



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

REGULAR MEETING
HINGHAM MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD
March 18, 2025

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Hingham Municipal Light Plant (HMLP) was called to order by the Board's Chair, Ms. Burns, at 4:00 pm on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, via Zoom.

Present:

Board Members:

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

HMLP:

Thomas Morahan, General Manager
Mark Fahey, Assistant General Manager
Steven Girardi, Engineering Manager
Joan Griffin, Business Manager
Brianna Bennett, Sustainability Coordinator

Meeting Called to Order

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 2 of the Act of 2023 and all other applicable laws temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You're hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham 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.*

Ms. Burns asked if anyone other than HMLP wished to record the meeting. No one responded affirmatively.

EFSB Hearing in Weymouth and Hingham – Tom Morahan

Mr. Morahan reported that the Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB) has scheduled two hearings:

- **March 25th at 6:30 PM** – Chapman School, Weymouth
- **March 31st at 6:30 PM** – Town Hall, Hingham

These meetings will be hybrid, allowing both in-person and virtual attendance via Zoom.

The prior EFSB hearings have been widely publicized. The Siting Board required legal notices to be published in the *Boston Herald* and *Patriot Ledger*. Additionally, HMLP issued press releases to the *Patriot Ledger*, *Hingham Journal*, and *Hingham Anchor*. HMLP also sent letters to each customer, and emailed meeting details to those with an email address on file.

Mr. Morahan noted these meetings are not Hingham-led meetings but hearings conducted by the Siting Board to gather public comments.

Vote on the Voluntary Earned Surplus Payment to the Town of Hingham - \$471,485

Each year, HMLP reviews and finalizes this payment after closing out the previous year's financials. The proposed amount for this year is **\$471,485**, which aligns with HMLP's regular annual contribution to the town. Hingham Light's attorney has confirmed that this is a matter requiring a formal Board vote each year moving forward.

There was a motion to approve the Voluntary Earned Surplus Payment of \$471,485.

Vote:

Mr. Reive: "Aye"

Mr. Herrald: "Aye"

Ms. Burns: "Aye"

Heat Pump Forum on 3/22/25 – House of Prayer 12 PM – 3 PM – Brianna Bennett

The Heat Pump Forum is set for Saturday, March 22, 2025 from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the Hingham House of Prayer, 916 Main Street. The event will include a free lunch for attendees.

The event will begin with registration, refreshments, and information tables at 12:00 PM, followed by lunch and presentations starting at 12:30 PM. The presentation session will run from 12:45 PM to 2:15 PM, with raffles and a short break afterward. A Question & Answer session will take place from 2:30 PM to 3:00 PM.

Several organizations will have information tables, including Hingham Light (covering rebates and billing programs), the Hingham Climate Action Commission (HCAC) & Energy Action Committee, Hingham Net Zero, Abode Energy (with heat pump demos), Energy New England (ENE- offering on-site energy assessment sign-ups), Next Zero (sign-ups for demand response programs), and CET (providing information on financing heat pump projects with the Energy Saver Home Loan Program).

The presentation lineup includes an introduction from Ms. Bennett, followed by remarks from State Rep. Meschino. Mr. Moyer (HCAC) will discuss Hingham's climate goals, while Mr. Chambers (ENE) will cover home energy assessments and efficiency improvements. Abode Energy will explain heat pump basics and installation, and Ms. Eckart (Next Zero) will highlight smart home integration and grid connectivity. MassCEC will wrap up with insights on financing heat pump projects. Harbor Media will be recording the presentation.

Large Building Reporting / Clean Heat Standard Proposed by the DOER – Tom Morahan

Mr. Morahan stated that the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) has proposed including municipal light plants (MLPs) in these programs. MEAM is currently working to oppose these regulations and is seeking support from the MLP Boards. Regarding the Large Building Reporting Regulations, HMLP will be required to report energy usage data for several large buildings in Hingham. This data will be published on a state-run website and will need to be updated annually. While this reporting requirement is not a significant burden, it could be more challenging for smaller municipal light plants.

The second regulation under discussion is the Clean Heat Standard, also proposed by the DOER. This policy would require HMLP to electrify a certain number of buildings each year, beginning in 2026. If those targets are not met, HMLP would be required to pay compliance fees of \$6,000 per household or \$12,000 per low-income household that fails to convert. These payments would go to the state, with no guarantee that the funds would be reinvested in Hingham. MEAM's concern is that these programs could impose state-level control over local decision-making, which has historically been under the jurisdiction of municipal light plant boards. Another potential issue is the Mass Save program, which MEAM has been encouraged to join. While programs like this have benefits, they come with costs, and MEAM believes that ratepayer-funded investments should be determined locally, rather than mandated by the state.

During the discussion, concerns were raised about how the program accounts for municipal light plants and whether MLPs will receive appropriate credit for electrification efforts already underway. The Massachusetts Light Commissioners Association (MLCA) will be holding a meeting on March 27, 2025, where the DOER representatives who designed the program will be available to discuss the role of MLPs in the Clean Heat Standard. Some Board members feel that engaging in this discussion is a better approach than outright opposing the regulations at this stage, as MLPs have historically not been involved in shaping these policies.

Ms. Burn's concern is that if MLPs continue to reject state policies outright, the legislature could eventually place them under DOER regulation, removing local control entirely. By participating in discussions now, there may be an opportunity to shape a program that works for MLPs rather than having an ill-fitting program imposed upon them.

The general consensus among Board members is that more information is needed before taking a formal stance. Some prefer active participation in discussions to help shape the regulations, while others are more inclined to support MEAM's opposition due to concerns over loss of local control.

For those interested, the March 27, 2025 MLCA meeting will provide an opportunity to ask questions and gain clarity. Board members and staff are invited to attend, and anyone needing the registration link can request it. The Board will revisit the issue after that meeting to determine the next steps.

Policy for New Commissioner Handbook – Laura Burns

It was discussed that the handbook could be provided in a commissioner’s preferred format—either digital or physical. Additionally, it will include Duncan Allen’s memo on General Manager vs. Board roles. The rest of the handbook includes Board policies, HMLP’s organizational chart, the General Manager’s contract, the Attorney General’s Open Meeting Law handbook, the Secretary of State’s Public Records Law guide, Conflict of Interest Law training requirements, the current budget and capital plan, and any additional materials reviewed and approved by the Board or deemed advisable by the General Manager.

A discussion followed regarding whether additional materials should be subject to board approval. To clarify, the handbook should include any other materials reviewed and approved by the Chair or recommended by the General Manager. Everyone found this wording acceptable.

Ms. Burns entertained a motion to approve the policy in the New Commissioner Handbook.

Vote:

Mr. Reive: “Aye”

Mr. Herrald: “Aye”

Ms. Burns: “Aye”

Municipal Solar Update for 2025 Town Meeting – Laura Burns

At the last Board meeting, Ms. Burns reported that the town has decided to pursue a grant rather than request funding at Town Meeting for a study on municipal roofs for solar development. The town has already identified its first and second groups of buildings for solar installation. If the grant is not awarded, the backup plan is to issue RFPs, which would include roof condition assessments by the selected solar developer—an industry-standard practice. Given this approach, the Solar Task Force agreed that this was the best path forward.

Mr. Reive inquired about the timeline. The town’s new sustainability coordinator, Ms. Burke, has been proactive, and a draft list of potential solar sites has already been reviewed by the Solar Task Force. Currently, the town cannot apply for another META grant while an existing one is still active, but that grant is wrapping up, and a new round of funding is expected in the Spring 2025. The plan is to submit an application as soon as the next round opens. The turnaround for these grants is relatively quick, so by the Fall 2025, we should know whether we will be moving forward with a META grant or issuing RFPs that include roof assessments. The ultimate goal is to seek Town Meeting approval for funding in the Spring of 2026 for a subset of solar arrays.

Mr. Reive asked about expediting a specific non-rooftop project. It was clarified that while the project in question is small, it has been included in the first group of identified sites. Additionally, the Water Department is considering a ground-based system, which will also be

evaluated. Some projects, such as the landfill site currently under the Light Plant's control and the Public Safety Building, do not require further studies since they were already designed for solar installation. The strategy is to ensure that the total project size exceeds one Megawatt (MW) before issuing RFPs, as larger projects are more attractive to developers.

With no further comments or concerns, the Board proceeded to vote on withdrawing the article from the Town Meeting warrant. Ms. Burns entertained a motion to withdraw the proposed article.

Vote:

Mr. Herrald: "Aye"

Mr. Reive: "Aye"

Ms. Burns: "Aye"

Approve Meeting Minutes

a) Meeting Minutes 12/17/24

The board postponed the approval of the December 17, 2024 meeting minutes due to an unresolved past concern. Mr. Reive, who had raised an issue initially, no longer recalled the specifics but agreed to review the minutes again. The item will be added to the next meeting's agenda for further discussion.

b) Meeting Minutes 2/11/25

The board discussed concerns regarding the pumped hydro facility. Mr. Reive questioned the accuracy of a previous statement about the facility using fossil fuels to pump water, as energy sources vary based on availability. He suggested revising the minutes to avoid presenting the statement as the Board's official position. Ms. Burns confirmed her research findings but acknowledged concerns from project opponents regarding environmental impact and fossil fuel reliance. After discussion, the Board agreed to remove the clause in question. The Board entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes with the discussed changes.

Vote:

Mr. Reive: "Aye"

Mr. Herrald: "Aye"

Ms. Burns: "Aye"

Updates: Transmission Line Project, Capital Projects

Mr. Morahan provided updates on the transmission project, with ongoing Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) proceedings expected to last 18 months. Capital projects included work on Circuit 9 near the Hingham High School and transmission insulator replacements, which recently received an MBTA license. Work is scheduled for either Spring or Fall 2025.

Financials were not discussed, but board members were encouraged to review them independently. Hingham Light will also participate in a Hingham High School career fair on April 2, 2025 to promote electric distribution industry roles.

Finally, the system is currently operating on a single transmission line due to scheduled Eversource maintenance, expected to last the rest of the week.

Motion to adjourn

Ms. Burns entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Reive: “Aye”

Mr. Herrald: “Aye”

Ms. Burns: “Aye”

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 pm.