



## **OBSERVER CORPS REPORT**

### **Marblehead Municipal Light -10/28/25**

LWVM Observer: Maggie Smist

#### **Members in Attendance:**

Jean Jacques Yarmoff, Michael Hull, Simon Frechette, Matt Harrington and Adam Smith

John Blair: General Manager

#### **Call to Order** at 4:04 pm

No Public Comments Land acknowledgement read

**Minutes approved** for 7/14, 7/22, 7/28, 9/9 meetings – this includes both public and executive sessions. There are outstanding minutes for three more meeting minutes which will be approved at the next meeting. Recordings are posted quickly but Minutes have been delayed for approval.

**Town Charter Committee** replies were distributed to the Commission. Any comments from the Board or Commission should be sent back to Chairman Yarmoff.

**General Manager Jon Blair:** In his first four weeks on the job, he has seen the Light Department systems and also has had one on one's with the board, employees and members of the public. He feels the department is in good shape to make good progress. The team is motivated and strong and finances are strong. The next 6 months will be establishing a clear vision and a structure built into the system, and the department needs to be able to measure progress. It helps to have everyone on full alignment with goals and share these goals with the staff, board and the public. Safety was discussed and the need to watch things as the end of daylight savings time approaches. There have been a lot of reports of streetlight outages and information has been shared

publicly on how to report outages. The Rec and Park Department was recently singing praises of the MMLD for the work at Gatchell Park.

**A Meter tech** will be retiring so jobs are posted for experienced person.

**MassDEP compliance** – gas storage non-compliance infraction was received so we need to get back on regular schedule. We are now back in compliance.

**Wilkins testing** – we are starting to prepare for a 3-year stat test and we are coordinating with MEMWIC to do testing in early December. **Village 13**

**substation** schedule has started to slip due to mobilization issues and some parts backorders. Weekly updates are being received. There was further discussion of pole configuration. The last phase of the **Switchgear project** will be at the end of February, 2026. **Insurance** -- full appraisal is ongoing due to our new projects. There were questions on ransomware insurance, and we have coverage, but it is evolving. **CEC (Clean Energy Center) Grant Project** announcement is still being kept quiet – we have fulfilled our requirement and are waiting to hear back from CEC. This project is for replacement of the transmission feed lines.

**Strategic and capital planning** is a priority, and we are looking at sustainability programs and MMLD's strengths and weaknesses. GM wants to talk to the commission and the public. What is our priority in this climate? Is it affordability, reliability, etc.? The GM emphasized the need to plan for 3-5 years and pivot as necessary.

**Policy development** – The GM feels the board can be very effective articulating policies such as EV chargers. Discussions should be conducted, put on paper and put out publicly for comment. There are a number of policies that can be discussed and possibly one could be discussed at each Board meeting. The Board should brainstorm issues and prioritize the order in which they are to be discussed. The GM will solicit for feedback before next meeting.

**Projects – DOE/MASS CEC** – we have fulfilled our part (see above). **Battery Energy Storage** – repeals of investment tax credit effect this project so this needs to be looked at again. The GM posed the question: Do we have information we need to discuss this and what our commitment would be and also the penalties? We will have to act on this project within the next 10 weeks or put it on the back burner for the next 3 years. **Distribution System** – the GM is working with the two teams to prioritize overhead and underground projects. We will put out bids when necessary if we can't do the work ourselves.

**Goals for the GM** – Chairman Yarmoff has distributed goals that need to be put into place based on the contact.

- **Yearly objective proposal** is to adopt the current objectives thru March 2026 and have the GM set a new set of objectives for April – September 2026. There was a general discussion about how raises and bonuses will be determined with this format. This is up for further discussion.

-**Objectives include:** Ensure financial stability and competitive rates, Decarbonize the power supply, communicate with stakeholders, improve customer service and education, work on human resources and safety and work on various projects and the infrastructure of the department. (Note: detailed objectives can be found on the powerpoint included in the recording for this meeting on the MMLD website page.)

The Board approved objectives and performance goals.

**Vote Application for MassCEC Climate testing and Demonstration program by InnoVenture Labs** – substantial grants for shared infrastructure and it must be built before 4/29. The board discussed the need for this grant and the benefit to town. Discussion followed on location for the project, but this is still in the works. There is no penalty if we get grant and cannot do it. There will be continued discussion on this grant.

Adjourn at 5:12 pm – MMLD went into Executive session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation.