

Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board Regular Meeting Minutes April 5, 2023



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

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order

II. Chairman Mitchell stated that this meeting of the Municipal Light Board is being electronically recorded in both video and audio by the Municipal Light Board. As stated in the WG+E MLB Video Policy the recording will be available on the WG+E website within one week. Is anyone, other than the Municipal Light Board, recording the meeting and if so state whether it is an audio or video recording and whether the recording is being live streamed.

III. Present:

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

Present: 6 Absent: 1

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. READING OF THE RECORD OF:

On motion by Commissioner Rivera and seconded by Commissioner Liptak, made a motion to accept, it was unanimously,

VOTED: To accept the minutes of the March 8, 2023, Regular Session Meeting of the Municipal Light Board as presented.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

VII. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY GAS AND ELECTRIC:

- a) **Acknowledgement- Art Works of Westfield Inc.-** Cheryl Crowe sent a thank you note for the generous sponsorship for their upcoming Agriculture Event.
- b) **Acknowledgment- Town of West Springfield Celebrate 250 Committee-** Co-Chairs for the Celebrate 250th Committee Carly Camossi and Sarah Calabrese sent a letter thanking the Westfield Gas and Electric for the generous sponsorship to kick off Town of West Springfield's 250th celebration.
- c) **Acknowledgement-2nd Annual Western MA Danceathon-** The City of Westfield, Youth Committee sent a thank you note to the Westfield Gas & Electric for supporting the 2023 Danceathon.
- d) **Acknowledgement-Cancer House of Hope (CHD)-Golf Tournament-** Program Director for the Cancer House of Hope, Margaret Toomey sent a letter to the Westfield Gas & Electric for the generous Golf Cart Sponsorship in support of the 19th Annual Cancer House of Hope Golf Tournament.
- e) **Customer Compliment-Cheli Menella-232 Thompson Road, Colrain** -Cheli Menella resident of 232 Thompson Rd in Colrain sent a letter to the customer care email expressing gratitude and thanks for the Whip City Fiber crew who restored residents in Colrain on March 6, 2023.
- f) **Customer Compliment-85 Valley View Drive, Westfield-** Resident at 85 Valley View Drive called WG&E Customer Service department complimenting the quick response time when reaching out with an issue at her home before leaving for vacation.
- g) **Customer Compliment- Jason Herald, New Salem-** Jason Herald, resident of New Salem reached out via email letting WG&E Customer Service department know how appreciative he was with the restore of internet service from the March 14, 2023 winter storm.
- h) **Customer Compliment-Carol Lively-27 Lively Lane, Colrain-** Carol Lively resident of Colrain was extremely impressed and grateful for the professionalism and customer service displayed by our crew members during the March 14, 2023, winter storm.
- i) **Customer Compliment-Sandy Monterose-West Center Street Otis-** Sandy Monterose of West Center Street in Otis extending a huge thank you to the Whip City Fiber crews for all their incredible work restoring lines and repairing damaged poles during the winter storm on March 14, 2023.
- j) **Customer Compliment-Aaron & Laura Clouser, Colrain-** Aaron and Laura Clouser of Colrain sent a quick note to express their appreciation for the prompt, personable and quality service provided during the winter storm on March 14, 2023.

- k) **Customer Compliment-Lou Leelyn-Town of Wendell MLP-** Lou Leelyn member of the Municipal Light Plant for the Town of Wendell sent a kudos message for the fantastic communication during the March 14, 2023 winter storm.
- l) **Customer Compliment-Paula Godfrey-2 Locus Street, Westfield-** Paula Godfrey of 2 Locus Street, sent compliments to Kenny Schabowski WCF Technician for his follow through in identifying an outage at her home and to the rest of the crew for fixing the fiber line.
- m) **Customer Compliment-1080 Western Avenue, Westfield-** Resident of 1080 Western Avenue sent compliments to a contracted crew member for their excellent customer service when installing Whip City Fiber internet at their home.
- n) **Customer Compliment-Kristen Bernard, Wendell -**Kristen Bernard of Wendell sent a letter expressing her gratitude for the excellent internet service she has received from Whip City Fiber in the Town of Wendell.

VIII. REPORTS FROM THE GAS & ELECTRIC

A. Action Required Items

- a) **Director of Customer Service and Sales PowerPoint Presentation-** Director of Customer Service and Sales, Caitrin Ferriter, Sales Team, and Customer Service Manager presented the following areas below to the Board:
 - i. **Collections Update-**Director of Customer Service and Sales, Caitrin Ferriter and Customer Service Manager, Betsy Loiko gave a brief overview to the Board on collections update through a PowerPoint presentation. Included in the presentation were the last six months of Collections for the year 2022 showing the notices sent to the customer, potential shut offs, actual shut offs. During the presentation it was also reiterated that assistance programs information continues to be provided to those residents who qualify.

Director of Customer Service and Sales gave a brief overview of the implementation of a new process, New Written Information Security (WISP), which will create more secure, restricted access with confidential information.

The presentation concluded with the Director of Customer Service and Sales mentioning the recent promotion of two Customer Service Representatives promoted to Customer Service Specialists as of April 10, 2023. The Board thanked the team for the presentation.
 - ii. **Renewal of Partnering Community Contracts-** Director of Customer Service and Sales, introduced the newest member to her sales team- Steve Kolek, Technical Sales Account Executive. Mr. Kolek introduced himself and briefly described his position as it relates to the sales process.

Key Accounts and Sales Manager, Andrew Short summarized the recent 2-, 5- and 10-year renewal of ISP_NO contracts from our Partnered Communities to the Board, through a PowerPoint presentation which include:

2-year internet service provider contract renewal:
Town of Becket, Heath, New Salem, Rowe, Washington, Windsor

5-year internet service provider contract renewal:
Town of Charlemont, Chesterfield, Wendell

10-year internet service provider contract renewal:
Town of Alford, Ashfield, Blandford, Colrain, Cummington, Goshen, Heath, Leyden, , New Ashford, Plainfield,

Town of Otis contract is currently in the draft stages.

- iii. **Future Partnering Opportunities**- Key Accounts and Sales Manager, Brian P. Sullivan gave a brief overview to the Board on future partnering opportunities that Westfield Gas and Electric/Whip City Fiber have engaged with and/or currently working with to provide Whip City Fiber internet service to their communities these include Town of West Springfield, Hampden, East Longmeadow, Northampton, and Southampton. Mr. Sullivan added and gave kudos to the General Manager as we make these partnered connections with surrounding communities, we continue to work on service areas in Westfield and plan on an estimated timeframe of year end of 2025 to be fully built.
- b) **Quarterly Power Line Publication**- General Manager summarized the spring 2023 Quarterly Power Line Publication report to the Board which included information on contacting 811 for any digs and updates on new fiber service area's that internet will be available in Westfield.
- c) **Recorded MLB Meeting Quarterly Report**-General Manager gave a brief overview to the Board on the recorded MLB meeting report viewers this quarter.
- d) **3/14/23 Storm Coverage Statistics (verbal)**-General Manager communicated to the Board the storm coverage statistics for the March 14, 2023 storm that strongly impacted Westfield and our Partnering Communities. Westfield Gas and Electric/Whip City Fiber crews spent the week of March 14th responding to a total of 6, 000 outages, with a total of 12,000 customers impacted from the storm throughout the day. General Manager continued stating that customer service received over 1500 calls between March 14 and 15th and over 1,000 calls received from customers to the IT customer service- technical team. There was a total of over 90 electrical issues, General Manager gave kudos to the department for their quick response time and teamwork.
- e) **Proposed 2023 Capital Project and Reconstruction Budget**- Finance Manager, Jamie Naughton gave an overview of the proposed 2023 Capital Project and Reconstruction Budget to the Board.

- f) **Gas Service Reliability Benchmarking Report**- Director of Operations, Mike Lee gave a summary to the Board on the Gas Service Reliability Benchmarking report.
- g) **PHSMA Grant**- General Manager let the Board know the Westfield Gas and Electric was awarded federal grant monies for infrastructure improvement which will help accelerate the replacement of cast-iron pipes. The General Manager invited the Board to the PHSMA Grant Award Event that Westfield Gas & Electric will be hosting at the Operations Center on Monday, April 10th at 12:30pm.
- h) **Cast Iron Abandonment Program Report**- Greg Freeman, Utility Superintendent provided a brief overview to the Board. Westfield Gas + Electric is responsible for providing natural gas service in a safe and reliable manner. Currently in 2023 working on South Maple main replacement as well as surrounding side streets. Mr. Freeman reported it will be another successful year of abandonment.
- i) **Westfield Warm Program Update- (verbal)**- Chris Tougas, gave a summary to the Board on the Westfield Warm Program as requested by the Board from the March 5, 2023, Municipal Light Board meeting.
- j) **Quarterly Gas and Electric Rate Comparison**- Senior Quantitative Risk Analyst, Keziah Bednarsky gave a summary to the Board on the Quarterly Gas Rate Comparison to the Board. Risk Analyst, Kurt Dahdah gave a summary to the Board on the Quarterly Electric Rate Comparison.
- k) **Energy Supply Update (verbal)**- Senior Quantitative Risk Analyst, Keziah Bednarsky gave the monthly Energy Supply update to the Board through a PowerPoint presentation. Summarizing the winter months for gas division including; market fundamentals, 2022-23 temperature outlook, Henry Hub Natural Gas futures, heating fuel price comparisons and on the electric division side electricity prices linked to natural gas, peak power and lastly supply costs in February 2023.
- l) **Monthly Financial Report**- Financial Manager, Jamie Naughton gave an overview to the Board on the Monthly Financial Report stating February Gas Division income of \$822k trails the original projection of \$1.21m by \$387k, while the February Electric Division income of \$1.32m is tracking above the original forecast by \$1.36m. The gas position reflects lower than anticipated sales in January 2023, which are billed in February.
 This variance reflects the warmest January in at least 40 years which decreased the need for heat, thus reducing our gas revenue by more than \$1m below the original projection.
 Electric supply costs came in about \$1.5m below the projection due to lower than budgeted spot market prices. This resulted in an increase to net income.
 The February budget and actual revenue numbers include the application of the \$1m deferral installments for both the gas and electric divisions. We also continue our \$50k per month contribution to the gas and to the electric stabilization funds.

The Telecom Division NI gain of \$340k is modestly below our original budget by \$15k.

Other Hilltown revenue and expense show a slight disparity due to timing of billings.

- a) **Annual ILOT Report**- The Financial Manager presented the FY2023 in lieu of tax report.

On the motion by Commissioner Rivera, seconded by Commissioner Roman, it was unanimously:

VOTED: that based upon the in-lieu-of-tax contribution formula vote taken at the June 9, 2004 and amended at the May 16, 2007 and October 2, 2013, and May 3, 2017 Municipal Light Board meetings, the following ILOT calculations and recommendation for FY 2024 is as follows:

1. That the Municipal Light Board determines the FY 2024 ILOT payment to the City of Westfield in the amount of \$616,001.
2. The ILOT is based upon 70% of the book value of the general plant as contained in the DPU Annual Report for the most recent fiscal year for gas and electric accounts 389 to 399, multiplied by the current commercial tax rate, (\$36.31 per \$1,000).
3. The actual ILOT cash payment to the City is then calculated by reducing the ILOT, as calculated above, to reflect the amount for non-statutory goods and services voluntarily provided by WG&E to the City, including traffic light maintenance at an agreed upon annual amount of \$60,000.

that the ILOT cash payment of \$556,001 for the City's fiscal year 2024 be made by monthly payments \$46,333 commencing on or after July 1, 2023; and

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.

- b) **Annual Insurance Report** – Financial Manager, Jamie Naughton provided an overview to the Board of Westfield Gas & Electric's current insurance coverage.

B. Informational Items

- a) **Utility Issues**- as presented.
- b) **Utility News**- as presented
- c) **Utility Course**- as presented

IX. OLD BUSINESS:

- a) **Human Resources Quarterly Report Follow Up**- HR Coordinator/Records Manager, Robin Krok gave a follow-up report break down of IBEW and Guild employees for each department as requested by Commissioner Sacco at the March 8, 2023 Municipal Light Board meeting.

X. NEW BUSINESS:

- a) **Other Special Funds- Commissioner Sacco-** Commissioner Sacco voiced his concerns on deferral of funds, upon further discussion Commissioner Sacco asked for an hour to discuss the deferral of funds 2022 into 2023 and recommendations of a formal opinion of the statutory rules from an accounting firm and legal counsel perspective.

General Manager asked if Commissioners could provide a list of any special reports or projects that they would like in preparation of the next Municipal Light Board meeting. Commissioner Roman recommended having accounting firm Meyers Brother Kalicka at the next Municipal Light Board meeting, scheduled May 3, 2023. Chairman Mitchell asked General Manager respectively to contact Meyers Brothers Kalicka and Legal Counsel, Attorney Michael Hall to speak at the May 3rd meeting. Commissioner Sacco requested the information from Meyers Brothers Kalicka and Attorney Michael Hall provide a formal written opinion as well.

- b) **Notice of Public Hearings- City of Westfield-Zoning Ordinance ARTICLE IV,Section 4-121.** – The General Manager spoke briefly about the City of Westfield ordinance under ARTICLE IV, Section 4-121 concerning the lighting ordinance and the recent City Council and Planning Board discussions that have arisen due to the lighting ordinance.

i. MassLive Article-by Amy Porter, The Westfield News, Published March 26, 2023-

- c) Governor Healey- Remote Participation extended until March 31,2025 (verbal)-as presented.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a motion made by Commissioner Liptak, seconded by Commissioner Rivera and on the basis of 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 or other proprietary information as noted on the agenda, and not to reconvene the Regular Session after adjournment from Executive Session.

Kelleher	"aye"
Rivera	"aye"
Renaudette	(Absent)
Liptak	"aye"
Mitchell	"aye"
Sacco	"aye"
Roman	"aye"

Motion passed 6-0

1-Absent

Chairman Mitchell stated that the Municipal Light Board would be entering into executive session for the purpose of discussing trade secrets and competitively sensitive information or other proprietary information and would not reconvene the Regular Session after adjournment from Executive Session.

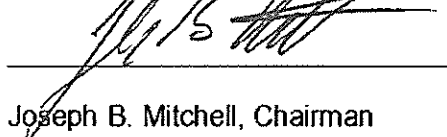
XIII. ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of made by Commissioner Liptak , seconded by Commissioner Sacco it was unanimously:

VOTED: To adjourn the regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board meeting.
Chairman Mitchell declared the regular session portion of the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD.

Attest:



Joseph B. Mitchell, Chairman

	Documents Presented at REGULAR SESSION April 5, 2023 Meeting		
Municipal Light Board Regular Session Meeting Minutes —March 8, 2023		4/5/2023	
Acknowledgement- Art Works of Westfield		4/5/2023	
Acknowledgement- Town of West Springfield-Celebrate 250 Committee		4/5/2023	
Acknowledgment- 2 nd Annual Western MA Charity Danceathon-Youth Committee		4/5/2023	
Acknowledgement-Cancer House of Hope (CHD)- Golf Tournament		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment- Cheli Menella-232 Thompson Road, Colrain		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment- 85 Valley View Drive		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment-Jason Herald, New Salem		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment-Carol Lively-27 Lively Lane, Colrain		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment-Sandy Monterose- West Center Street, Otis		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment-Aaron& Laura Clouser, Colrain		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment-Lou Leelyn- Town of Wendell MLP		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment- Paula Godfrey-2 Locust Street		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment-1080 Western Avenue		4/5/2023	
Customer Compliment-Kristen Bernard, Wendell		4/5/2023	
Quarterly Power Line Publication	Marketing- Laura Dorman Marketing Specialist	4/5/2023	
Recorded MLB Meeting Quarterly Report	Marketing-Laura Dorman Marketing Specialist	4/5/2023	Internal and External Department Communication M-1.9
Proposed 2023 Capital Project and Reconstruction Budget	Jamie Naughton, Financial Manager	4/5/2023	2023 Key Capital Projects
Gas Service Reliability Benchmarking Report	Pat Levesque, Utility Supervisor	4/5/2023	Communications, Customer Service, Community Affairs Operations Customer Service CCA 2.6
Cast Iron Abandonment Program Report	Greg Freeman, Utility Supervisor	4/5/2023	Gas Utility Business Gas Distribution Reconstruction GUB-3.2
Quarterly Gas and Electric Rate Comparison	Keziah Bednarsky, Sr. Quantitative Risk Analyst Kurt Dahdah Energy Supply Manager	4/5/2023	
Annual Insurance Report	Timothy Fouche, Accounting Procurement & Contracts Manager	4/5/2023	Financial Insurance Programs & Risk Management F-5.1
Monthly Financial Reports	Jamie Naughton, Financial Manager	4/5/2023	Financial Annual & Quarterly Reports F-4.5
Annual ILOT Reports	Jamie Naughton, Financial Manager	4/5/2023	Communications, Customer Service, Community Affairs
Utility Issues	Thomas P. Flaherty, General Manager	4/5/2023	Regulatory & Governmental Affairs Gas,Electric Regulatory Issues, RGA-1.4 RGA-1.5
Utility News	Leanne Cloutier, Executive Administrator	4/5/2023	Communications, Customer Service, Community Affairs- Media Relations- CCA-1.6
Utility Course Update	Robin Krok, HR	4/5/2023	Administrative and Organization WG+E Training and Development-AO-3.6

