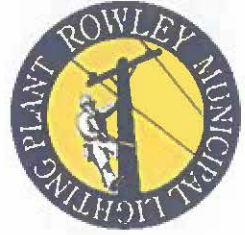


# Rowley Municipal Lighting Plant



December 12, 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.

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Mark Cousins opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

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## *Citizen Query*

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

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## *2023 Liens List*

Once again, we sent down our annual list of liens to the Assessor's Office to be added to the ratepayer's tax bills. We sent out 29 letters with 9 on the final tax bills. The amount of the liens was \$3,803.59 which was not bad. This was due to the diligent work by the front office which really paid off.

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## *2023 Write Off*

Manager Matt Brown explained to the Board that we wanted to do our annual write-offs of customers in collections. Accounts may have become stale, or contained balances that couldn't be collected through the collection agency or collection efforts had been exhausted by the office. There was a total of \$39,055.06 slated to be written off. A large portion of this was one residential ratepayer that had been shut-off and taken to court with a favorable ruling for RMLP. Attorney Steve Doucette, who handled the case for RMLP recommended writing this off, as well as the Auditors Roselli & Clark. The other one notable is a car accident whose insurance company refused to pay the claim.

*Danby Whitmore made the motion to except the write off list of customers in collection that have become stale for \$39,055.06. Bryan DiPersia seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken. Mark Cousins, "I," Bryan DiPersia, "I" and Danby Whitmore "I." Voted in at 6:13.*

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## *Customer Survey Continued Discussion*

There was continued discussion on the survey ideas from the board. Manager Brown recapped from prior meetings on where we stood with Great Blue and the question process so far. It has progressed very well; we just need to figure out the questions and structure of the survey. Commissioner Danby Whitmore suggested keeping the questions short to keep the person interested in completing the survey. She had suggested asking questions

regarding our website and if ratepayers were happy with the service from the RMLP. She also wanted to include interest in solar incentives and interest in methods of reaching net zero. Manager Brown suggested that we keep the survey to five to ten questions.

Commissioner Bryan DiPersia had the same opinion on the question structure. He thought the paper form was good but thought that would shrink down the number of responses we receive. Text message would be great, but we don't have the database to get all those numbers out. Another way we used to reach our ratepayers was through the town Blackboard Connect system in place through the town hall. This is a great system, but it is really intended to be used for emergencies, school issues, and public safety messages to the public. People seem to tend to see the message on their device and dismiss it plus every resident must sign up for it through the town's website.

Commissioner Mark Cousins repeated the same thing to the group, to keep it short and simple. Manager Brown said he has contacted Ann Hadley of JC Marketing to get a quote and her professional input on a satisfaction survey. He is just waiting for her proposal to come back.

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### ***Discuss MA specialized Stretch Energy Code & Letter of Support to The Board of Selectman***

Commissioner Bryan DiPersia said that the state has a base energy "stretch code" above the normal base code which is updated every three years. The towns or cities need to have adopted the stretch code, but in Rowley's case it is automatic because of the green community's act, and it still would still go to town meeting and voted in.

So, at the last meeting there was discussion on support or deferral against a letter to the Board of Selectman. DiPersia had drafted up a letter which was read [see attached]. At the end of the letter there were boxes for approval, disapproval, or abstain. In the letter there was one correction in the third paragraph which will be fixed before signing. A board vote was taken:

*Bryan DiPersia made the motion to send the letter drafted up for the Specialized Energy Code to the Board of Selectman. Danby Whitmore seconded. DiPersia and Whitmore voted for the letter and Cousins voted against. 2 yes and 1 no, split vote at 6:51*

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### ***Battery Storage Project Update***

We are making progress with Citizens and legal is looking and reviewing the agreement. The plan right now is all the edits and comments completed by next week and then a meeting will be scheduled to talk it all over with Citizens. PLM is still working on the system impact study that Citizens is paying and Brown will try and get an estimated completion date on the study.

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### ***Managers Update***

**MLP Solar Update:** There are two potential solar customers who have applied for service with 34 total systems currently running. We just connected number thirty-four on Hillside Street this past meter reading cycle.

**Holiday Lights on The Common:** The Girl Scouts did their annual lighting and holiday caroling on the common on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The event was very well attended with lots of singing and enjoying the lights. This year Margaret Lemelin oversaw the event, and she couldn't have been anymore pleased with the outcome.

**Construction Projects:** The new wire is carrying the load on Mansion Drive. We have two new subdivisions we have started to work on. One is Betsy Lane, which has 9 homes and Osprey Lane which is 6 homes.

All office lighting was upgraded to new LED fixtures per the Rise Energy Study done in the summer of 2022. All the lights in the garage and warehouse have been changed out also. The weatherstripping on the garage doors has been fixed or replaced and we have replaced the hot water heater with a new hybrid model to reduce the kwh usage for the facility.

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

Manager Brown did attend the NEPPA Annual Membership meeting in Leominster MA. There were 120 attendees and 24 new apprenticeship graduates. The keynote speaker was Commander Kirk Lippold United States Navy retired. He told the firsthand story of the USS Cole attack in Yemen on October 12, 2000. There were 17 sailors killed while refueling inside Yemen's Aden Harbor.

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**Executive Session If Required**

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

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**Adjournment**

*Bryan DiPersia made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Danby Whitmore seconded. All voted in favor at 7:03 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