



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

Marblehead Municipal Light Commission - 12/19/23

LWVM Observer: Maggie Smist

Members in Attendance:

Jean Jacques Yarmoff, Michael Hull. Simon Frechette, Adam Smith, and Lisa Wolf (chair)

Joe Kowalik : General Manager, and Colin Coleman: Technical Operations Manager

1. Call to Order Approve minutes - 11/21/23 and public comment

Meeting called to order at 4:08 pm. Land acknowledgment read, and minutes were passed.

Michael Hull asked not to use acronyms in minutes. Michael Hull reported a pole down on Damon's Way yesterday, and a homeowner from this neighborhood wrote a note of thank you to the MMLD.

2. Outstanding items and requests from previous meetings 1) Retain recruiter for critical hires 2) Duracell Battery Proposal status

There is an Outstanding question on dual meters. Public filing will be in the local papers this week. There is also a question on analog meters – Joe is drafting a letter on this topic to the public – this was discussed at the November meeting.

Status on Retaining a recruiter – Joe signed a contract with recruiter, and there are two positions to be filled. Lisa recommended Simon join Joe to be on the interview committee. Joe has to make the final decision on hiring, but Simon will give questions to Joe to ask. Joe is also working with the town administrator on a position that has been posted for a year. Lisa asked if job description has changed – Joe said it has not changed.

Duracell property proposal status – Joe hasn't done anything on it yet. Mike has not heard back about training in this area.

3. Engineering Manager update

Wind (60 mph +) knocked down trees in the storm the day before per Joe. There were some other outages in town. Feedback is that tree-trimming program has been advantageous to Marblehead during this storm. Joe received 6 mutual aid requests from other towns late on Monday due to the storm. Maine requested 20 line-operators to go to Maine. Marblehead has sent a crew.

Colin, the engineering manager, gave updates on his work on checking on sub-stations, transformer testing, power plant, meters, billing, heating system in the office building etc. Joe and the commission asked him questions on processes and timing. Joe praised Colin's management of the group with authority and clarity.

Some of the topics discussed by Colin also included:

Colin is looking for different sites for batteries.

He discussed one distribution line and its age from Village sub-station. Line is on Village and goes out to West Shore Drive.

He is dealing with the Water and Sewer dept with alarms going off in pumping station due to the rain. Sewer department is critical customer per Joe.

Colin is working on solutions to the meter infrastructure system. He discussed equipment has come in and installation of the equipment.

He updated the commission on a condo project on Lime Street.

ISO approached Colin about buy-backs from Atlantic Street sub-station. Compliance inspection completed.

Inventory energy program will be participated in by Marblehead – offered by ISO. It is to assist during cold spells.

Discussed various audits done throughout the year.

Lisa asked commissioners to follow up with Colin on any questions they may have,

4. ISO updates on winter projections

Joe said ISO is predicting slightly higher temperatures this winter but also higher precipitation. ISO has slightly elevated concerns about higher electric use. Joe feels concerns are due to supply and delivery of natural gas. ISO will continue to monitor natural gas availability.

5. 2024 Budget discussion

\$21.69 million budget for 2024 but they are waiting for more information from MEMIC. Joe does not expect much change after receiving information from MEMIC. There was a Discussion about 'hedging' and Joe will meet with the marketing team this week. Joe is trying to work more with Hydro-Quebec. Joe worked thru budget items at a macro level with the commission. It was decided to wait for final numbers before making final vote on budget.

6. Jackie Lemmerhirt, Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) & Meter Data Management (MDM) consultant Overview of background and Mass/NE Muni experience Ratify contract

She was not available – she will meet in January with group. Service agreement has been signed with her. Jackie has worked with automated meters and integrating the meters into the system that Marblehead is looking to use. Joe has reviewed her references and thinks she can be helpful.

7. Write-outs on inactive accounts

Motion made to write off on inactive accounts for 11/2021-10/2022 for \$73,436.84. Moved and approved.

8. Proposal to MIT Sloane School

Marblehead will host a team and calendar is laid out for 2024. Work would happen between 1st and 2nd quarter 2024. Idea is to have the MIT team work on a project proposed by the commission. Possible ideas are time of use, storage, resilience or microgrid. Jean Jacques asked for other possible project ideas. Discussion followed about last years project and how to improve this years' experience. Jean Jacques is meeting with Sloan this week and encouraged others from the gathered group to join him. He is looking at the time of use project for MIT Sloan, but it will be decided after the meeting.

9. MMLD Fiber Optic Communications System - Maintenance Contract with vendor Upnine, Norwell, MA - discussion and VOTE

Contract has been received. Options are for a contract for 1, 3 or 5 years. Joe also discussed the idea of 8 am – 4 pm communication system monitoring, and if there is great value then Marblehead will move to 24 hours.

Joe is proposing a 3-year contract and 8 am – 4 pm monitoring option. Motion moved and voted to approve to cover the cost of Joe's proposal.

10.Village 13 update Tioga Way site update

Joe gave an update of where sewer and electric lines are laying. The proposed design was reviewed with S Essex sewer district, an engineering firm and the water and sewer department. The project is more complicated than they originally thought – there has been a proposal to tweak the design.

There was a discussion about the possible change in design and possible concerns. Joe wants to bring in a site developer to discuss grading of property and getting easements needs to be handled first. Jean Jacques asked for a timeline to be presented at the next meeting. Project cost is about \$200,000.

11. EV school bus discussion

Discussion is beginning at the commission level since there is an EPA rebate program being offered as a lottery. It would be worth \$200,000. Application process is easier and the deadline is 1/31/24. The Commission has to sign an affirmation with the project, but it is a non-binding program. School committee has to ok it as well as the MMLD.

MMLD will need to find a depot to charge the bus. Discussion around whether town is ready to jump into this lottery.

Motion was passed to sign the affirmation.

-Meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm