

Light Commission May 19, 2025 meeting minutes

To: Light Commission: Commissioners
Light Department: J. Kowalik, General Manager
From: Adam Smith
Date: June 2, 2025

A quorum being present, Chair Yarmoff brought the meeting to order at 4 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, Smith, and Yarmoff all participated in person.
Light Department: General Manager, J. Kowalik. Chris Dunbar IS&T Manager

The Land Acknowledgement was read by Commissioner Frechette.

Comments from the Public

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

Process for the selection of the next General Manager

The Job Description has been posted with application instructions on six different sites since May 2nd and will remain open until May 26, 5 pm. Eventually, the Commission will interview three leading candidates in a public meeting.

The Open Meeting Law (OML) specifies critical steps of this process. KP Law attorney Joe Fair also clarified the process that must be followed, as follows

- any action taken by the full Commission needs to be in open session;
- a subcommittee of the commission created to select candidates can meet in executive session to screen resumes and interview candidates, as long as commissioners do not represent a quorum of that subcommittee. If the subcommittee is composed of 5 members, only two commissioners can participate;
- the subcommittee can only recommend candidates for the commission to interview, it cannot make a choice itself.

While the subcommittee of the commission can meet in executive session, that executive session of the commission, as usual, needs to start as a posted meeting open to the public during which the chair specifically invokes exemption 8 to the Open Meeting Law.

Having received a large number of applications (well over 50), it is necessary to narrow down the number of applicants to be interviewed in public sessions, and for the Marblehead Light Commission to create a selection subcommittee: see slides pages 4-5.

The chair proposed that the Selection Subcommittee of the Light Commission be composed of:
Simon Frechette, Commissioner
Adam Smith, Commissioner
Alexa Singer, Marblehead Select Board Member
Greg Chane, MMLD Distribution Manager
Tom Howard, Marblehead HR Director

Vote #2025-13 A motion to create a Selection Sub-Committee of the Light Commission, as described above, charged with selecting three candidates for interview by the Light Commission, was moved by Commissioner Frechette and seconded by Commissioner Hull. **Unanimous.**

Process for Evaluation of the General Manager

Chair Yarmoff proposed a process for the evaluation of the General Manager, which is a slightly streamlined version of the process previously approved. Some key changes are:

- Clarified timeline and procedures,
- Evaluations are anonymized and compiled into a summary for public discussion.

The version appended to these notes (page 8) was edited after the meeting to show “approved” following the vote #2025-14 below.

Vote #2025-14 Motion to amend General Manager Evaluation process as presented was moved by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Frechette. **Unanimous.**

MIT Sloan Sustainability Lab Presentation

As in previous years, the Commission has worked with the MIT Sloan School and proposed a project for them to work on. The focus this year was on developing a simple methodology to evaluate and prioritize different projects on key metrics beyond financials and including metrics such as reliability, equity for low-income residents or the project impact on emissions.

Presenter Solangel Fernandez (MIT Sloan Fellow) was invited to the meeting and presented the results of her project. Interested readers are invited to refer to the recording of this meeting.

- Tool introduced: **GreenBridge**, an AI-based policy evaluation model
- Use case: Comparing **Time-of-Use (TOU) rates** vs **Solar Feed-in Tariff (FIT)**
- Key features:
 - Multi-criteria analysis (cost, emissions, equity, adoption)
 - Scenario modeling, stakeholder mapping, implementation guidance
 - Results suggested a hybrid approach (start with TOU, evolve to FIT)

General Manager Updates

Village 13 Project

- Switchgear arrival targeted for **week of July 15**
- Final testing of the switchgear will take place at manufacturer's, with MMLD team to observe the final release
- Energization goal: **December 2025**
- Construction sequencing was updated (Schedule 6)
- Right-of-way access and July 4 holiday constraints discussed

IT & Infrastructure Updates

Presented by Chris Dunbar IS&T Manager, see slides pages 6-7.

- AMI fiber and SEL switch upgrades
- GIS system redevelopment using SQL-based alternative to ESRI
- Substation monitoring pilot at 80 Commercial Street
- Engineering control upgrades for Wilkins
- Risk modeling for diesel tank replacement

Internship & Staffing

- Staff additions (see page 7):
 - Jose Acosta (Fleet Maintenance Specialist)
 - New substation/operations hire with USCG background
 - Michael Hall (Energy Efficiency & Marketing Manager)
- Engineering Project Manager position under consideration

Commissioner Hull left before the Cybersecurity discussion at approximately 5:30

Cybersecurity Discussion

- Discussion of upcoming cybersecurity concerns and relevant Open Meeting Law exemptions
- Reference to Littleton Electric's experience with Volt Typhoon cyberattack
- Plans to discuss cybersecurity further at a later date (possible June Executive Session)

It was decided not to enter into Executive Session in view of the absence of one commissioner.

Motion to adjourn at 5:57 seconded by Smith, unanimous.

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Documents shown during the May 19, 2025 Light Commission Meeting



Process to review GM Candidates

- Call for Candidates published May 2, 2025
- Open until May 26, 2025, 5 pm
- Goal: Interview of 3 finalist candidates by Light Commission



Process to review GM Candidates

- Call for Candidates published May 2, 2025
- Open until May 26, 2025, 5 pm
- As of May 19:
 - 50+ resumes received
 - 8 candidates with Electric Utility experience
 - 4 former or current General Managers
 - Need to establish a Screening Subcommittee of the Commission



Process to review GM Candidates

- Screening Subcommittee of the Light Commission
 - 2 members of the Light Commission
 - 3 non-commission members



Process to review GM Candidates

- Screening Subcommittee of the Light Commission
 - Light Commission Vice Chair: Simon Frechette
 - Light Commission Secretary: Adam Smith
 - Select Board Member: Alexa Singer
 - Municipal Light Department: Greg Chane
 - Town HR Manager: Tom Howard



Process to review GM Candidates

- Motion to create a Selection Sub-Committee of the Light Commission, as previously described, charged with selecting three candidates for interview by the Light Commission.



Village 13 substation project update

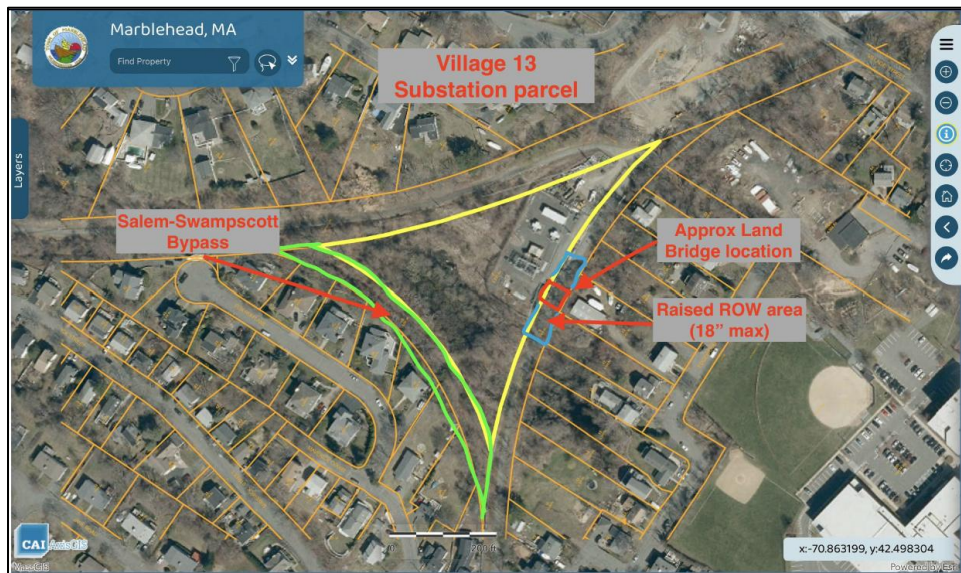
Switchgear Construction by Myers Controlled Power

Task	Dates
Housing Construction & Assembly	Complete
Electrical Wiring	March 6 - June 6
Testing	June 9 – June 24
Customer Final Assembly Testing	June 23 – June 24
Punchlist Resolution	June 25 – June 31
Disassembly to 5 sections for Packing & Shipping	July 1 – July 14
Ship to Marblehead Village 13 site	July 15- July 18



Village 13 substation project update

- Electrical Contractor Fischback & Moore- Schedule updates 5 & 6
 - Based on “High confidence” switchgear target delivery dates of July 16-18
 - Land bridge #2 construction on the Swampscott ROW dates in process
 - Schedule 5 indicates a Feb 6, 2026 completion date (upgraded substation fully energized Jan 12th)
 - Schedule 6 shortens completion date to Dec 31, 2025 (upgraded substation fully energized Dec 12th)



IS&T Manager Project Updates (6 Goals)

Goal 1 - Modernize Meter Network Infrastructure (critical)

- Install and configure server room fiber switches – **Done**
- Move fiber backbone switches to expanded town fiber optic network. **In Process**
- Replace field fiber switches. **Contingent on SEL product release.**
- Develop Software Defined Network for AMI traffic. **Planned**

Goal 2 – Revamp GIS System

- Recover legacy GIS Data – **Done**
- Update specific data assets – **In Process**
- Transition legacy GIS assets to an appropriately scaled GIS platform suitable for electric utilities for asset management, engineering and rate design. **In contracting**



IS&T Manager Project Updates

Goal 3 - Circuit Level Monitoring and Automation

- Install and configure circuit level monitoring system at the 80 Commercial St Substation **Design Complete, in contracting**
- Stand up a monitoring platform with database, analytics and reporting. **Design complete, in contracting**
- Plan for additional substations to have similar capabilities- **Planned**

Goal 4 - Upgrades to Wilkins 5MW Power Plant

- Finalize workplan for upgrades to Wilkins 5MW plant upgrades, engine controls, grid sync controls and switch gear. **In process**
- Have contracts in place for work, work scheduled. **Planned**



IS&T Manager Project Updates

Goal 5 – Customer Rate Review Analytics

- Stand up new database server with SQL Server database – **Delivery June 15, 2025**
- Integration with AMI -**Designed and in contracting**
- Develop analytical tools – **intern starting June 2025**

Goal 6 - Transition to new IT Managed Service Provider - Done

- Upgrade firewall- **Done**
- Update workstations and other infrastructure - **Ongoing**
- Policy Development – Cyber security assessment, Cybersecurity Policy, Computer Use Policy. **Planned**



Open Position updates

- **Fleet Maintenance & Facilities Operation Specialist–**
 - Jose Acosta start date May 19th
- **Senior Substation and Operations Specialist –**
 - Position offer accepted by John Wright, Marblehead, Mass
 - June 9 start date
- **Energy Efficiency Marketing Programs Mgr.**
 - Position offer accepted by Michael Hall, Community Development Specialist, Waterville, Maine
 - July 14 start date

**Marblehead Light Commission
General Manager Evaluation Process**

The following process is proposed to ensure a consistent, fair and effective evaluation process of the General Manager of Marblehead Municipal Light Department.

A. Goal Setting

The evaluation process presupposes that goals and objectives have been set and agreed upon between the Commission and the General Manager.

The evaluation process is based on a review of performance vs objectives.

B. Evaluation Process

1. The evaluation process starts with the Chair / Secretary sending to the Commissioners
 - the approved goals for the period considered, together with
 - a document allowing to evaluate and score performance, and record comments as may be needed.
2. Commissioners send back their evaluation to the Chair / Secretary within 10 calendar days. The Chair / Secretary of the Commission then creates a composite written statement taking into account the scores and all of the comments provided in writing by Commissioners within the 10-day period.
3. The composite evaluation is provided to the General Manager in the next five calendar days. The General Manager is invited to add comments to the evaluation where he or she believes that additional comments are warranted, and returns the finalized document to the Secretary.
4. The finalized review, including the possible General Manager's comments, together with the individual written evaluations by Commissioners, are recorded in the General Manager's personnel file within 30 calendar days of the start of the process.
5. The Chair / Secretary creates a summary document with appropriate feedback, to be disseminated to the Commissioners, which will form the basis for a vote in public session on the performance review of the General Manager, and as appropriate in function of the General Manager's employment contract, will be one element the Commission will consider for compensation changes.

Version 2, approved 5/19/2025, to replace:
Version 1, Approved 4/10/2023