes occurred at the MLB meetings held "December 5, 2018. As decided previously, these reviews will occur quarterly as in many cases there might be an agenda item that spans several months and anything more frequent than a biannual review would not allow ample time for some issues to reach conclusion. The MLB was presented with the minutes that the Manager recommended be released at this time.

After review of the minutes to be released by the MLB, on motion by Commissioner Rivera, seconded by Commissioner Liptak, it was unanimously:

VOTED: that the Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board determines that the following portions of the Executive Session minutes may be released to the public:

November 7, 2018 - Item d) New General Manager Contract.

November 20, 2018 - Item d) New General Manager Contract.

December 5, 2018– Item b) General Manager Contract.

January 2, 2019 – Item a) General Manager Contract; Item b) Natural Gas Safety; and Item d) CAF II Program Requirements.

February 6, 2019 - Item b) Proposed green house gas emissions legislation.

That the General Manager is hereby authorized and directed to take any actions he deems necessary or advisable to carry out the purposes of this vote in compliance with M.G.L.c. 30A §22.

- h) **Inspector General Report.** The Manager reported that on February 15, 2019 the Massachusetts Inspector General released a report relating to the sick leave buyouts by municipal light departments and was discussed during the earlier agenda item relative to the annual audit.
- i) **Monthly Financial Reports.** Finance Manager Jay Kline noted monthly and year-to-date purchased power expenses and net income figures presented in this report reflect estimated amounts. Through the first month of 2019, the Gas Division gain exceeds the original budgetary estimate by \$113k, while the Electric Division loss is currently \$74k more than the original forecast. U.S. natural gas in storage totaled 1.705 Tet for the week ending February 15th, which reflects a draw of 177 Bcf from the prior week. The withdrawal was well above market participant expectations for a weekly storage draw of 165 Bcf. The withdrawal was also much larger than the 134 Bcf pull recorded for the same period last year. In response, the NYMEX March contract traded up to

example, once a real estate transfer has been completed or a collective bargaining agreement executed as a public document; the disclosure would violate the rights or reputation of an individual; or if disclosure would adversely affect WG+E's ability to conduct its business in the current business climate, taking into consideration the competitive nature of the business it applies to. For example, strategic plan documents, supply acquisition and hedging strategies, telecommunications growth and technological equipment strategies and such. Chairman Sacco requested that the Whip City Fiber, along with all other matters still not released be reviewed based on the criteria and release what can be released.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS:**

With the passing of Commissioner Wensley there was discussion on the process to fill the vacant Ward 3 seat. As has occurred in the past, the Chairman will forward a letter to the City Council informing them of the vacancy and request a joint meeting to fill the vacancy. The MLB hoped it could be finalized by the City Council's first meeting in May. Discussion was held concerning providing topics that the MLB would like each candidate to discuss during their presentations.

**X. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On the motion of Commissioner Flaherty, seconded by Commissioner Liptak and on the basis of a roll call it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board meeting and enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing trade secrets and competitively sensitive information the disclosure of which will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling or distributing electric power and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining in that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of WG+E, as noted on the agenda, and will not reconvene the Regular Session after adjournment from Executive Session.

Sacco	"aye"
Roman	"aye"
Kelleher	"aye"
Rivera	"aye"
Liptak	"aye"
Flaherty	"aye"

The motion passed 6 to 0 0 absent

Chairman Sacco stated that the Municipal Light Board would be entering executive session for the purpose of discussing trade secrets and competitively sensitive information the disclosure of which will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling or

Documents Presented at REGULAR SESSION March 20, 2019			
Name of Document	Author		Strategic Plan
Draft Municipal Light Board Regular Session Meeting Minutes - February 6, 2019			
Draft Municipal Light Board Executive Session Meeting Minutes - February 6, 2019			
Acknowledgement from Amelia Park Children's Museum	Diana McLean, Plunge-Chair Director and Harry Rock, Honorary Chair	February 1, 2019	
Acknowledgement from Amelia Park Ice Arena	Brian P. Barnes, Executive Director	December 31, 2018	
Acknowledgement from Baystate Health Foundation	Kathy Tobin, Director of Annual Giving & Events	February 14, 2019	
Acknowledgement from KEVS Foundation, Inc.	Susan Cannign, Director	February 23, 2019	
Acknowledgement from Stanley Park	Robert McKean, Managing Director	February 13, 2019	
Acknowledgement from Westfield Middle School	8th Grade Washington DC Fundraising Committee	January 23, 2019	
Quarterly Gas and Electric Rate Comparison	Anthony J. Contrino, General Manager	March 6, 2019	
Energy Stabilization Funds Quarterly Report	J. Kline, Business & Finance Manager	March 6, 2019	Financial Electric Rate Stabilization Fund Management F-6.1 Gas Rate Stabilization Fund Management F-7.1
Annual Street Lighting Report	Michael S. Lee, Operations Manager	March 6, 2019	Communications/Customer Service/Community Affairs Street Lighting - CCA-4.3
2019 Technical Organization and Functions Manual	Anthony J. Contrino, General Manager	March 1, 2019	Administration & Organization Organization Manual
Release Criteria for Executive Session Minutes	Anthony J. Contrino, General Manager	March 6, 2019	Regulatory & Governmental Affairs Municipal Light Board Meeting Management, RGA-1.2
Utility Issues	John W. Welch	March 6, 2019	Regulatory & Governmental Affairs Gas/Electric Regulatory issues, RGA-1.4; RGA1.5
Utility News/Pulse Line	Beth Burns, HR Coordinator/Records Manager	March 6, 2019	Communications/Customer Service/Community Affairs Media Relations - CCA-1.6
Utility Courses Update- 2019 Seminars/Workshops	Beth Burns, HR Coordinator/Records Manager	March 6, 2019	Administration and Organization WG&E Training & Development, AO-3.6



# Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board Executive Session Meeting Minutes March 20, 2019

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

## MINUTES

After a brief recess the Executive Session of the Westfield Gas and Electric Light Department Commission convened at 8:32 p.m. following a roll call vote taken at the Commission Meeting for the purpose of discussing trade secrets and competitively sensitive information the disclosure of which will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling or distributing electric power and energy and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining in that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of WG+E, as noted on the agenda, and will not reconvene the Regular Session after adjournment from Executive Session.

Roll call was taken as follows:

Present:

Ward #1 Commissioner, Kevin M. Kelleher  
Ward #2 Commissioner, Ray Rivera  
Ward #3 Commissioner, Vacant  
Ward #4 Commissioner, Francis L. Liptak  
Ward #5 Commissioner, Thomas P. Flaherty  
Ward #6 Commissioner, Robert C. Sacco  
Appointed Commissioner, A. Edward Roman

Absent:

Present: 6    Absent: 0

Others:

Tony Contrino, General Manager  
Jay Kline, Finance/Accounting Manager  
John Leary, Information Technology Supervisor  
Michael S. Lee, Operations Manager  
Attorney John W. Welch

a) \*\*\*\*\*.

*together we have the power to make a difference*

b) **Whip City Fiber Update.** The Manager reported the Whip City Fiber planned to complete 50 FSAs (Fiber Service Areas) during the 2017 – 2018 construction schedule. During the 2018 construction season, the decision was made to expand fiber offerings to 58 FSA's. Currently, the Department is selling in 56 of these FSA's. In addition to internet service, the Department offers phone service and a high definition digital antenna installation. Through February 12, 2019, the Department has completed 3,514 internet services, 1,039 phone service installations and 1,064 HD antenna installations. The Department currently has 673 new and pending service applications in FSAs released for sales.

c) \*\*\*\*\*

d) \*\*\*\*\*

**Adjourn**

On motion by Commissioner Liptak, seconded by Commissioner Flaherty, and on the basis of the following roll call it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Executive Session portion of the meeting and not to reconvene in Regular Session.

Sacco	"ye"
Roman	"aye"
Kelleher	"aye"
Rivera	"aye"
Liptak	"aye"
Flaherty	"aye"

Motion passed 6-0. 0 absent

Chairman Sacco declared the Executive Session of the Commission meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD.

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert C. Sacco, Chairman

Documents Presented -

Title	Author	Date
Accounts of Concern		
FTTH Services Installed	Michael S Lee, Operations Manager	March 6, 2019