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Minutes
Town of Belmont
Municipal Light Advisory Board & Warrant Committee
Chenery Middle School
Wednesday, February 1, 2012
7:15 P.M.

I. Call to Order:

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order at 7:30 by BMLAB Chair Allison.

Present: BMLAB Chair Brown, BMLD General Manager Palmer; Warrant Committee Chair Allison; Warrant Members Bruschi, Epstein, Grob, Libenson, Manjikian, McLaughlin, Millane; Board of Selectman Chair Jones; Town Treasurer Carmen.

II. BMLD Warrant Article II Discussion and Vote

Chair Allison thanked the BMLD Board members, members of the Warrant Committee and the Board of Selectmen for all their hard work on this article.

Manjikian summarized his thoughts on the article and had concerns regarding the plans of the 13.8kV option vs. the 115kV option for the new substation. He stated that the numbers have changed throughout the process and cannot support the project at this time. Epstein concurred with Manjikian but noted that the new capacity needs to be invested in. He stated that the numbers need to be more final and hopes that Town Meeting will approve the project. Allison noted that the capacity is a real issue. From a cost point of view, this will cost the Belmont residents approximately \$200-\$300.00 per household per year. The 13.8kV option still requires much discussion with NSTAR and the BMLD has been committed to the 115kV solution throughout the process. The direct involvement of the Board of Selectmen in the negotiating process would be more likely to provide an incentive to NSTAR to enter into serious negotiations.

Chair Jones stated that there is a real issue to pass this article but yet it is still not clear which option is the right one. He proposed that if this article is passed, NSTAR will give the BMLD more details on the 13.8kV option and then BMLD will be in a better place to negotiate. Chair Jones noted that if the article passes, both options will be compared and evaluated. He noted the importance of passing the article at Town Meeting in order for the town to get the best deal possible with NSTAR. Allison clarified that the intent of the amendment to this article is to ensure that the 13.8kV option gets a fair look and that the Board of Selectmen are responsible for participating in these discussions to ensure that happens.

Town Treasurer Carmen confirmed that the project number is at 53.7 million.

Palmer stated that the process should not be delayed six months. There has been a commitment to select the least expensive option with the best product for the town. The 115kV option was the least expensive and that is why it was strongly pursued. He noted that NSTAR is a business and as such wants to make a profit which is why they have not been forthcoming in negotiations. Brown added that there are regional benefits to the 115kV option as well, which he explained. Allison observed that these 115kV benefit points do not easily translate to the fiscal impact on the rate payers and cannot be determined whether the difference in reliability are meaningful to the BMLD customer.

Manjikian stated that Belmont has had a reliable system and that the current system is a 13.8kV system which has worked well. Capacity expansion will be needed for the future, but the need for greater liability is unclear. Palmer stated that the problem is very real and he has the data to back it up. Allison raised the issue of filing an amendment regarding the amount of the project of 53.7 million. The Warrant Committee discussed and it was decided that the Board of Selectmen will file this amendment to Article II by Friday regarding more strongly pursuing the 13.8 kV option. Brown stated that the BMLD intends to do this, thus making the amendment unnecessary. Allison distributed a draft motion for the Warrant Committee to review. The language of the amendment was discussed.

Member McLaughlin moved: That the Warrant Committee recommends favorable action on a proposed amendment that will include a 53.7 million cost number for the project and a requirement that the Board of Selectmen take responsibility for negotiations with NSTAR regarding the 13.8kV option and that the option will be fully explored.

The Motion passed unanimously.

Member McLaughlin moved: That a formal motion consistent with this intent be prepared and delivered to the Town Clerk on behalf of the Warrant Committee.

The Motion passed unanimously.

III. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 PM.

The Board moved:

The motion passed unanimously (5-0).