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**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
TOWN HALL
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
Monday, December 18, 2017
5:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dash called to order a regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board (MLB) at 5:06 P.M.

Present:

MLB – Chair Adam Dash, Vice Chair Mark Paolillo, Member Jim Williams

Belmont Light (BMLD) – Acting General Manager Craig Spinale, Staff Aidan Leary

Town of Belmont HR Director Jessica Porter

Chair Dash began the meeting by announcing BMLD's Winter Solstice celebration on Thursday, December 21st. The public was encouraged to attend and to bring new or gently used blankets and bedding to be donated to those in need.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved to go into executive session at 5:07 P.M. (Paolillo aye, Williams aye, Dash aye):

- a. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (IBEW, Local 104)**
- b. To discuss contract negotiations with non-union personnel**

The Board moved to return to open session at 5:47 P.M. (Paolillo aye, Williams aye, Dash aye).

Porter stated that the Board met and discussed continuing Spinale's appointment as Acting General Manager. Because BMLD is on a calendar year fiscal year, there was an agreement to revisit Spinale's salary and appointment effective January 1, 2018. Porter said that the Town proposed awarding the 2% cost of living (COLA) increase, as well as a 3% merit increase consistent with BMLD practices. She said this would be all-inclusive of Spinale's on-call and other duties as Acting General Manager.

Paolillo moved to approve the increase for Acting General Manager Craig Spinale as stated above. Williams seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of all in favor (3-0).

III. 2017 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Chair Dash invited Seamus McNamee, Senior Project Director at Great Blue Research of Cromwell, CT, to give a presentation on the customer satisfaction survey that had been performed in August 2017. The presentation is available on Belmont Light's website.

McNamee gave an overview of his company and reviewed the process that had been undertaken to perform the survey. 401 BMLD customers were included in the survey and Great Blue made over 4,000 phone calls in order to reach that number of customers. McNamee said that based on a summation of customers' ratings over nine categories, BMLD has an average positive rating of 90.1%, an increase from 86.1% in 2015, the last time this survey was conducted. He said that satisfaction rates also rose for customer service and field staff interactions.

McNamee said customer ratings rose across the board, particularly in helping customers conserve electricity, rates, staff, and reliability. He said 85% is a good benchmark for ratings, that signifies top notch service. He noted that there was a rise in the number of customers who said that community goals are more important to the overall policy than industry best practices. Dash stated that people may want to use BMLD as a social force.

McNamee said that while only 22.9% of customers have used the SmartHub online platform in the past, the largest bracket of users is those aged 18-44, so the usage should rise in the future.

McNamee said that approximately three-quarters of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that BMLD is doing all it can to keep customer prices low. Paolillo pointed out, however, that the number of those who strongly agreed with that statement had gone down from 44.0% in 2015 to 30.7% in 2017.

McNamee reported that over half of customers surveyed said that they would be willing to pay to increase the amount of renewable energy in BMLD's power supply portfolio. 53.6% of respondents said they would make some financial contribution, while 30.2% said they would not. Dash said that this was important to guide future decision-making in terms of increasing renewable energy in the portfolio. McNamee said that this question stood out because, in other communities, the willingness to pay for increased renewables is typically between 34-38%.

Dash asked if there were any surprises in the results of the survey. McNamee responded that BMLD's scores were typical of other municipal light plants in Massachusetts, especially those who had consistently done surveys such as this, which allow them to gather data and make improvements.

Spinale said that while there is room for improvement, especially surrounding SmartHub and the Invoice Cloud billing system, he was happy with the high level of service that customers reported receiving. Williams asked Spinale to give the Board a report on steps to use the data received to improve BMLD. Spinale agreed.

IV. GENERAL MANAGER SEARCH PROCESS

Dash said that the goal was to appoint a search committee and choose a contractor to aid the HR Department in the search process. Porter had provided the Board with proposals from both the Edward J. Collins Center and Groux-White Consulting, LLC to perform the search. The Collins Center proposal came as part of its proposal to perform a governance study.

The cost of the search proposal for the Collins Center would be \$14,000 without an accompanying governance study. The cost of the search proposal for Groux-White would be \$10,200.

Discussion ensued over whether an RFP would be necessary in order to have Groux-White perform the search. Paolillo said that if the Collins Center were involved in the search, it could help with the governance study afterwards. Dash said that the Collins Center would be another \$4,000 expenditure and that Groux-White had already been dug into the structure of the Town. Porter said that it was her understanding that an RFP would not be necessary before engaging Groux-White. Dash said that the Board could consult with counsel after the meeting on this issue.

Paolillo moved to appoint Groux-White as the consultant to assist with the Belmont Municipal Light Department General Manager search subject to Town Counsel's confirmation that the Board does not need to go out for a request for proposal for the contract. Williams seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of all in favor (3-0).

Dash had previously proposed a General Manager Search Committee consisting of the Chair of LBAC, the Chair of the Energy Committee, a professional from another town's municipal light department, HR Director Jessica Porter, and the Chair of the Light Board or his designee. Paolillo asked how the professional from another town would be selected. Dash responded that the Committee could determine that person.

Paolillo moved to approve the search committee as stated above in the minutes. Williams seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of all in favor (3-0).

V. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Spinale reported that BMLD had been approached by an organization in town (McLean Hospital) that wanted to install a fuel cell. He said based on BMLD's current policy, he told the organization that it was not able to do so. He explained that a fuel cell is another form of power generation using natural gas to chemically create a combustion to create electricity, similar to a generator that is online all the time.

Spinale said that the problem with the request was that BMLD's limit on generation is 250 kW per customer but the organization requested to install 1.3 MW (1,300 kW) of generation. He

said that he has proposed working together with the hospital on another project besides a fuel cell. He mentioned a solar array or battery storage project might be possible.

The Board and Spinale discussed the percentage of usage McLean makes up in town and whether a fuel cell would be more carbon-friendly than what BMLD currently distributes. Spinale said that it would depend on what the portfolio is. Williams said if a fuel cell was cleaner than the portfolio, it should be approved. Dash agreed and said that new technologies may require some changes.

Spinale next stated that he had been meeting with LBAC and the Energy Committee on demand side management (DSM) programming and the Purchased Power Policy. He said he was seeking the Board's blessing to allow LBAC and the Energy Committee to work with BMLD on both issues. The Board agreed. Dash said he strongly encouraged cross-collaboration so that all sides could utilize each other's talents.

VI. DISCUSSION OF PURCHASED POWER POLICY

Spinale said that there is a Purchased Power Policy in place currently but nothing in the MLB minutes around that time demonstrates that it had been voted on or implemented. Williams said that it was the General Manager who purchased the power and asked if there was a committee who aided in that decision making. Spinale said there was and this policy was designed as a guideline for that process.

Dash proposed having LBAC work on the policy with BMLD and bring it to the Board. Paolillo added that the Energy Committee should be involved.

Williams said that for risk management purposes, there must be a check and balance. Spinale said that contracts can be upwards of 10 years and that the General Manager may sign a contract for up to 5 years and up to 3 MW. Paolillo said, historically, it was the Municipal Light Advisory Board (MLAB) that was involved in advising the General Manager on power purchases.

Klionsky said that a meeting had been set up with LBAC, the Energy Committee, and BMLD for January 2018. Williams asked whether Klionsky would recommend an interim policy before a final one is produced. Klionsky said he believed that LBAC should be involved on any power purchase that the General Manager makes. Klionsky confirmed that he would have some sense before the January 22, 2018 MLB meeting whether an interim policy would be necessary.

Dash asked if there were any purchasing opportunities upcoming. Spinale said that the portfolio was set through 2018. He said there was an opportunity to purchase a 10-year contract from 2020-2030 with the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant. He said this is emissions-free but is not renewable or green. The Board agreed with Spinale that he should not sign this contract.

Spinale said that the process now would be that BMLD's vendor, Energy New England (ENE), would present him with a purchasing opportunity, Spinale would discuss the opportunity to LBAC and the Energy Committee, and LBAC would give its recommendation to the Light Board. The Board agreed with this process.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular session minutes dated 12/4/17

Paolillo moved to approve the regular session minutes dated December 4, 2017. Williams seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of all in favor (3-0).

b. Executive session minutes dated 10/16/17 & 12/4/17

Paolillo moved to approve the executive session minutes dated December 4, 2017. Williams seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of all in favor (3-0).

VIII. FUTURE MEETINGS

The upcoming meetings of the Light Board, all to begin at 5:30 P.M., were stated as follows:

- January 22, 2018
- February 26, 2018
- March 12, 2018
- April 23, 2018
- May 21, 2018
- June 18, 2018

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Board moved to adjourn at 6:48 P.M.