



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

RMLD Citizens Advisory Board

Date: 2015-01-14

Time: 6:30 PM

Building: Reading Municipal Light Building

Location: Winfred Spurr Audio Visual Room

Address: 230 Ash Street

Purpose: Regular Meeting

Session: General Session

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Mr. George Hooper, Chair (Wilmington); Mr. David Nelson, Vice Chair (Lynnfield); Mr. Mark Chrisos (North Reading)

Members - Not Present:

Mr. David Mancuso, Secretary (Reading) Mr. Dennis Kelley (Wilmington)

Others Present:

Mr. Thomas O'Rourke, RMLD Board of Commissioners
Mr. Hamid Jaffari, Ms. Kathleen Rybak

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Mr. George Hooper, Chair

Topics of Discussion:

1. **Call Meeting to Order – G. Hooper, Chair**

Chair Hooper called the meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Board to order at 6:30 p.m. and noted that the meeting was being audio recorded.

2. **Introductions – G. Hooper, Chair**

Chair Hooper introduced Mr. Mark Chrisos the new North Reading representative to the CAB. Mr. Chrisos noted that he has lived in North Reading since 1993. Mr. Chrisos' professional background and training is in environmental health and safety with 25-30 years in that business. For the past two years, Mr. Chrisos has worked for Con Edison of New York as a regional project developer for large renewable projects in Massachusetts (solar and wind) including some for municipalities.

3. **Approval of Minutes from October 22, 2014, Meeting – G. Hooper, Chair:**

Materials: Draft October 22, 2014, Minutes

Mr. Nelson made a **Motion** that the Citizens' Advisory Board approve the minutes of the October 22, 2014, meeting as written, seconded by Mr. Chrisos. Hearing no further discussion, **Motion carried 3:0:2** (3 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 absent).

4. **Follow-up on Presentation to Towns – H. Jaffari, Director of E&O**

Chair Hooper noted that RMLD did a great job with the Wilmington presentation – staff were able to put minds at ease on a lot of issues and questions. Mr. Jaffari provided an overview of the RMLD presentations, which were made to each of the four towns. The presentations included the RMLD Mission Statement, the Organizational and Reliability Studies, the LED street light program, tree trimming, and charging stations and commercial rebates. Wilmington also had a presentation on RECs.

Mr. Jaffari reviewed the reliability indices and spoke about some of the programs put in place to address reliability including maintenance programs and a revamped tree-

trimming program, which now focuses on the main roads and feeders (where all the switches are) and then going to the laterals, which are protected by the fuses. The old tree-trimming program cuts back five feet, and we have requested an increase to eight feet (on a three-year cycle). The national standard is ten feet. Mr. Hooper asked about the arborist. Mr. Jaffari noted that there is a new tree-trimming contract with Mayer Tree Services, which started as of January 1. As part of the new program, the RMLD website has a tab for tree trimming that shows (for each community) a map and routes where the tree contractor is trimming. RMLD has met with all Town Managers, DPW Directors, and Tree Wardens to get their feedback on the tree-trimming program. As part of the tree-trimming contract, Meyer Tree Services will develop an IVM (Integrated Vegetative Management) Plan for any community that, under MGL (Part I, Title XIV, Chapter 87, Section 14) requests such plan. Once that is completed, reviewed, and approved, RMLD will sit down again with the DPW Directors and Tree Wardens to finalize the plan.

Mr. Jaffari noted that the reliability and organizational studies will review the current situation and then compare RMLD against other organizations of similar size for benchmarking. Leidos will do a gap analysis in order to give us recommendations moving forward for the next 20 years. Mr. Jaffari noted that the RMLD system lacked maintenance, which we now know about and have begun to address deficiencies. Substations had not been tested and maintained (some equipment for almost ten years). After coming on board, Mr. Jaffari hired a testing company so we have a benchmark from that point. The reliability study will focus on the current situational analysis, determine deficiencies and appropriate planning and maintenance, as well as the day-to-day engineering and operational activities. Leidos will compare RMLD with best practices and make recommendations in five-year segments including the cost estimates and budget recommendations. The final reports should be completed by March, with presentations for the Board and CAB to follow. This will set the tone for what RMLD needs to do for the next 20 years to be more efficient, productive, and reliable. RMLD will have a road map to prioritize capital and operational spending. The two studies will be merged to see if we have adequate staffing required to achieve the goals; what skill sets are necessary in order to prepare the workforce for the future challenges in our industry. Mr. Chrisos asked about the age of the workforce. Mr. Jaffari responded that half of the RMLD workforce are/or are becoming eligible for retirement within five years.

Mr. Nelson noted that he has observed over his last three years on the CAB that RMLD is evolving into a more efficient, safe, reliable service, which actually costs less money in the long-run, and questioned if that was a trend. Mr. Jaffari noted that most municipalities are more reactive than proactive. At RMLD, our strategy is to be proactive rather than reactive, we even raised it one notch up to be more proactive with all the maintenance programs that have been initiated. As an example, in a study RMLD found that there are about 1,800 (1/3 of the transformers in the system) that are over 20 years old and we are scheduling replacement to avoid costly environmental issues. Mr. Jaffari noted that last year RMLD spent close to \$80,000 just for cleanup. Now we have a program in place and are moving in the right direction. Mr. Nelson noted the emphasis that RMLD is placing on preventive maintenance and training, which is a positive thing.

Mr. Jaffari went on to talk about the LED pilot program, which has been implemented in all towns. In response to a request from Commissioner Talbot, Mr. Jaffari is putting together a document that explains the strategy and the science to designing the streetlights - how they are set up, how many feet apart they need to be for proper illumination; the standards for design - what height, what illumination. The decision whether communities need to install or remove any lights will need to be made by the towns. There were no significant comments regarding the LED lights noted by staff or CAB members.

Mr. Jaffari continued with his overview of the town presentations noting that Ms. Parenteau's presentation included the charging station at Analog, commercial and residential rebates, the water heater program and other cost-saving DSM programs. The Wilmington, presentation included discussion of RECs. Mr. Chrisos asked if the lighting district is generating RECs. Mr. Jaffari replied the RECs are not generated. Because of the programs that RMLD has in place, you get a Mass energy credit that is given. RMLD received \$1.9m via the sale of RECs and the money received was applied against the fuel charge, effectively reducing the cost to all ratepayers. It offset some of the energy costs – a win/win for both the ratepayers and utilities.

Mr. Jaffari noted that the presentations were very well received by all communities, selectmen and town administrators. Presentations will be done again in the future. Chair Hooper asked if there were any questions or comments. There were no questions regarding the town presentations.

Mr. O'Rourke reported on the awards ceremony for the Annual RMLD T-Shirt Contest noting that it was a great evening.

5. Review and Approval of CAB Policies #1 and #2 – D. Nelson, Vice Chair

Materials: CAB Policy No 1 and CAB Policy No. 2

Mr. Nelson reported that over the last several meetings the CAB has been reviewing CAB Policy No. 1 and No. 2, which were sent out by RMLD for legal review. Mr. Nelson noted that he has looked at the policies, and that they are above and beyond what he thought they could be revised as - they are on target and go along with the 20-Year Agreement. Chair Hooper noted that he had reviewed them and thought everything was positive. The group agreed that the policies are always changeable/amendable should there be a need. However, (as with the policies at RMLD) there will be a three-year review period for all policies.

Mr. Nelson made a **Motion** that the CAB approve CAB Policy No. 1 and CAB Policy No. 2 as revised and written, seconded by Mr. Chrisos. Hearing no further discussion, **Motion carried 3:0:2** (3 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 absent).

Mr. Nelson thanked RMLD and Ms. O'Brien for looking at these policies along with the RMLD policies. Chair Hooper thanked Mr. Nelson for bringing this forward.

6. Coverage for the 2015 BOC Meetings – G. Hooper, Chair

Mr. Nelson agreed to cover the January 29th Commissioners meeting. Mr. Chrisos agreed to cover the February 26th meeting.

7. Next Meeting – G. Hooper, Chair

The next CAB meeting was scheduled for February 11, 2015, at 6:30 p.m. FY16 Operating and Capital Budget review meetings were scheduled for April 15 and April 22 with one of the meetings taking place in Wilmington.

Mr. Nelson asked for an update on the vacancy on the Board of Commissioners. Mr. O'Rourke reported that a meeting has been scheduled for January 27 to vote on a candidate for the vacancy.

8. Motion to Adjourn – G. Hooper, Chair

Mr. Nelson made a **Motion** to adjourn the Citizens' Advisory Board meeting, seconded by Mr. Chrisos. Hearing no further discussion, **Motion carried 3:0:2 (3 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 absent).**

The Citizens' Advisory Board Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Minutes Approved on August 12, 2015.