

# Light Commission November 26, 2024 meeting minutes

To: Light Commission: Commissioners  
Light Department: J. Kowalik, General Manager  
From: Jean-Jacques Yarmoff, Secretary  
Date: December 15, 2024  
Re: Light Commission Public Meeting, November 26, 2024

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A quorum being present, Chair Wolf brought the meeting to order at 4:03 pm. The meeting was held in person and with remote internet access, both available to public participation. A recording of the meeting is made available to the public at the following [link](#).

## **Participated in meeting:**

Commissioners: Commissioners Frechette, Hull and Wolf participated in person, commissioner Yarmoff participated remotely.  
Light Department: General Manager, J. Kowalik.

**Marblehead Land Acknowledgment** declaration was read by Commissioner Frechette.

## **Approval of minutes**

**Vote #2024-20** Motion to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2024 public session was moved by Commissioner Frechette and seconded by Commissioner Hull. **Unanimous.**

**Vote #2024-21** Motion to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2024 executive session was moved by Commissioner Frechette and seconded by Commissioner Hull. **All commissioners present on November 21: Yes, Wolf abstained.**

**Vote #2024-22** Motion to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2024 joint public meeting with the Marblehead Charter Committee was moved by Commissioner Frechette, seconded by Commissioner Hull. **All commissioners present on November 14: Yes, Frechette abstained.**

## **Comments from the Public**

There were no comments from the public, whether in person or from remote participants.

## **Outstanding items from previous meetings**

**Polco Employee Survey.** Commissioner Wolf reported that after recent conversations, Polco has provided us with their standard survey, we have given our edits. We should be ready to launch the survey soon.

## **Chargers**

The company that was manufacturing the chargers that were provided in the MMLD NextZero program, JuiceBox, is going out of business. MMWEC and Virtual Peaker are managing the large majority of the chargers via direct interaction with the EV telematics interface. Seven customers do not have a

telematics interface. Their chargers could be changed for another model. The situation is still being assessed, and MMLD so far has not yet communicated with these customers. See slide p 3.

### **Legislative actions**

State representative Jenny Armini received on October 17 requests from a lobbyist asking for her to sign letters to be sent to the Executive Branch (DOER and DEP). Representative Armini is part of the Municipal Caucus, the group of legislators with Municipal Light Plants in their territories. She contacted the secretary of the Commission to understand whether these letters, relating to the Clean Heat Standard and Large Building Energy reporting, were reflective of the position of the Commission. Checking with other Light Commissioners in the Commonwealth, it became clear that the letters originated with MEAM, the organization of General Managers, and that even though policy is the responsibility of Commissioners, none of the Commissions had been contacted about these policy positions.

It would make sense for the General Managers to make Commissioners aware of lobbying actions, and when these happen, to clearly mention whether they have been brought to the attention and are supported by their Commission. Hence the two proposed motions listed in the agenda for this meeting. A discussion took place, highlighting the differences between legislation and regulation, the timing for collecting feedback from Commissions and the difficulty of getting 41 systems to agree, or represent a diversity of opinions. Circulating these policy proposals through MLCA, the Massachusetts Light Commissioners Association, to all the Commissions in the Commonwealth would facilitate this process. MMLD's General Manager mentioned that he had a conversation with Joe Sollecito, current MEAM president and general manager in Mansfield on this subject.

**Vote #2024-23**                      Motion to direct MMLD's General Manager to request that MEAM share all letters related to draft regulations and legislation with Commissioners prior to sending to legislators was moved by Commissioner Wolf, seconded by Commissioner Frechette. **Unanimous.**

### **General Manager Updates**

**Village 13 substation upgrades:** Bid documents for the civil engineering work have been published, the Department held a vendor's conference where 12 vendors participated. We anticipate bid amount to come in at around \$1.5M. Given the volume of the documents (~ 250 pages), some of the bidders requested more time to provide a quality bid: MMLD extended the bid submission deadline to 10:00 am on December 11, from the original timeline of December 3.

**Mass CZM Grant:** all the work that was planned for 2024 has been done, the \$161K grant approved.

**Preliminary 2025 Operating and Capital Budget:** The forecast operating budget for Year 2024 is shown on page 5, as MMLD can best estimate it with the actual data thru October and forecast for RoY: F10. Bulk Power expenses came under budget as, so far, we have had rather clement weather this year in Marblehead. This sets the basis for the preliminary operating budget for 2025, factoring in power costs as forecasted by MMWEC, shown on pages 5 and 6.

The forecast for the Capital Budget is shown on the slides on page 6: we will have more capital spending in 2025 than we have had in recent years. This will be mainly driven by the Village 13 substation update, and the upgrades to the feeder line into Marblehead. A discussion on vehicles replacement plan took place. Discussions on Wilkins upgrades will come at a future meeting.

**Ocean Ave underground service:** MMLD has built the underground service and owns it, as part of the agreement with the residents who have paid for this undergrounding. The remaining step is MMLD getting the appropriate easements for the transformers which are on private land, see the slides p 7.

**Clifton Substation parcel:** An issue has come up with the exits from the MMLD land parcel. MMLD surveyed the land at its expense in 2023. The General Manager will try to resolve the issue with the relevant town departments. See slides p 8.

**IT upgrades:** MMLD has upgraded its internet connection to the 80 Commercial Street building. Chris Dunbar is reviewing options for implementation of the GIS system, see slide p 8.

### **Executive Session**

During the Light Commission Meeting of November 26, 2024, Chair Lisa Wolf proposed a motion to meet in Executive Session to discuss confidential, competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information when such disclosure will adversely affect our ability to conduct business, and to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Frechette. Votes: Simon Frechette: Yes; Mike Hull: Yes; Lisa Wolf: Yes; Jean-Jacques Yarmoff: Yes.

Executive Session started at 5:11 pm.

The Executive Session concluded at 6:00 pm at which point a motion to adjourn was proposed, seconded and, after a roll call of the commissioners voting unanimously in favor, adopted.

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### **Documents presented during the November 26, 2024 Light Commission Meeting**



#### **Agenda**

- 4:00 Call to Order, Land Acknowledgement, Minutes, and Public Comments
- 4:10 Outstanding items and requests from last meeting
  - Employee survey, Juicebox EV charger customers
- 4:15 WRT Municipal Electric Assoc of Mass legislative actions-
  - Two Board votes requested
- 4:30 General Manager Updates
- 5:30 Executive Session



## Status of *JuiceBox* EV chargers in our NextZero Scheduled EV charging program (Outstanding item)

- 27 Enel X Way *JuiceBox* chargers in Marblehead
  - 4 customers (2020-21) have completed their 3-year program term
  - 23 customers will complete their term within 6 months: 12/2024-5/2025
- MMWEC and Virtual Peaker have determined that the Juicebox chargers can be interfaced & managed via direct EV telematics interface (to EVs that support telematics).
- *MMWEC contacted MMLD customers. 7 do not have a telematics interface*



## General Manager updates

- Village 13 Update
- Mass Coastal Zone Management grant payment - \$161,000
- Preliminary 2025 Operating Budget
- Preliminary 2025 Capital Budget
- Ocean Ave underground service –easements needed
- Land ownership confusion at Clifton Substation parcel
- IT upgrades



## Village 13 update

- Construction bidding is underway
- 12 contractors attended the mandatory site visit on Nov 14
- Bids opening is Tuesday, Dec 11 at 10 AM, 80 Commercial St



# 2024 Operating Budget YTD

	2024 Budget	2024 F10 Actual	Budget-F10 Variance	Budget-F10 Variance
	Total	Total	\$	%
kWh Sales (millions)	101.0	99.9	-1.1	-1.1%
Operating Revenue:	\$20,549,000	\$21,178,719	\$629,719	3.1%
Power Expenses:				
Energy	\$3,927,900	\$4,263,790	\$335,890	8.6%
Capacity	\$3,233,902	\$3,581,056	\$347,154	10.7%
Transmission	\$3,655,980	\$3,377,956	-\$278,024	-7.6%
Other Power	\$624,171	\$586,517	-\$37,654	-6.0%
<b>Total Power Expense:</b>	<b>\$11,441,953</b>	<b>\$11,809,319</b>	<b>\$367,366</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
Net Income before Operating Expenses:	\$9,107,047	\$9,369,399	\$262,352	2.9%
Operating Expenses:				
Payroll & Benefits	\$4,217,000	\$3,940,360	-\$276,640	-6.6%
Depreciation	\$2,139,828	\$2,139,828	\$0	0.0%
Maintenance	\$853,000	\$808,238	-\$44,762	-5.2%
Admin & General	\$715,992	\$695,100	-\$20,892	-2.9%
Outside Services	\$423,000	\$378,043	-\$44,957	-10.6%
Bond & Interest	\$428,000	\$427,800	-\$200	0.0%
<b>Total Operating Expenses:</b>	<b>\$8,776,820</b>	<b>\$8,389,368</b>	<b>-\$387,452</b>	<b>-4.4%</b>
Net Operating Income	\$330,227	\$979,851	\$649,624	196.7%
Non Operating Income	\$540,000	\$859,932	\$319,932	59.2%
Net Income Before Town Payment	\$870,227	\$1,839,783	\$969,556	111.4%
Town Payment	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$0	0.0%
<b>Total Net Income</b>	<b>\$540,227</b>	<b>\$1,509,783</b>	<b>\$969,556</b>	<b>179.5%</b>

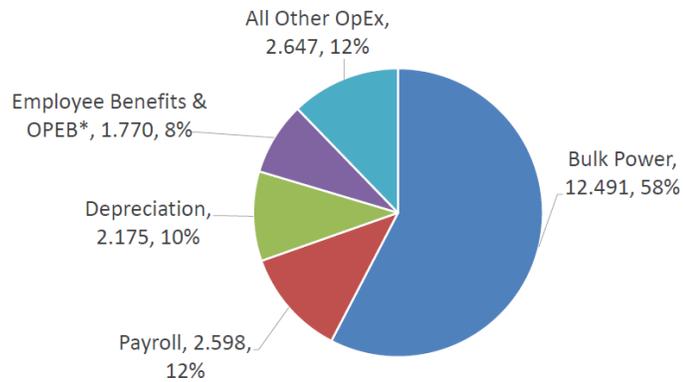


# Preliminary 2025 Operating Budget

	(000's) Using 5% Depreciation		Proposed
	Budget	F-10 Actual	Budget
Items	2024	2024	2025
Total Operating & Maintenance Expense Budget	\$20,910	\$20,198	\$21,351
Surplus Revenues returned to Town of Marblehead	\$330	\$330	\$330
Revenue Requirement	\$21,240	\$20,528	\$21,681
Projected Sales (Kwh)	\$101,000	\$99,900	\$101,000
Average Rate Required per Kwh Sold	0.2103	0.2055	0.2147



## MMLD Proposed 2025 Operating Budget \$21,681,000



## 2025 Capital Projects Budget

- Several large 2025 items will be determined in December:
  - Village 13 Substation Construction bids to opened Dec 11- estimated at \$1.5 million
  - MassCEC/DOE 404019(d) grant – MMLD contribution - \$645,000; Salem OH- \$106,000; Lead Mills toward W. Shore Drive UG - \$539,000



## 2025 Capital Projects Budget

- Other Known projects
  - Village 13 substation switchgear \$1.1 million
  - Department vehicles \$160K
  - Wilkins upgrades - \$250K-500K
  - Dept. General upgrades - \$400-600K



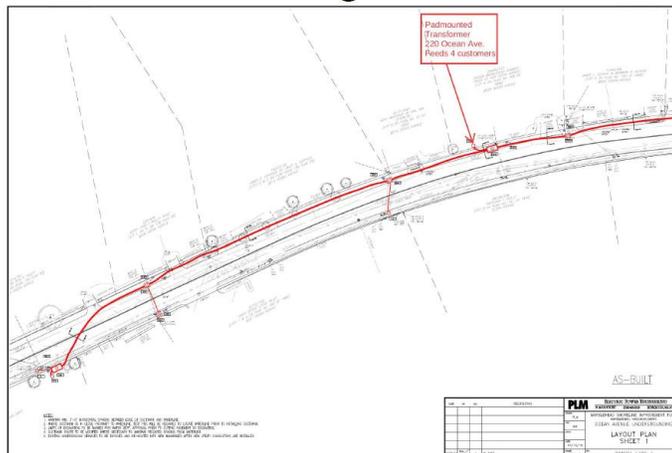
## Ocean Ave Underground Project wrap-up

Two open items remain – MMLD atty Rick Holland working with the project attorney to close

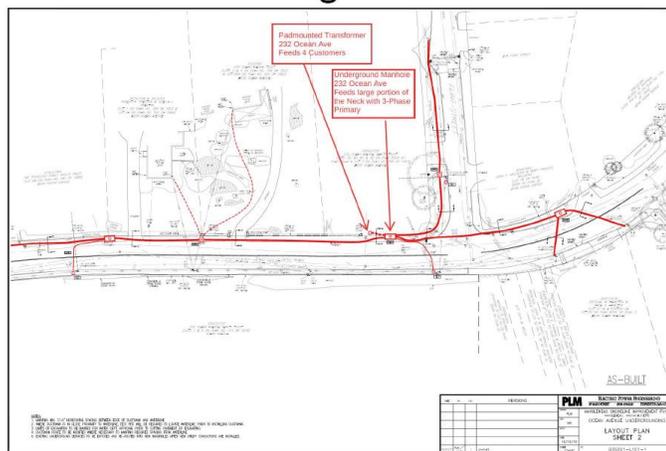
1. An asset transfer agreement that details the distribution system assets that MMLD agrees to “operate, maintain, repair, and replace”.
  - Based on the PLM “As Built” drawings and Bill of Materials
2. Easement agreements @ 220 and 232 Ocean Ave, for assets located in their front yards.



## Ocean Ave Underground service

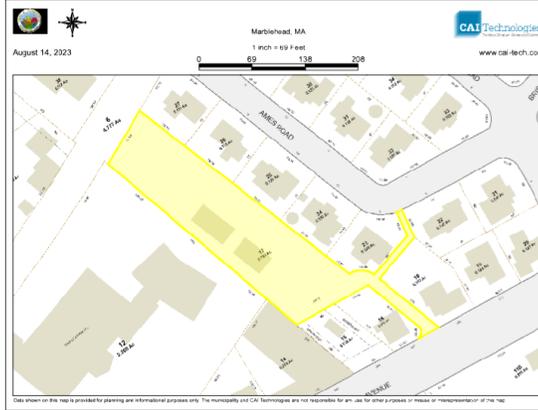


## Ocean Ave Underground service

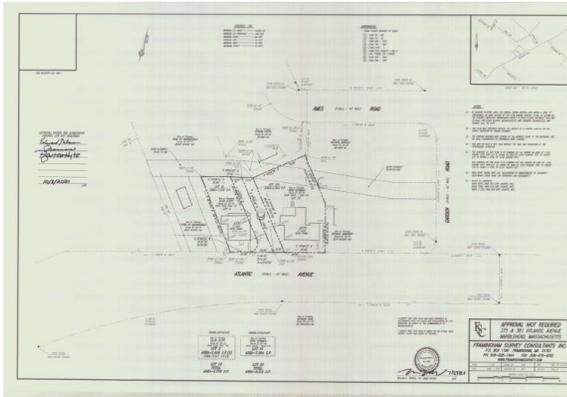




## Land ownership confusion at Clifton substation – MMLD view of the land area- Town GIS parcel map



## Atlantic Ave homeowners' view of the land area



- July 2024 survey by homeowners' surveyor
- Surveyor uses survey points set by MMLD surveyor in 2023
- Area in question is not shown as a section of the MMLD parcel 26-17-0
- Availability of the land, per Town Counsel, is based on a 1990 Town Meeting vote declaring the land as abandoned/surplus
- The Town Planning board did not contact MMLD before signing off 10/8/2024



## IT Systems update

- Upgraded 1,000 MB Comcast internet connection to 80 Commercial completed
- Met with Town officials to integrate with the town's upgraded fiber system when it comes online
- MMLD team met with ESRI account team for specifications on MMLD ESRI product plan moving forward...two options.
  - Visited Peabody MLP to review their implementation of one option
  - Plan to visit Mansfield MLP to review their implementation of the second option
- Testing new a server switch to replace aging switches in the server room and field

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