

Ashburnham Municipal Light Board
Conference Room 24 Williams Rd.
Ashburnham, MA 01430

Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2015

Commissioners: Richard Ahlin, Chairman
Mark Carlisle, Vice Chairman
Sarah Davis, Clerk

AMLPL Manager: Michael Rivers

Others in attendance: Richard Cannavino (Ashburnham Wiring Inspector), Matthew Wilson, Jeffrey Schrecke, Jeremy Holmes, Jordan Gendron, Anne Olivari, Jane Dancause, Candace Wright, Walter St. Cyr, Tina Wilson, Bob Feen, Brian Pierce

Meeting was called to order by Ahlin at 6:30 pm with a roll call vote. Ahlin aye, Carlisle, Davis aye. Ahlin announced all meeting are subject to audio and video recording.

Carlisle made a motion to approve the agenda as written. It was seconded by Davis. The vote was unanimous.

Manager's expenses: Carlisle motioned to approve Manager's expenses. Davis seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Managers Update Rivers discussed scheduling of town warrants and change of dates warrants are done to conform to town. This also gives Commissioners the ability to review and sign warrants for bills and payroll. Commissioners Davis needs a remote to open gate. A discussion followed regarding changing the alarm code and keys as we have never changed.

Rivers stated he had solicited propane quotes from about a dozen companies and about half gave quotes. After negotiation, Rivers signed a contract a fixed price of \$1.23 per gallon for the season.

Mass Clean Energy Center (CEC) has extended most of the rebates that were due to expire at the end of September until 2020, rebates are available on line and linked to CEC website. Rivers said that we get a lot of calls about rebates and incentives from customers. It is very confusing to them and we are looking at ways to better inform. We are looking into recording either a video or a community meeting with invited speakers from Muni HELPS and the CEC to help explain what is available. Rivers is waiting to hear back from the local cable access station with some options.

Rate study update: Rivers explained that we had two options regarding a Rate Study (aka Cost of Service Study). We could use MMWEC for free as part of our members fees, or hire an outside consultant. Rivers has received proposals in the \$10,000 range. A rate study was last done in the 2006 to 2008 period and took over a year. Part of the reason is because of limitations in our billing and accounting system which still exist. Whether we use MMWEC or a private consultant, both recommended waiting for FY2015 data, which we should have complete by March or April 2016. This would also give us a full year of data from the large amount of solar capacity added since 2014.

NDS Inventory- NDS has a new inventory module that AMLP will switch over to. Plan is to have training and begin conversion to new package in September. We will also likely be doing another physical inventory this fall.

NEPPA 50 annual meeting update- Manager Rivers and Commissioner Ahlin attended. There were good speakers in attendance and a lot of information was given about gas infrastructure and it's possible effect on driving up the cost of electricity.

APPA seminar - Rivers said he was trying to attend an APPA seminar in Texas in October, but due to all the projects going on it was a 50/50 chance at best he would be going. He will keep the Board updated.

Murray Road Solar Recloser- Rivers reported that the automated recloser has been installed at the Murray road solar field so that it will come back on line automatically after power outages.

IT/Computer room- Manager Rivers has gotten quotes build or buy a 8x14 IT and storage room, either stick built or modular in the upstairs area to eliminate the heat and dirt exposure for the computer server and other equipment. The prices were in the area of \$4,000 to \$8,000 as an electrician and ac would need to be involved. Would make sure it was to new server specs. Building inspector had been contacted and had no issues.

New business:

General Manager job description is necessary for Procurement Officer (MCPPO) certification. The Board agreed to use the description in M.G.L. Chapter 164 and have Chairman sign. We will work on a more comprehensive job description later.

Employee reviews and forms for them were discussed. Candace Wright offered one that was written this year for the Library Director to use as a sample. Carlisle and Rivers will work together on coming up with a draft form.

AMLP web site, social media and public communication method and policies.

Commissioner Davis had concerns that there were two Facebook accounts for AMLP. Rivers explained that he started with a business "page" but it was very slow in getting visibility without paying Facebook to promote it. Creating an AMLP "person" had been very successful with over 1,400 "friends". This method had been used successfully to notify of the planned outage, tornado warning, voluntary power reductions, civic activities, etc. Using the AMLP "page" reached less than 10% of the people the "person" did. He explained that he had deactivated the "person" account at Davis' request. Rivers explained that AMLP web site has little traffic and much is from outside our area, or the same people regularly accessing the bill pay page. Davis felt website should direct to FB and vice versa. Davis felt it needs to be upgraded. Rivers has gotten preliminary quotes to upgrade to a "mobile friendly" site and it will cost in the range of \$10, 000 with higher monthly fees.. Davis volunteered to check into this along with mobile applications. Anne Olivari mentioned that our current web vendor had created a new web site for Marblehead Light.

Wiring Inspector

Upon arriving, Richard Cannavino stated that he was not there in any official capacity, only personally. Rivers asked why his request to be on the agenda was on town letterhead and used a town envelope is he was there for personal reasons. Cannavino then changed and said he was actually there as Wiring

Inspector. He then said he had concerns regarding installation of solar meters without having the signatures of the Electrical and Building Inspectors and homeowner signing the AMLP Interconnect Application. He said that in the past there was a set procedure where no meter was installed unless all the signatures were on our form. The issue arose when the Building Inspector mistakenly told the Wiring Inspector that he had not inspected one recent solar installation. Rivers stated that he had a signed Certificate of Completion from the Building Inspector dated 8/7, and that he took Cannavino at his word when had Cannavino told him that the Wiring Inspection was done as well. Rivers pointed out that the interconnect form was written by us, for our use, and we make sure that both Building and Wiring have inspected before we put in a meter.

Cannavino also expressed concern regarding what he termed unqualified personnel in the substation, but would not elaborate. Rivers asked if there was a specific complaint and Cannavino refused to answer. Cannavino mentioned that he had some emails from National Grid on this issue but wasn't specific about what they said. He further stated that he had no jurisdiction over anything related to the substation. Rivers said that he didn't believe that an anonymous, unspecific complaint could be acted on for Code Enforcement.

Revised solar and net metering policy. Commissioner Davis has asked to have the Board review the revised Net Metering Policy, as she was unsure that it had actually been approved in January before she was on the Board. Rivers stated that he had spoken to all three of the Commissioners that were at the meeting, and all understood that we were adopting the new standards and policy in all respects except for the rate we pay customers for generation. The Board agreed to continue paying the full retail rate instead of just the wholesale energy LMP cost. Rivers explained that we have used the new standards for all new arrays as of December 2014 so that we didn't have to completely shut down solar, as we were well over the existing 1% cap. The Board and Manager had agreed to keep the solar rate paid the same until we could study the full financial impact as part of a Rate Study. Rivers explained that we have used the new guidelines for all solar systems installed in the last year, and if we hadn't approved the changed policy with its higher caps then we couldn't have added the arrays we did this past year. Candy Wright asked about the legal process to change a policy. Rivers and Carlisle explained that M.G.L. Chapter 164 gives the Manager the sole authority to change rates or policies unless he asks the Board to also approve. Rivers explained that most Managers don't make rate changes on their own without discussing with their Board first. Further discussion if the rate paid for solar generation was changing now or waiting until the rate study. The last rate study was over ten years ago according to Manager Rivers. Manager Rivers stated that new solar systems are being sized to 50% since the new policy went into effect and we have one residential customer pending approval and one commercial customer inquiring about solar. Davis felt that it shouldn't matter whether it was a residential or commercial customer, all should be treated the same. It was discussed that under perfect conditions we are dangerously close to becoming a generator into the grid which would bring unknown changes. Pros and cons of allowing the proposed additional systems to interconnect were stated. A vote was taken by the Commissioners to allow the residential but not the commercial, which passed unanimously.

Past Minutes approval- Correction to Commissioner Davis's name to Davis not Wright-Davis and also a correction of a misspelling of Davis. Carlisle made a motion to approve the January 8th Minutes, Ahlin seconded. Ahlin and Carlisle voted aye, Davis abstained. Commissioner Ahlin made a motion to accept the Minutes of June 10, 2015. Carlisle seconded, the vote was unanimous.

Future agenda items and Meeting dates-

Next meetings were scheduled for September 29 and October 21, 2015 at 6:30pm.

Items requested to be on the agenda are: the attendance award, arc study, intersection update.

Adjournment:

Motion was made at 8:45 by Carlisle for the purpose of entering into Executive Session as stated in the Meeting Notice to return to open session only to vote on Berkshire Wind and then adjourn. Motion was seconded by Davis. Roll call vote, Carlisle aye, Davis aye, and Ahlin, aye.

Signed _____

Sarah Davis, Clerk

Date