



HINGHAM MUNICIPAL LIGHTING PLANT

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Laura Burns, Chairman
Michael Reive, Vice-Chair

HMLP BOARD MEETING MINUTES

July 1, 2022

Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/sdT0i0HYdj2tBzSBQP_Z-7mQzqVaM7GP96zHf21FrnJzpBrD_Q53Pwx2tk-eVLT3g.HkLXqzoODjkh4jdO?startTime=1656683507000

Meeting Called to Order

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Hingham Municipal Light Plant (HMLP) was called to order at approximately 10:09 AM on Friday, July 1, 2022, via Zoom. The following persons were present:

Board Members: Laura Burns, Chair
Michael Reive, Vice chair

HMLP: Tom Morahan, General Manager
Joan Griffin, Business Manager
Steve Girardi, Engineering Manager
Brianna Bennett, Sustainability Coordinator

Other: Members of the Public

Ms. Burns read the following statement regarding the meeting:

This meeting is being held remotely as an alternative means of public access pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Act of 2021 temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Hingham Municipal Light Plant in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the state of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform other participants of said meeting.

- **Incentive Programs**

Ms. Burns would like to discuss the appropriate ways HMLP could incentivize and weatherize homes by reviewing proposals prepared by Brianna Bennett and Michael Reive.

Mr. Reive believes that HMLP is behind our peers and other light plants with our weatherization incentives. He believes the long-term target for 2040 is reasonable and that all citizens should focus on heating and cooling the right places in their homes. Mr. Reive stated the demographics of Hingham'

- Three proposals that are ready to be reviewed:
 - Increase the rebate cap
 - Increase cost share percentage
 - Proration

Mr. Reive believes most people would want to have an energy audit and then complete a whole home weatherization project so that it will be done all at once. He believes these projects should be done with the help of incentives, low-cost loans, or bill credits.

Ms. Burns would like to ensure that HMLP incentivizes small projects and allows people to “jump in” without spending a lot of money in the hopes that they will do future enhancements. This is in conflict with Mr. Reive’s belief that our program should incentivize on a whole house basis and large projects. Income levels need to be considered so that all residents can benefit. Additional information must be collected from other municipalities as to how they qualify for “low income” incentives as well as financial hardship for billing purposes.

Funding is key and Ms. Bennett shared her comparable town information regarding incentives. Additional research must be done regarding funding.

Ms. Burns asked for a motion to adopt an incentive policy of 50% up to \$4,000. Mr. Reive did not think \$4,000 was enough and thought \$6,000 was better. Need clarification on whether the incentives would be by meter or by address. Further discussion is necessary to decide upon the dollar amount.

Reviewed Weatherization Incentive Proposal by Mr. Reive.

- Similar to the MassSave program; however, MassSave is funded through the gas bill.
- HMLP had eight (8) weatherization projects last year and the presumption is that the numbers will increase with incentives.
- Ms. Burns stated that we need to have a ceiling for incentives so that people realize that there is only a limited amount of money available.
- Ms. Bennett has concerns over HMLP customer portal and its ability to handle incentives
- Ms. Burns believes a large marketing campaign should be done to promote the pilot program. Pilot program would last until the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Morahan stated that there should be a lifetime cap, such as \$6,000.
- Mr. Reive would like to exclude new construction and major additions. He also wants to maximize incentives stating that “\$4,000 is ok but citizens could be made whole at a later date.” Ms. Burns would like a higher incentive amount for the pilot program but this will need to be revisited. Ms. Burns is not in favor of spending incentive money if the customer is not spending the money right now. She stated that it would not change their behavior which is what the Board is looking to do.
- Energy New England (ENE) would have to help with modifications to their tracking and reporting structure.
- Mr. Reive wants to treat all ratepayers the same but Ms. Burns stated that we are not treating all ratepayers the same because we are looking to treat low-income customers differently by providing them with more incentives.
- Mr. Girardi cautioned that 1200-1400 residential customers (out of approximately 10,195) that live in condominiums and apartments will not qualify for these incentives. This statement was reiterated by Mr. Morahan for multi-unit houses as well. Ms. Bennett proposed that landlords could apply for tenants for these incentives; however, the logistics would have to be worked out. Ms. Bennett will research what other towns do to include their rental customers.
- A member of the public, Mr. John Borger, believes that an incentive of 50% up to \$6,000 would be very powerful.

A discussion on Incentive Program Funding ensued with the following outcomes;

- Need to wait for language on multi-family units
- Currently the program is funded with “unassigned funds”

- Potentially add an Energy Efficiency line to the bill with the ability to “opt out”. Language on the “opt out” must be clear. Joan Griffin does not feel we can take money from customers without asking.
 - This could cause 2-page statements. Joan Griffin is not in favor of 2-page statements.
 - Need to understand the structure of the proposal
 - Account
 - Rate
 - Meter
 - KWH hours
 - Exclusion of HW meters and ORLs
 - What happens if they opt out after they get the incentives?

A discussion regarding the use of the Rate Stabilization- Green Fund ensued.

- Ms. Burns does not believe there has ever been a vote to set the policy for what the Green Fund can be used for. A policy could be adopted to use the Green Fund for this pilot program but other sources need to be researched.
- Ms. Griffin needs to look at the YTD financials before committing funds. Ms. Griffin also cautioned that there are other projects on the table at HMLP that require funds from the Operating Budget. Ms. Griffin will provide the Board with a status of the Green Fund in two (2) weeks when she has all the solar renewable energy credit information for 2021.

Ms. Burns would like to invite a representative from Wellesley to discuss how they arrived at the 4% Energy Efficient charge on their bill and how they administer it.

Ms. Burns wants to ensure that citizens know what is going on with these funds. Need to ensure equality and no exclusion of any group. This plan must also encompass both residential and commercial customers. Mr. Girardi added that several very large accounts, such as BlueCross/Blue Shield and Linden Ponds would see a very large increase in their bills. HMLP may need to consider a different structure for larger commercial buildings.

Mr. Morahan wanted to ensure that even if you opt out, you are still able to apply for rebates.

In summary, Ms. Burns stated that she would like the following:

- Pursue a loan program for energy efficiency improvements for HMLP customers
- Pursue “opt out” rate to fund incentive programs
- Ms. Burns believes the Proration model proposed by Mr. Reive option may be a good approach.
- Further research is needed by Ms. Bennett on the weatherization language for multi-unit building

Ms. Burns asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Mr. Reive moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Burns seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:19 AM.