

Ashburnham Municipal Light Board Meeting Minutes Regular session

Date: January 08, 2015

Location: 99 Central Street, Ashburnham, MA Public Safety Meeting Room

Board Members: Richard Ahlin, Chairman
Mark Carlisle, Secretary
Kevin Lashua

AMLP staff: Michael Rivers, General Manager

Others in Attendance: See attached list

Chairman Ahlin called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and notified those in attendance that all meetings of the Light Board were subject to audio – video recording. Ahlin, Carlisle, and Lashua present.

Open Meeting Law (OML) Complaint - Manager Rivers requested an addition to the agenda for response to an Open Meeting Law complaint that was received from Michael Parenteau the previous day and must be responded to. The Board agreed, and Rivers read a draft response letter. Ahlin made a motion to accept the letter as written to be sent. 2nd by Carlisle (Clarification-the note on who seconded the motion is illegible, but believed to be by Carlisle, Motion passed unanimously, and all Commissioners signed.

Carlisle then opened a public discussion on the proposed Net Metering policy, copies of which were available to audience. Carlisle explained the history of the net metering policy and the reason modifications were needed. Rivers explained that the existing Net Metering and Distributed Generation policy that was approved in 2009 included a total system cap that limited all Distributed Generation such as solar to one percent (1%) of our maximum system load. Unfortunately, this provision was apparently misunderstood and over time we had come to have solar capacity in excess of forty percent (40%) of our load. In all likelihood AMLP has the highest percentage of solar of any utility in the country. The Board and the Manager are strongly in favor of solar, but having so much is unprecedented and might be opening us up to financial and regulatory risk. After discussion, comments and questions, the following items were agreed to by the Board.

- a) All new solar arrays going forward would be approved under the terms of the new Net Metering Policy, including the \$250 application fee, and sized up to 50% of past average customer use.
- b) All existing and new solar owners would be required to install lockable disconnect switches as this provision has always been part of our Net Metering Policy and Interconnect Agreements.
- c) The Distributed Generation (DG) caps would be raised to the amounts specified in the New Net Metering Policy.
- d) The AMLP would temporarily “grandfather” the net metering rate at its current pricing until a Cost of Service/Rate Study could be completed, but that the long term goal was to give solar customers credit at the average Locational Marginal Price (LMP) wholesale rate because that is a more accurate reflection of the market value of the power

generated. Rivers explained that all customers who had applied for new solar arrays since last fall understood that the retail Net Metering credit would be ending.

Customer Comments

Resident Patricia Stewart read from a letter that she presented to the Board regarding the Town Energy Committee. Stewart was concerned that the Energy Committee hadn't done enough to oppose a proposed gas pipeline, and that two of the committee members weren't town residents. Carlisle and Rivers explained to her that the Energy Committee was separate from the AMLP, and the makeup of the committee was largely in line with the recommendations of the Mass Dept of Energy Resources (DOER) to work toward the town's designation as a Green Community. Further that most of the committee's duties thus far were to make recommendations with regard to energy efficiency of town owned buildings.

Manager's report:

Energy Committee Update-Carlisle and Rivers gave an update on the Town Energy Committee. He is a member, and Manager Rivers was asked by Town Administrator Doug Briggs to take former AMLP Manager Stan Herriott's place on the Committee. Currently the Energy Committee was working on recommendations to make the Stevens Library more energy efficient and upgrade the HVAC and lighting systems. Resident Patricia Stewart read a letter to the Board regarding the Town Energy Committee. Carlisle explained that the Energy Committee was not part of the Light Board or the Light Department. It was created by the Town Administrator using state Dept of Energy Resources (DOER) guidelines and was required in order for the town to apply to be a Green Community. Ms. Stewart said the committee should have weighed in on the proposed gas pipeline. Carlisle explained that the committee didn't set broad energy policies, it just made recommendations on energy efficiency measures for town-owned buildings.

Vehicle-The 2005 bucket truck that is due for replacement this year became inoperable and needed an emergency repair. Total cost is expected to be about \$15,000 and should be ready shortly.

Employee Schools-Rivers gave an update on employee school schedules, which have been rearranged several times by NEPPA.

Mailing Stuffer- The next round of customer bills will include an insert that is a Questionnaire from the town with questions related to Senior Citizens.

DOR Sales Tax Audit-The state is auditing all Municipal Light Plants with regard to sale tax exemptions for businesses.

Transmission-The Manager will be meeting with representatives from National Grid next week to discuss power transmission issues.

Sick Time Bonuses-The Manager brought forward the issue of Sick Time Use awards as per AMLP Policy. Carlisle made a motion to approve the awards as presented, Lashua, seconded, all in favor, approved unanimously.

ISO Voltage Reduction Test-Rivers noted that our we've had some issue with our semi-annual Voltage Reduction tests, as so much of our daytime load is solar generated, that minor changes in sunshine or cloud cover significantly skews the results, We had to re-do our October test because ISO had never seen such an impact before. Hopefully it will be either full cloud cover or full sun when these tests are done in the future.

New Business

Several AMLP Linemen questioned the Standby / Call Out policy and determining when a lineman is qualified and put on the list. The Manager responded that we needed to have a written policy that outlines the minimum qualifications and what a single Lineman is allowed to do by himself for safety reasons. They also asked about creating two new "Lead Linemen" positions to be filled by existing employees. The Board agreed to put discussion of these two items on future agendas and to work toward updated and new written job descriptions and Progression Charts for Linemen. It is hoped this can be completed by March along with a revised Sick Time Policy as previously discussed.

Scheduling of next Board meeting

Meeting tentatively scheduled for January 21, 2015 at 6:00 pm in AMLP Conference Room.

Topics will be Annual Budget, Audit Update, update on Transmission discussions, Employee Policies, Sick Time, Job Descriptions, Standby Process,

Approval of Minutes

Lashua made a motion to approve the minutes of September 10, 2014 meeting, both Regular and Executive Session minutes. Motion seconded by Carlisle, Roll Call Vote, Ahlin aye, Carlisle aye, Lashua aye.

At 8:20 pm Carlisle made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Lashua, Ahlin aye, Carlisle, aye and Lashua aye

Signed _____
Mark Carlisle, Clerk- Secretary Date

Referenced Documents: Draft Net Metering Policy, Letter from Patricia Stewart,
Attached Documents: