

Ashburnham Municipal Light Board

Wednesday, December 20, 2023
Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant
24 Williams Rd, Ashburnham, MA 01430

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners: Richard Ahlin, Chairman
Mark Carlisle, Vice Chairman
Candace Wright, Secretary
General Manager: Brooke Czasnowski
Other Attendees: Aili Ruuska

Ahlin called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with a roll call. Carlisle present, Wright present, Ahlin present.

Ahlin announced all Board meetings are subject to audio and video recording.

Approval of Agenda: Wright made a motion to accept the agenda as written. Carlisle seconded. All in favor. Carlisle aye, Wright aye, Ahlin aye.

Approval of Minutes: Wright made a motion to approve the November 16, 2023, open session meeting minutes. Carlisle seconded. All in favor. Carlisle aye, Wright aye, Ahlin aye.

Carlisle made a motion to approve the May 19, 2021, April 21, 2021, March 17, 2021, February 17, 2021, and January 20, 2021, executive session meeting minutes. Ahlin seconded. All in favor. Carlisle aye, Ahlin aye, Wright abstained.

Citizen Speak: No citizen comments.

General Manager Items:

Cost of Service Study: Czasnowski will continue to review the findings from the cost of service study and will provide additional recommendations to the Board at future meetings. More analysis will be done during the first part of 2024.

Budget & Power Bill Analysis Update: Czasnowski discussed the monthly summary reports provided to the Board.

2024 Budget Presentation: Czasnowski discussed the comparison of the 2023 Operating Budget and 2023 Actual Expenses report. Wright questioned the Attendance Award. Czasnowski responded that this award is part of the sick policy and the collective bargaining agreement.

Czasnowski presented the proposed 2024 Operating Budget to the Board. There was discussion with the Board to provide further explanation on the line items for training, actuarial services, auditing services, police details, NextZero rebates, and arborist services.

Carlisle made a motion to accept the 2024 Operating Budget as presented. Wright seconded. All in favor. Carlisle aye, Wright aye, Ahlin aye.

Czasnowski presented the Board with the proposed 2024 Capital Expenditure Budget. Additional discussion was had on the transformer storage item from the 2023 budget and equipment/truck purchases.

Carlisle made a motion to accept the 2024 Capital Expenditure Budget as presented. Wright seconded. All in favor. Ahlin aye, Carlisle aye, Wright aye.

Collective Bargaining Agreement: Czasnowski informed the Board that the Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 11/28/23. She recommended that the Board vote to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union No. 104, AFL-CIO, July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026. She stated that the agreement did include a retroactive payment through July 1, 2023, and provided the Board with the 2023 financial impact of the new agreement. Carlisle made a motion to approve the CBA. Wright seconded. All in favor. Carlisle aye, Wright aye, Ahlin aye.

OPEB Funding: At the previous meeting the Board requested more information regarding OPEB and yearly funding amounts. Czasnowski read the Executive Summary from the 12/31/2022 Financial Reporting and Disclosures for Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statements 74 and 75 to provide the Board with a better understanding of the program. The summary states that the Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant administers the retiree health care benefits program – a single-employer defined benefit plan that is used to provide postemployment benefits other than pensions (OPEB) for all permanent full-time employees. The Light Plant provides health care benefits for retirees and dependents. Benefits are provided through the Town, and the full cost of benefits is shared between the Light Plant and retirees.

Czasnowski will be submitting all the information for the 2023 OPEB valuation in early January 2024 and will let the Board know if the annual funding recommendation amount changes.

Residential Distributed Generation Policy (RDGP) Comparison: Czasnowski provided the Board with a draft of the RDGP Comparison. She stated that Ruuska has contacted other MLP's to get information on base charges, standby charges, and kWh charges. She will continue to do more research on this topic and provide the Board with an update at a future meeting. Wright would like to have a comparison made between small, medium, and large solar installations.

Other Updates:


- Carlisle asked for an update on the amount of propane required per year after adding insulation in the garage. Czasnowski stated she would get the figures for the next meeting.
- Large Interconnection Study: Czasnowski received the results of the study. She stated she has sent the customer a letter regarding the next steps for the project and she is waiting to hear back.
- Osmose: To date Osmose has submitted results for 910 poles and will test 2700 poles in 2024. Czasnowski stated that the results of the Osmose testing will be used to create the 2024 and 2025 pole replacement schedules.
- Tree Trimming Update: Project will resume next week and is expected to be complete in three to four weeks.
- Solar project in Winchendon/Ashburnham: Czasnowski stated that the Town of Ashburnham selectboard voted to assign the Town's Purchase Option to Massachusetts Audubon Society, Inc.

New Business:

- Czasnowski stated that the office will close at noon on 12/22 for the holiday.

The next meeting for the Board was scheduled for January 18, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at the Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant.

Ahlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Wright seconded. Vote was taken at 11:10 a.m. All in favor. Carlisle aye, Wright aye, Ahlin aye


Candace Wright, Secretary