

Light Commission July 14, 2025 Meeting Minutes

To: Light Commission: Commissioners
Light Department: J. Kowalik, General Manager
From: Matt Harrington
Date: July 14, 2025

A quorum being present, Chair Yarmoff brought the meeting to order at 4:01 pm. The meeting was held in person at Abbott Hall 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, Harrington, and Yarmoff all participated in person. Commissioner Smith participated via Zoom.
Light Department: General Manager, J. Kowalik.

Marblehead Land Acknowledgment declaration was read by Commissioner Frechette.

Comments from the Public

Andrew Ibarra via Zoom - Asked the commission who was being interviewed for the GM position in Marblehead. Commissioner Yarmoff responded with the names of the 3 finalists: Mary Usovich, Jon Blair, and Nathan Mitchell. No follow-up questions or comments were issued by Mr. Ibarra.

Albert Jordan, in person - Asked the commission if any of the candidates for the GM position lived locally and mentioned the importance of candidates from our area. Commissioner Yarmoff responded that 2 of the 3 finalists currently live on the North Shore (Salem and Gloucester) and 1 lives in Virginia. No follow-up questions or comments were issued by Mr. Jordan.

GM Candidate Interviews

Candidate: Jon Blair, resume attached

- Standard questions (See attached) were asked by commissioners. See recording for responses.
- Interview concluded at 4:47 at which point the candidate was informed that the Commission would vote on the candidates in public session on July 22, 2025.

Candidate: Nathan Mitchell, resume attached

- Standard questions (See attached) were asked by commissioners. See recording for responses.
- Interview concluded at 5:15 at which point the candidate was informed that the Commission would vote on the candidates in public session on July 22, 2025.

The motion to adjourn was moved by Commissioner Yarmoff, seconded by Commissioner Frechette
Votes: Simon Frechette: Yes; Matt Harrington: Yes; Mike Hull: Yes; Adam Smith, Yes; Jean-Jacques Yarmoff: Yes;

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Resumes of candidates interviewed during the July 14, 2025 Light Commission Meeting



Gloucester, MA



(765) 418-3445



jwblair100



jwblair100@gmail.com

Jonathan W. Blair, MBA

Professional Experience

Senior Managing Consultant

Energy and Environmental Economics (E3); Boston, MA

2023 – Present

- Lead project teams advising utility, government, and corporate clients across North America on integrated systems planning topics including rate design, resource valuation, and development of strategic roadmaps for decarbonization and grid modernization
- Support the United States Department of Energy in reviewing federal grant applications for Climate Pollution Reduction Grants, resulting in the awarding of over \$500M in project funding in 2024
- Perform site review for battery energy storage developments, assessing utility costs and benefits specific to existing and proposed locations, resulting in over \$200K of annual utility costs savings for client
- Develop and deliver recommendations to diverse audiences, including governing boards, industry executives, legislators, and advocate groups; support comprehensive engagement efforts to educate and build consensus among diverse coalition of stakeholders

General Manager

Ipswich Electric Light Department; Ipswich, MA

2017 – 2023

- Expertly led public electric utility with direct responsibility for over \$20M in annual operating budget, 21 staff members, 3 substations, 100+ miles of distribution and sub-transmission circuits, and 10 megawatts of local generation, including wind, solar, and combustion engine resources
- Procured reliable, affordable power for over 7,000 utility customers by identifying, negotiating, and executing power supply contracts, including solar, wind, hydroelectric, and storage technologies; reduced carbon-intensity of the power portfolio by half, over a 5-year period, earning recognition as a Sustainable Energy Provider by the American Public Power Association in 2022
- Secured >\$5M in third-party funding to develop strategic programs and infrastructure in cooperation with federal agencies, including US Departments of Energy and Agriculture, as well as local industry partners, including the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Clean Energy Center, and Departments of Energy Resources and Environmental Protection
- Assertively engaged new climate goals and emerging market opportunities with innovative programs to support local electrification, including the development and implementation of “ReSource,” a first-in-state decarbonization program providing customers with comprehensive energy audits, targeted incentives, and unique financing opportunities
- Established strategic vision and led measurable progress toward specific goals, including the creation of restricted funds for future investments in developing carbon-free generation and energy storage, as well as providing for the eventual decommissioning of legacy resources; led projects to integrate advanced metering, expand power grid infrastructure, and evaluate cost-of-service and rate design, earning the Francis King Leadership Award from the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company in 2019

Operations Manager (Interim Business Manager, Interim General Manager)

Ipswich Electric Light Department; Ipswich, MA

2016 – 2017

- Improved workflows, established internal controls, and built resiliency, earning national recognition as a Reliable Public Power Provider from American Public Power Association for operational excellence in the areas of safety, reliability, compliance, workforce development, and system improvement
- Increased ancillary service revenues by over 200% by negotiating new and existing leases to cable television, fiber optic, and 5G communication providers
- Collaborated with stakeholders in the local community to provide technical assistance and evaluation of energy performance, contributing to municipality earning formal designation as a “Green Community”

Submarine Officer

United States Navy; New London, CT & Boston, MA

2009 – 2016

- Demonstrated strong technical aptitude in directing the operation, testing, and maintenance of shipboard nuclear power plant, including reactor dynamics, steam plant controls, and electrical distribution, earning recognition as the Submarine Junior Officer of the Year in 2013
- Developed and led high-performing teams in missions critical to national security while forward deployed onboard USS DALLAS, earning Battle Efficiency award as most effective ship in the squadron for 2013

Education**Master of Business Administration – Sustainability**

Boston University; Boston, MA

2016

Bachelor of Science – Nuclear Engineering

Purdue University; West Lafayette, IN

2009

Professional Affiliations

Board of Directors – Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company	2022 – 2023
Treasurer, Board of Directors – Northeast Public Power Association	2020 – 2023
Climate Resiliency Committee – Town of Ipswich	2020 – 2023
Project Participants Board – Master Sergeant Cotton Solar Array	2020 – 2023
Board of Directors – Berkshire Wind Cooperative	2019 – 2023

Publications

Muspratt, A., & Blair, J. (2023). *Accelerating Building Decarbonization with Tariffed On-Bill Financing*. Northeast Sustainable Energy Association BuildingEnergy Boston Conference.

<https://nesea.org/session/accelerating-building-decarbonization-tariffed-bill-financing>

Muspratt, A., & Blair, J. (2022). *Utility Led Acceleration of Residential Efficiency & Electrification Retrofits – A Feasibility Study of Tariffed On-Bill Financing in Ipswich, Massachusetts*. Center for EcoTechnology.

<https://www.centerforecotchnology.org/utility-led-acceleration-of-residential-efficiency-electrification-retrofits/>

J. Blair Resume

Nathan Mitchell, P.E.

Profile: Electrical engineer with over 30 years of experience in the electricity sector with technical and managerial capabilities. Expertise in federal grant management, electric industry federal policy, cyber and physical security, electric utility regulation, NERC standards, electric reliability, utility operations, worker safety, electric distribution design, and construction.

Objective: Use my experience in a collaborative environment to advance the societal benefits of safe, reliable, and cost-effective energy delivery.

Experience

MPR Associates Inc. (MPR) - April 2022 - Present

Cybersecurity Assessments for Rural and Municipal Utilities

Project manager for DOE- ACT 1 Cybersecurity Technical Assistance Program performing cybersecurity assessments of rural and municipal utilities. The assessments included reviews of cybersecurity technology, network architecture, governance, and organizational structure. Identify risks and provide a cybersecurity roadmap for implementation of recommendations.

Risk Analysis of BESS Tolling Agreements

Provide technical expertise to identify risks within Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Tolling Agreements. Develop mitigation strategies to ensure system availability, a robust measurement and validation process, and calculation examples for liquidated damages.

Aligning Rate Design with Grid-edge Technology Guideline

Provide project management and technical expertise to develop and publish a rate design guideline for public power utilities. Presented the findings and case studies at public power conferences.

BESS Use Case Study and Transmission Capacity Analysis

Provide technical expertise for a use case study in coordination with a BESS developer to support a DOE-GRIP grant application. Conducted a transmission thermal capacity analysis for the siting of BESS on a Midwest cooperative utility transmission system to determine hosting capacity and recommendations for system deployment.

DoD Microgrid Readiness Assessment

Provide subject matter expertise to plan, facilitate, and assess mission capability under the DoD energy resilience readiness exercises at US Air Force bases. Collaborate with base engineers to assess the impact of loss of utility power and provide recommendations for addressing vulnerabilities in the energy infrastructure discovered during the exercise.

Transmission Substation Risk Analysis

Lead technical consultant, assessing the vulnerabilities and risk reduction recommendations for a key transmission substation of a large California utility. Quantify the impacts for load at risk and estimate restoration times based on high-impact scenarios. Provide mitigation recommendations for the utility's senior leadership.

American Public Power Association (APPA) – January 2006 – March 2022

Senior Director of Operations Programs, APPA - June 2020 – March 2022

Principal Investigator for federal grants at a major Washington DC trade association. Successfully proposed and awarded over \$2 Million in Department of Energy (DOE) grants to develop guidance materials and help public power utilities manage the energy transition to low-emission resources. Led a team of technical specialists on APPA Smart Energy Provider (SEP) and Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) designation programs. Also, led the oversight, business development and maintenance of a utility reliability tracking software service, eReliability Tracker used by over 500 public power utilities.

Senior Director of Cyber and Physical Security Services, APPA – June 2016 – June 2020

Principle investigator of a 4-year, \$7.5 million DOE grant to develop a cybersecurity program for public power utilities. Successfully published the Public Power Cybersecurity Roadmap, Public Power Cyber Incident Response Playbook, Managed Cybersecurity Service Providers Guide, and several other resources. Hundreds of utilities around the world have downloaded these open-source tools. Also, developed a simplified cybersecurity self-assessment tool, the Cybersecurity Scorecard, commercialized into the Axio360 for Public Power.

Successfully proposed and awarded a 3-year, \$6 million DOE cooperative agreement for deployment of operational technology cybersecurity solutions at public power utilities.

Senior Director of Electric Reliability, Standards and Security, APPA – January 2014 – June 2016

Led an APPA membership-wide strategic initiative on cyber and physical security which includes developing resources, engaging with members, along with educating Congress, regulators, and other federal partners.

Coordinate utility involvement in industry cyber and physical security working groups such as the CEO-led Electricity Sector Coordinating Council (ESCC), the North American Electric Reliability Corporations (NERC) Critical Infrastructure Protection Committee (CIPC), and the NERC CIP reliability standard drafting team. Provide technical support to utility leaders serving the ESCC. Manage the ESCC secretariat duties assigned to APPA. Advise APPA CEO and utility CEOs on grid security issues.

Worked with the NERC Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC) to continually improve the industry threat information sharing.

Director of Electric Reliability Standards and Compliance, APPA – January 2011 – January 2014

Provide technical leadership within the electricity industry by supporting the NERC efforts to ensure reliable bulk power system operations. Develop grid security resources by engaging municipal utilities and other industry subject matter experts in collaborative working groups on the NERC (CIPC).

Coordinate utility participation in standard drafting and revisions on projects such as the NERC CIP Version 4 & 5. Lead discussions and develop consensus comments on NERC standards. Provide technical expertise and coordinated comments on Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Final Rules. Provide NERC compliance resources by creating webinars, leading collaborative discussions, and communicating best practices at conference sessions. Provide technical expertise on proposed reliability and grid security legislation. Testified at a FERC technical conference on public power cybersecurity.

Support government-led initiatives to develop cyber risk management tools and cyber security measures. Develop working relationships with key federal government officials within The White House, DOE, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and FERC. Participated in the industry advisory committee of the White House/DOE Electricity Sector Cybersecurity Capabilities Maturity Model (ES-C2M2).

Director of Engineering and Operations Services, APPA – January 2006 – January 2011

Facilitate the exchange of utility best practices at APPA's Engineering and Operations conferences. Develop guidebooks to provide the latest reliability tools to member utilities. Incentivize reliable utility operations through APPA's Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) awards program. Guide utilities on topics of reliability, safety, workforce development, and system improvement. Represent APPA members on the IEEE National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) Main Committee. Track industry standards through meetings with NERC, OSHA, NESC, and other trade associations.

Manager, Electric Distribution, City of Naperville – December 1995 – December 2005

Progressive responsibility in utility engineering and operations management. Manager of Electric Distribution Operations and Construction leading line crews and construction contracts, Senior Electrical Engineer for Distribution Design developing one of the first municipal smart grid installations, Electrical Engineer, and construction coordinator for a major 138kV transmission line relocation.

Transmission and Distribution Line Design, 1991-1995

Designed transmission and distribution line projects for major electric utilities.

Education

- Graduate Leadership Certificate - North Central College, Illinois 2003
- Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering - Iowa State University 1989

License

Active Registration as a Professional Engineer in the State of Illinois since 1998

Industry Publications:

- Aligning Utility Rates Design with Grid-Edge Technology 2024
- Public Power Cybersecurity Roadmap - 2019
- Public Power Cyber Incident Response Playbook - 2019
- Managed Cybersecurity Service Providers Guide - 2017
- Electricity Sector Handbook on DHS Private Sector Clearance Program – 2014
- NERC Personnel Security Clearance Task Force Report - 2013

Industry Committees:

- Vice Chair of NERC CIPC - 2012 to 2017
- Chair of the NERC CIPC Policy Subcommittee – 2013 to 2016

Contact Information:

Nathan Mitchell

**TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Marblehead Municipal Light Commission**

Jean-Jacques Yarmoff:

1. Please introduce yourself and give us an overview of the career experiences that most directly prepare you to run a municipal electric light plant.
2. What specific aspects of MMLD's mission, size, or community appeal to you, and how would they influence your first-year priorities?
3. Which two achievements in your past roles best illustrate the results you could replicate in Marblehead?

Mike Hull:

4. When you consider the skills and experience necessary to run MMLD, where are your biggest gaps relative to these needs?
5. Describe what your approach would be to budgeting, capital planning, and rate design.
6. How would you ensure compliance with state and federal regulations—as well as evolving clean-energy mandates.

Matt Harrington:

7. How would you balance achieving long-term goals while ensuring that near-term operational and other critical issues are effectively managed?
8. Describe a time you disagreed with a board directive and how you ultimately executed the final decision.

Adam Smith:

9. What would be your philosophy for collaborating with the union and how would you go about building trust?
10. Describe the most serious outage or crisis you've managed through.

Simon Frechette

11. What would you do to ensure that MMLD is an organization with strong retention and high employee satisfaction?
12. What specific programs or leading indicators would you use to strengthen a safety-first culture?

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