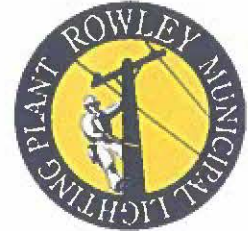


Rowley Municipal Lighting Plant



June 14, 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. Both Kevin Snow and Sean LaBelle were in attendance.

Mark Cousins opened the meeting at 6:02 PM.

Citizen Query

Resident Kevin Snow asked when the board meetings were going to go back to meeting in person? Commissioner Mark Cousins said that we are allowed to continue this way until March of 2025 and right now it is a convenient method of meeting. Snow commented seeing other boards in town such as the Water Board, Selectmen in person and was wondering why this board was not yet.

2022 Audit

The auditors from Roselli, Clark & Associates were out at the office from June 5th through June 7th. They spent those days getting documents and information for the audit and then some emails back and forth after that. When we receive a draft report, it will be forwarded to the board.

Energy Use Challenge Update

The energy challenge was brought to the board by Commissioner Danby Whitmore. She proposed this at the last meeting and asked Manager Matt Brown to see how we could do it. Brown provided Energy New England with some information and had a call with Noel Chambers, the director of energy efficiency. This call was to discuss what we were looking for, such as graphs, flyers, or any advertising for the program. The board should have something to review on or around the 23rd of the month. Whitmore was confident this could work out well if we advertise it in the form of a bill stuffer in the monthly invoices. Bob Breaker thanked the line staff for Memorial Day and said how effective the bill stuffer is. Commissioner DiPersia said we need a process to make it available on the website.

Battery Storage Project Update

Manager Matt Brown said that since MMWEC project was discussed there has been radio silence since Bill Bullock left. Reading, Littleton, Groveland, and Rowley are working on a new plan with Bill Bullock who recently joined the Reading Municipal Light Department. Bullock has taken the lead, and we all hope to use already in place documents

and formulas to save money. We are working with other municipalities to get the best pricing. Last week there was a call with Citizen's Energy on the new project. Manager Brown will keep the board up to date on future details.

Managers Update

MLP Solar Continuation Update: There are three potential solar customers who have applied for service, one decided to drop out. There are 33 total systems currently.

RMLP Survey Continued Discussion: Manager Brown said he spoke with Jon Blair regarding their experience with doing a survey for their ratepayers. Ipswich has done two surveys, one in house back in 2018 and then they contracted Great Blue in 2021. Both ways received similar results, but Mr. Blair said there was a lot of employee time involved when doing it in-house. Even though it comes at a cost, Brown thought outsourcing may be the way to go. Brown can provide the board with some samples, and they can look, and we can talk about it. Commissioner Danby Whitmore stated it would be a good thing to do as it will show how reliable we are in areas such as customer service and distribution of power to the town. We could also see where our energy resources are thought to be used by the ratepayers. Commissioner Bryan DiPersia asked which direction we want to go forward with? Ratepayer Kevin Snow asked how much Great Blue was and the answer was around nine thousand dollars. Snow opined that was a large amount especially with resources like Facebook and other survey options such as Survey Monkey. Mark stated you can build the survey with Great Blue the way you want. Great Blue is used by the industry and is customizable. Danby stated it seems like it is going to be complicated- what are we seeing as the purpose of the survey. Matt - compared to other systems, reliability, interaction with customers, problem solving, how do you receive info about the department, are you aware of the website. Danby - also consideration of energy sources. Bryan - it is an opportunity to see how we are doing and what people want to see in the future, how we prepare for our 2030 goal. Mark - we need feedback to give directions. Danby, is it challenging enough that we have to outsource? Kevin - do social media blast.

Fleet Vehicles: The new truck is here and is in use. The permanent logo and vinyl need to be applied when time allows.

Rowley Housing Production Plan: By now the board should be receiving emails from this board. There have been two meetings at which there has been some discussion on the future. Commissioner Danby Whitmore attended 2 meetings. Contractor Nat Coughlin addressed the group and stated that with state and federal grants, and equity loan requirements, building green is seen as the best option.

Collections: We had our second round of shutoffs on June 7th. We are in better shape than two years ago currently and credit goes to the office for leading this charge.

Solar Rebate Discussion: Solar Rebate Discussion: Mark Cousins started with his position has not changed. He stated we are giving too much incentive at the expense of people in rental units or people who don't have proper sun exposure, subsidizing at 60 cents a watt. Danby questioned that if there is increased housing - group of 60 units- rental and individual units isn't it better to generate more solar to offset higher electrical use? Matt stated if we have more load we may be able to accept more solar, but currently if we generate too much we could trip the substation off line. If load grew, solar hosting capacity could increase. Otherwise, we would need investment at the substation and update all the relays. Danby asked Mark if he would be happier with a reduced rebate incentive? Mark replied this program is an extension of DOER expired program and it has been replaced by other state and federal incentives. Bryan questioned if that is verified, Mark stated he heard it at a lecture, - People in the pipeline are getting a better deal than DOER gave, plus other towns did not extend the solar initiative program. Danby interjected that maybe that should be a question in the survey. Mark said that is what Great Blue would shepherd

us through. Mark stated, someone has to pay for this incentive, that is what I am trying to stress. It rubs me the wrong way that I am paying for my neighbor's solar panels. Danby said it benefits all. Mark stated he disagreed - there is only benefit to the solar owner. Danby - if there are more solar users don't we pay less for energy coming into town? Mark- no, look at California. If solar is so great is should be able to stand on it's own. Bryan- solar represents an investment in our infrastructure. Every watt of solar reduces what comes through to the substation. Every renewal energy credit we own, - it is a long term investment as I understand it. We need actuals for costs, for the life of the system. We own minted Rec's so it is a long term investment. Whether is 60 cents of 1.20 it represents an investment. Mark - it is better to by Recs on the open market. Bryan- I want to see a more data driven decision. Mark- You need to ask Matt for the specifics. Bryan- How many recs are minted for each system. if you draw it out 20 years. Mark- we have that info. Matt - I gave 2021 when 7 systems were involved so 75 recs estimated. Bryan- I want actual minted rec for all systems for each year. Matt- there are 33 systems. I will have to gather the information but can do that. Life is a compromise, maybe we can scale it back, see how it goes and then re-visit if needed. Mark- so you are saying we will have 2020 and 2021 data, because there is a lag on the AQ31 data.

Town Fiber Project: The Town of Rowley has received a grant for the fiber project to connect the Town Hall to the Annex and Highway Department. There needs to be some made ready work done which we are working on a list now to get a price. There was a draft agreement sent on June 20th to the town regarding pole attachments on the RMLP/Verizon joint owned poles.

All Other Items Not Anticipated by The Chair

There was nothing added by the chair.

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

There was no reason to go into executive session for this meeting.

Adjournment

Bryan DiPersia made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Cousins seconded. All voted in favor at 7:48 PM with a roll call vote with everyone saying yes.

Minutes submitted by Eric R. Grover



Mark Cousins, Chair



Danby Whitmore, Clerk



Bryan DiPersia, Member

June 23