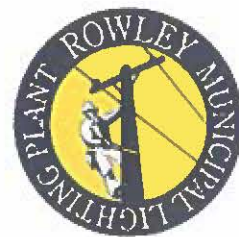


# Rowley Municipal Lighting Plant



May 24, 2023, Commissioner's Meeting

6:00 PM – Remote Go to Meeting

Commissioners Present: Bryan DiPersia, Mark Cousins, Danby Whitmore. Also, in attendance was General Manager Matthew Brown, Office Manager Eric Grover

See attendance sheet for the public sign-in. Employee Sean LaBelle and resident Kevin Snow logged on.

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Bryan DiPersia opened the meeting at 6:05 PM.

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## **Citizen Query**

There wasn't anyone participating in citizen's query.

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## **Board Re-Organization – [Agenda Out of Order]**

Every year the board reorganized after the elections.

*Bryan DiPersia nominated Mark Cousins as the chair. Danby Whitmore seconded the motion at 7:23 PM. All in favor "I" except Mark Cousins abstaining.*

*Mark Cousins nominated Danby Whitmore as the clerk. Bryan DiPersia seconded the motion at 7:24 PM. All in favor "I" except for Danby Whitmore abstaining.*

Bryan DiPersia defaulted to member.

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## **Review and Accept Previous Minutes**

After reading the minutes from the previous meeting sessions, March 14 and April 12th provided, the corrections made by the board were previously edited prior to the meeting.

*Bryan DiPersia made the motion to accept the regular minutes for March 14, 2023 and April 12, 2023 with the corrections made. Danby Whitmore seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken. Mark Cousins, "I," Bryan DiPersia, "I" and Danby Whitmore "I." Voted in at 6:09.*

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## **E&O Plymouth, NH Summary**

Manager Brown gave a rundown of the E&O conference. RMLP placed 6<sup>th</sup> overall in the Rodeo Team event, 4<sup>th</sup> for municipals in Massachusetts, with a total of 16 teams. Second place in the Bell event [speed climb] was Sean, Dennis, and Jeff. Mark and Brian were judges, and per the rules were not allowed to judge Rowley. Overall, it was a

well-attended event, and the keynote speaker was Colonel Arthur J. Athens retired USMCR. He gave a powerful speech on love and leadership.

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### ***MEAM Meeting May 18 & 19, 2023 Plymouth MA Summary***

The MEAM Meeting was well attended, Mark Cousins was also in attendance. There were many speaking points, including the Merrimac Light Department situation regarding dissolving the department. It was a very good lesson learned for everyone and how important and beneficial Public Power is to the community. Manager Mary Usovicz thanked everyone for all their work and support while her and her department dealt with the situation. Steve Doucette also spoke on the roles and responsibilities of Managers and their Boards.

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### ***Light Commissioners Statewide Zoom Meeting Summary***

Commissioner Bryan DiPersia attended the meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Manager Matt Brown was also signed in to participate. The topic of the meeting was “Rate Setting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. DiPersia said it was a very well attended meeting by commissioners and general managers. There should be a follow-up sent out to the group from the meeting along with a survey on what the group would like to see for future meetings.

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### ***Energy Use Challenge Danby Whitmore***

Commissioner Danby Whitmore noticed the Town of Ipswich has started something called the “Energy Use Challenge” which is on their website. Whitmore was excited to see it and was wondering how the RMLP could do something similar and maybe do a friendly challenge with the Rowley ratepayers. It would require some advertising once the summer months start and she thought it could help people on our system conserve electricity. We could advertise on the website and maybe put a flyer in the invoices to educate how to go forward. Manager Brown will check with the website people to see how hard it would be to get a page started and see if Energy New England could provide some data from last year.

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### ***Solar Rebates/RCS Continued Discussion***

Commissioner Mark Cousins had mentioned he would like to see the subsidy stop eventually. RMLP participated in the DOER program and then continued with its own version mimicking the DOER and Rules. Approximately 10 of the 41 have continued after the DOER program. According to our AQ31 for 2021 reporting we have 7 systems involved totaling 57.21 KW that RMLP gets the Rec’s for and must retire. We do pay a premium for these by subsidizing the solar program. Cousins said he would recommend that we finish this calendar year and then discontinue the program unless we would like to continue it and do something different. Even with all the solar arrays, we would never be able to island or be able to power a circuit without a battery or some kind of storage device. Resident Kevin Snow said he didn’t know of any other municipals participating in the program except maybe Ipswich. Cousins said the DOER does have resources for other funding types for solar arrays such as 5% tax credits which is capped at \$1000.00 and on the federal side there is a 33% credit. Part of the problem with the incentives is that the panels must be made here in the United States which they are not, only some of the components are.

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## ***Battery Storage Project Continued Discussion***

Things have gone quietly from MMWEC as far as the proposed project introduced to us. There haven't been any communications with Matt Ide since Bill Bullock separated and went to work for Reading Municipal Light. Time will tell where the project will go.

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## ***Managers Update***

**MLP Solar Continuation Update:** There are four potential solar customers who have applied for service. There are 33 total systems now. I continue to get calls from the ratepayers that have questions. Most commonly it is what the rate of return is on the array.

**RMLP Customer Survey Initial Discussion:** There is a company called Great Blue Research which has done surveys for a few municipalities. If the board would like, I can reach out to them for pricing and maybe get a general feel for how they run their surveys.

**Fleet Vehicles:** The new bucket truck should be here any day now. The old bucket truck was offered to NEPPA to use at the training facility, but they passed on the purchase.

**LED Streetlight Issue:** It was noticed that some of the 35W and 213W LED streetlights were turning a shade of purple. Superintendent Mark Anderson reached out to the vendor and explained the problem. The manufacturer said there were a certain number of fixtures with chip issues and would cover the cost of new fixtures. The line staff did a night patrol to identify the problem fixtures and it was determined that 45 fixtures needed to be replaced. Currently we have received new fixtures and there are 8 left to fix.

**Substation:** The substation equipment has been ordered to replace what needs to be fixed. 6 voltage transformers at \$19 thousand, 6 insulators for breakers at \$25 thousand, and one load tap changer timer costing \$6 hundred. Our preventative maintenance vendor, United Power Group, has identified these issues and will complete the repairs when items come in.

**Rowley HPP Info:** The Rowley Housing Production Plan is a plan for affordable housing for the Merrimac Valley area. There have been meetings on what role the towns departments had thoughts of and what role the RMLP can play in that. One thing Commissioner Danby Whitmore noticed was on the production plans there wasn't anything mentioned for solar or even EV chargers in the units. She thought this would be an important facet in the thinking design process.

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## ***All Other Items Not Anticipated by The Chair***

There was nothing added by the chair.

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## ***Executive Session under GLC 30A, Section 21 a Strategy for Negotiations with Non-Union Personal***

*Danby Whitmore made the motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the non-Union Personal and return to regular session for the sole purpose of adjournment. Bryan DiPersia seconded. All voted in favor in favor at 7:26 PM with a roll call vote with everyone saying yes.*

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**Adjournment**

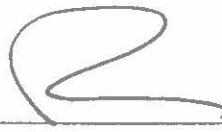
*Bryan DiPersia made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Cousins seconded. All voted in favor at 8:21 PM with a roll call vote with everyone saying yes.*

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Minutes submitted by Eric R. Grover



Mark Cousins, Chair



Danby Whitmore, Clerk



Bryan DiPersia, Member