HINGHAM MUNICIPAL LIGHTING PLANT

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Board Members

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

REGULAR MEETING
HINGHAM MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD

February 13, 2024
Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86712404543

Meeting Called to Order

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 approximately 7:30 am on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, via Zoom.

Present:

Board Members:	Laura Burns, Chair Michael Reive, Vice-Chair Tyler Herrald, Secretary
HMLP:	Thomas Morahan, General Manager Mark Fahey, Asst. General Manager Joan Griffin - Business Manager Stephen Girardi, Engineer Michael Menten - Division Line Manager Jeff Jones - Asst. Division Line Manager Ellen McElroy, Customer Service Brianna Bennett, Sustainability Coordinator
Guests:	Zoe Eckert - MMWEC

Ms. Burns read the following disclaimer into the record:

This meeting is being held remotely as an alternative means of public access pursuant to Chapter 107 of the Act of 2022 and all other applicable laws 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 start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.

Demand Response - Presentation by Zoe Eckert, MMWEC (Mass Municipal Wholesale Electric Company)

Ms. Burns stated that the Board has agreed that they need to search for a demand response program that is going to serve our rate payers by allowing them to save money and move their usage. In addition, the program should save money for Hingham Light by shifting our demand to a cheaper time of the day.

Connected Homes is a program offered by MMWEC to customers to help control or reduce peak demand by enrolling wi-fi devices with Virtual Peaker to allow for unified control during a peak event.

- Customers are notified of peak events via text or email and they can either opt-out or allow Virtual Peaker to control their device. If a customer opts-in, they receive an incentive which is paid out quarterly.
- Program has been running for 2 years with 10 municipal light plants and over 1,800 devices.
- Marketing support tools are provided to MLPs that participate.
- An EV Charging Schedule is designed to curtail charging between 5-9pm on all non-holiday weekdays. MLP will provide a full or partial discounted EV charger from a pre-approved list. The payback for this EV program is just under three years.
- MMWEC is looking to increase program benefit validation and calculations. They are putting together proactive data accessibility for MLPs to use a dashboard to see real time data. In addition, they are currently working to increase program offerings around residential batteries and flexible demand response.

Mr. Herrald asked whether there was any data on what temperatures you typically enact the demand response, especially for thermostat control. Ms. Eckert responded that there is not a huge amount of enrollment for smart thermostats controlling heating yet, so the vast majority control air conditioning and it is a three-degree difference (for both winter and summer). She stated that it was a 65%-75% participation in those enrolled devices for smart thermostats. Ms. Eckert stated that their marketing shows that customers that enrolled in the Connected Homes program understand the impact of their enrollment and how it will allow cost avoidance for the MLPs to help keep energy costs low.

Mr. Reive questioned whether the incentive for a smart thermostat is per home or per thermostat and Ms. Eckert stated that the program can be set up either way. Ms. Eckert explained that if a customer would like to opt out of an event, there will be a link or a button to press on the text message which allows them to do so or they can just adjust their thermostat which signals that they have opted out. Mr. Reive also asked if there are differences between the investor-owned utilities connected homes programs and MMWEC's connected homes program. Ms. Eckert stated the MMWEC program has allowed MLPs to come together for negotiating power with technical partners and demand response partners. She also believes that MMWEC is able and willing to customize adjustments for each municipality in a cost-effective manner which increases its attractiveness. Mr. Reive asked about the cost structure and Ms. Eckert stated that

she had shared the figures with Ms. Bennett but since they are strategic in nature, she is not comfortable sharing them in an open session such as this meeting. Ms. Eckert did share that some manufactures do not have an annual/enrollment fee, but instead have a per device fee (ex: $1 for smart thermostats and $5 for electric vehicles) but it differs for each manufacturer and is per period and per month for each device. Some manufacturers have annual or startup fees as high as $10,000 to $15,000 and that is where MMWEC is constantly trying to assess the program for enrollment and cost effectiveness. She also stated that there is a fixed contract cost that is shared among all the MLPs that are part of the program based on meter counts and then the variable costs which is per device. Ms. Eckert stated that MMWEC does have Tesla EVs are part of their program by using the telematics onboarding feature (new as of January 2024). She said that Tesla is not interested in having their power walls in the battery program. Tesla is only looking for a high volume of sales which they consider to be one thousand units.

Ms. Burns asked how many MLPs are program participants and Ms. Eckert stated that there are 10 MLPS currently enrolled in Connected Homes. Ms. Eckert said that she and her team are unique in that they can work with any MLP because they work under different contracts so you do not have to be an MMWEC member to participate in the program. The standard arrangement for onboarding is that the municipality signs a Schedule A contract and each year they decide which programs they want to participate in. However, a municipality can opt in or opt out of any program at any time during the year. Mr. Burns asked what the cost is to join the MMWEC Connected Homes program. Ms. Eckert stated that there are fixed costs, such as marketing and contract fees with Virtual Peaker and then there are variable costs which she can estimate based on other MLPs of a similar size. Ms. Burns asked what data is available to the light plants to evaluate the uptake on the program. Ms. Eckert responded that participants receive quarterly NextZero Activities reports of enrollment participation but at any time you can request reporting on a specific data point. The reporting is currently done by hand so MMWEC is looking to move to a dashboard scale so that MLPs can see their information in real time. Ms. Eckert will send a quarterly report so HMLP can view it.

Ms. Burns asked for a brief history of the last two years of the Connected Homes program. Ms. Eckert said that it started with a handful of MLPs that are always the early adopters of new technology and in this case, residential demand response programs. The focus was on smart thermostats and mini split controllers but then it grew into electric vehicles and batteries that were just added at the beginning of 2023. Ms. Eckert is adding Franklin Whole Home on the battery front. Ms. Burns commented on the large incentive for batteries and asked if that was due to the amount of savings that the light plants receive. Ms. Eckert responded by incentivizing enrollment then participation in this program should increase. This program allows the homeowner to give MMWEC permission to discharge their batteries to cut the peak load. Ms. Eckert stated that incentive amounts are adjustable and set by each MLP. She said that MMWEC does not adjust incentives for existing program participants but they do create a new incentive for new enrollments as part of their marketing strategy.

Mr. Morahan asked how MMWEC ensures that the batteries are fully charged when you need them. Ms. Eckert stated that they cannot ensure batteries are fully charged in the Connected Homes program; however, they are working on a virtual power plant model where the homeowner has access to a certain part of the battery and the MLP has access to the rest. Mr.

Morahan then asked if a customer has multiple mini-split controllers do they get the incentive per home or per controller and Ms. Eckert stated that, similar to thermostats, the program can be set up either way. Mr. Morahan also asked if MMWEC anticipates that the qualifying brands list will continue to grow. Ms. Eckert stated that she intends to grow the list to the point that it is still cost effective for those MLPs enrolled in the program and for the manufacturers. Mr. Morahan asked if MMWEC anticipates having a commercial side to this program and Ms. Eckert stated in the affirmative.

Mr. Reive asked if Connected Homes will publish an updated list of brands that are available with their program, as well as those coming in the future, to assist consumers when purchasing new technologies for their home. Ms. Eckert stated that they do not currently put that information on the NextZero Site but it could be put on your specific MLP site. Mr. Reive believes it is important to highlight these new technologies when and if they are going to be part of the program.

Ms. Burns questioned the difference between the Connected Homes and NextZero programs. Ms. Eckert stated that NextZero is the branding for all of MMWECs demand response and energy efficiency programs on the residential side. Connected Homes is the demand response program within NextZero. If you look under the NextZero umbrella you will also find appliance rebates, heating/cooling rebates and home energy audits.

Ms. Burns asked if there are smart meters/AMI meters that come with software that have demand response capabilities and can talk to the individual appliances. Mr. Morahan stated that he does not believe they have that capability. He also stated that he believes that with AMI meters the need for demand response will diminish. Ms. Burns envisions the demand response program as a person's automated way to move their load and save money at the peak times. Mr. Reive believes that Connected Homes may be limiting themselves by stating five events. He would prefer to see it more widespread to take advantage of the daily peaks and not just the monthly peaks. Ms. Burns questioned if an EV customer would lose their monthly incentive if they needed to charge at 5 pm, one night. Ms. Bennett responded that it was her understanding that they would lose the incentive, but she will review the scheduled charging program requirements. Mr. Reive asked what is Hingham Light's actual exposure to real time prices in the market for the transmission peak and the capacity peak? Mr. Morahan stated that we are hedged at least 80% so we are exposed for 20%. A discussion ensued regarding the use of email notifications to customers regarding an upcoming peak.

Vote to publish Board Meetings on Harbor Media

The Board voted in favor of publishing all future Board Meeting on Harbor Media. The recorded meetings need to be provided to Harbor Media after the program distribution agreement has been signed by the General Manager giving them permission to publish the meetings.

Financing Options for Ratepayers (Solar, Heat Pumps, etc) - Michael Reive

Mr. Reive would like to offer ratepayers a financing incentive to electrify similar to smart loans. The technologies that could be financed are heat pumps, solar, electric hot water heaters, car charging infrastructure and insulation. Mr. Reive stated that if customers can use the smart loans

to purchase and install these items then they would be saving money and improving the energy efficiency of their homes at the same time.

National Grid funds loans through a several cent kilowatt charge for all customers. Since HMLP does not have that charge, Ms. Burns believes that a business case analysis would be necessary to understand the options and related savings, analyze the impact on ratepayers, and comprehend the level of investment from the light plant.

Ms. Bennett spoke about the pilot program in Ipswich for "tariff on bill" financing which includes air sealing, duct sealing, insulation and air source heat pumps. This pilot program is an outside program that would require opting into and there are start-up fees. This program has complex calculations which allow for a 0% financing and the resident pays it back on their electric bills but they never pay more than what the savings of those measures are. The electric company is the financial backer and risk taker for this program. Ms. Burns prefers a partnership with a bank that has the knowledge of managing loans. Mr. Morahan will contact Braintree as they are researching programs like this with local banks.

Approval of January 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Burns asked that the approval of minutes be postponed until the next meeting.

Updates:

- ***Transmission Line***: Mr. Morahan stated that there have been a few more outreach meetings with Weymouth residents. The plan is to file with the Siting Board at the beginning of April 2024.
- ***EV chargers:*** Mr. Morahan stated that there are no plans for any additional EV chargers. There are new chargers at the rear of the HMLP building and two inside the garage which are all operational. The two additional chargers at the front of the building, under the solar canopy, will be operational when the electrical work within the building is complete in a few weeks.
- ***Municipal solar:*** The Solar Committee has changed its name to be the Distributed Energy Resource Task force and is now beginning the process of commercial outreach. The Select Board has heard the proposal on the PACE program and they seem impressed but have not adopted it as of yet. The PACE program helps commercial building owners add not just solar but other energy efficient improvements to their buildings with very favorable financing.
- ***Article for Town Meeting:*** The Select Board voted to support the article for Town Meeting which allows them to sign leases on municipal buildings for distributed energy resources.
- ***Transmission project:*** Mr. Morahan stated that the last estimate for the project was $106 million. An updated figure will be available before the meeting with the Siting Board in April 2024. Some changes are being made to the plan for an "open air" substation and the geophysical surveys that need to be conducted will be done by Eversource. Eversource will own and operate the station but HMLP will pay for it. Weymouth has given HMLP feedback on the route that the line will take; however, once the final route is

adopted by the Siting Board there will still be more opportunities for discussion by Weymouth.

- ***Landfill solar:*** Mr. Morahan has instructed Mr. Kourafas, Purchasing Manager, to hold off on the landfill solar RFP. Mr. Morahan would like to know if the Board plans to move forward with an AMI system and if so, where will the funds come from for that project. There is a potential vendor for the landfill solar. Ms. Burns asked for a meeting with Mr. Morahan and Mrs. Griffin to discuss financing the AMI project.
- ***Capital projects:*** There is a project in the Prospect Street, Charles Street, and South Pleasant Street areas to address outages.

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Reive: "Aye"
Mr. Herrald: "Aye"
Ms. Burns: "Aye"

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 am