



HINGHAM MUNICIPAL LIGHTING PLANT

31 Bare Cove Park Drive
Hingham, MA 02043-1585
(781) 749-0134 FAX (781) 749-1396
www.hmlp.com

General Manager
Thomas Morahan
tmorahan@hmlp.com

Laura M. Burns, Chairman
Michael Reive, Vice-Chair
Tyler Herrald, Secretary

REGULAR MEETING
HINGHAM MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
April 8, 2026

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Hingham Municipal Light Plant (HMLP) was called to order by the Board's Chair, Laura Burns, at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, April 8, 2026, via Zoom.

Present:

Board Members:

Laura Burns, Chair
Michael Reive, Vice-Chair
Tyler Herrald, Secretary

HMLP:

Thomas Morahan, General Manager
Mark Fahey, Assistant General Manager
Stephen Girardi, Engineering Manager
Brianna Bennett, Sustainability Coordinator
Robert Shapiro, Attorney Duncan & Allen
Tracy Adamski, Vice President Tighe & Bond

Open House to Discuss Transmission Line Project

Ms. Burns opened the meeting by welcoming attendees to the Hingham Municipal Light Plant (HMLP) Board meeting on Wednesday, April 8, 2026. She noted that the sole item on the agenda was an Open House to discuss the transmission project being presented at Town Meeting, on April 27, 2026.

She thanked participants for joining via Zoom to learn more about the reliability project and expressed hope that everyone had received the informational brochure mailed to Hingham residents. She explained that the purpose of this Open House is to provide a detailed overview of the project, clarify what is being requested at Town Meeting, answer questions, and seek community support.

She noted that, in addition to the Light Board, General Manager, Tom Morahan, was available to answer questions, along with Robert Shapiro, HMLP Legal Counsel from the law firm Duncan & Allen, and Tracy Adamski, Vice President at Tighe & Bond, the project's environmental and civil consultant.

Ms. Burns explained that HMLP is a public power utility, meaning HMLP is owned by the Town of Hingham rather than private investors like Eversource or National Grid. The Town is the sole owner of the Light Plant. Without private shareholders to consult, HMLP is able to reinvest all revenues back into maintaining the system and keeping rates as low as possible. HMLP is overseen by a three-member elected policy board, Michael Reive, Tyler Herrald, and Laura Burns and the Board hires a General Manager to oversee day-to-day operations.

Ms. Burns presented an overview of the Transmission Line Project, which includes three main components: a new underground transmission line connecting Hingham to the grid in Weymouth, a new substation near the existing transfer station to tie into the local system, and a tap station in Weymouth connecting to the regional grid. The project is needed because Hingham currently relies on two transmission lines on the same set of poles, creating a vulnerability, if one pole fails, the entire town could lose power. This outdated setup also complicates maintenance and does not meet current standards.

The proposed underground line, with a preferred route along Broad Street, in Weymouth, will improve reliability by protecting against weather and other risks and will be capable of carrying the town's full electrical load, if needed. Originally developed to address reliability, the project also supports future demand as electrification increases. The new substation is designed with added capacity, including space for a future transformer.

The total cost is estimated at \$100–\$110 million and will be funded through utility rates, not property taxes, with rate increases already approved. Town Meeting approval is being sought to borrow up to \$70 million for the line and substation, while the Weymouth tap station will be funded separately. The project has undergone years of planning and is currently under review by the state's Energy Facilities Siting Board, with a decision expected in August 2026. Local input has been incorporated, and additional permits will follow. The Light Board is requesting community support and a favorable vote at Town Meeting.

Ms. Burns opened up the meeting to any questions from the community.

Anita Ryan of 37 Baker Hill Drive thanked the team for their extensive work on the project and said she was still reviewing the information and had not yet decided how she would vote. She explained that her questions were not meant as criticism, but rather as part of her effort to understand the proposal. She asked whether Hingham's status as a municipal light plant limited its options for improving reliability, noting that the town relies on Eversource and questioning the nature of that relationship and associated costs. Ms. Burns responded that HMLP has full control over its operations and emphasized that strong reliability is the result of continued investment in infrastructure and staffing. She explained that the project is another example of using ratepayer funds to strengthen the system and prevent outages.

Mr. Morahan added that the utility evaluated both Eversource and National Grid as potential sources of supply. He explained that National Grid would have required costly upgrades due to limited capacity, making Eversource the more feasible and cost-effective option. He also noted that the tap station will be built and owned by Eversource as part of the regional system.

Ms. Ryan asked how Hingham compares to neighboring communities and whether collaboration is possible. Mr. Morahan explained that unlike larger investor-owned utilities, Hingham has only one substation, which limits redundancy. He noted that larger utilities can reroute power between multiple substations, whereas Hingham cannot. He added that nearby communities vary: Hull and Braintree are also municipal light plants, while Weymouth and Quincy are served by National Grid. He further explained that Hull relies on multiple incoming lines and even temporary generators in winter, but still faces similar structural limitations.

Ms. Ryan asked whether strengthening the existing system was an option. Mr. Morahan confirmed that alternatives were studied extensively, but the existing configuration cannot be meaningfully separated or reinforced due to physical constraints along shared right-of-way corridors.

She also asked about a previously considered “Option 4,” including a potential substation on Union Street. Mr. Morahan explained that this option was not feasible because it would have required major upstream upgrades, including work through National Grid infrastructure and environmentally sensitive areas.

Finally, Ms. Ryan raised environmental concerns regarding construction under the Herring Run in Weymouth and asked about drilling methods. Mr. Morahan and Ms. Adamski explained the difference between Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) and Pipe Jacking. HDD uses a drilling slurry but allows longer, deeper crossings; Pipe Jacking pushes pipe between pits without slurry but is more limited in scope. They noted that both methods are considered less disruptive than open excavation, and that mitigation and monitoring plans would be in place. The slurry used in HDD is typically bentonite clay, a naturally occurring, non-toxic material, and any final method selection would depend on soil conditions and engineering constraints.

Dr. Barry Belgorod of 344 High Street thanked the team and asked questions about the proposed route near his home, confirming the underground line is expected to run from Broad Street under High Street and onto French Street. He expressed concern about Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) exposure for nearby residents. Mr. Morahan responded that a comprehensive EMF study, covering both above and underground conditions, has been completed and is publicly available.

Dr. Belgorod also asked about system design and capacity. Mr. Morahan explained that the project does not include a new transformer at this time; the new substation will use switchgear, with power continuing to be stepped down at the existing substation, which has sufficient capacity. Space is reserved for a future transformer as demand grows, and the Weymouth tap station will connect the line to the regional grid.

He also raised questions about transformer supply and construction impacts. Mr. Morahan said any future equipment would be competitively bid, with no requirement for domestic sourcing, and that transformer needs are likely years away. For construction, work will progress about 100

feet per day, with maintained driveway access, advance communication, and traffic plans in place. Temporary steel plates will ensure access when needed, and final conduit placement will depend on existing underground utilities. Dr. Belgorod closed by thanking the team.

Mike Somerville of 28 Westmoreland Road asked about the type and configuration of the underground cables and their impact on EMF. Mr. Morahan explained that the project will use cross-linked polyethylene cables, with one conductor per phase installed in separate conduits in a delta configuration. This design helps minimize EMF levels, which are expected to be relatively low.

Mr. Somerville asked why the new substation is being placed near the existing one instead of elsewhere in town. Mr. Morahan explained that alternative sites were evaluated, but they would have required connecting to National Grid lines with limited capacity, making them too costly. Mr. Somerville also asked about potential collaboration with Hull to share power and reduce costs. Mr. Morahan said Hull is exploring its own options and, while no plans exist now, a future connection could be possible.

Brad Carr of 2 Tupelo Drive thanked the team and asked whether adding a second transmission line would change how Hingham sources its electricity, particularly regarding fossil fuels versus renewables. Mr. Morahan explained that it would not, as HMLP purchases power through the regional market regardless of the transmission line, and continues to prioritize non-carbon sources, using others only to fill short-term gaps.

In a follow-up, Mr. Reive asked about shielding of the underground three-phase lines. Mr. Morahan explained that the cables are fully shielded, placed in separate conduits, and encased in concrete, with electromagnetic fields decreasing rapidly with distance, especially underground.

Mark Duff of 37 Bradley Park Drive, former Emergency Management Director and Fire Chief, strongly supported the project, emphasizing the importance of reliability and redundancy. He explained that Hingham previously had three independent transmission feeds, but now relies on fewer lines, increasing vulnerability. He noted that the upgrade to 115 kV reduced energy costs and allowed reinvestment in infrastructure, contributing to Hingham's strong reliability compared to neighboring towns that experienced significant outages during recent storms. Recalling a past 23-hour, town-wide outage, he stressed that loss of heat is the most serious risk and underscored the need for added redundancy.

Mr. Duff highlighted that the project would introduce a third transmission line to support the existing three transformers, with future capacity for a fourth as demand grows. He also clarified that the project is funded through previously approved rate increases and reserves, not property taxes. He concluded by urging support at Town Meeting, calling the project a "win-win" that strengthens resilience and prepares the town for emergencies.

Ms. Ryan asked about environmental and operational impacts, particularly on the Herring Run. Officials said there is no evidence that EMF affects fish migration and confirmed the new line will remain energized, with flexibility to shift load if needed. Construction near the Herring Run will be scheduled to avoid disruption. They also explained the substation was relocated to the

transfer station site in response to community feedback, using a more compact design, and that route selection followed standard Energy Facilities Siting Board criteria.

There were no additional questions.

Motion to Adjourn:

Mr. Reive - Aye

Mr. Herrald -Aye

Ms. Burns - Aye

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:05pm