



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

2016-09-22 LAG

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

RMLD Board of Commissioners

Date: 2021-02-24

Time: 7:30 PM

Building:

Location:

Address:

Session:

Purpose: General Business

Version:

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Mr. John Stempeck, Chair; Mr. David Hennessy, Vice Chair; Mr. Philip B. Pacino, Commissioner; Mr. David Talbot, Commissioner; Mr. Robert Coulter, Commissioner

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Staff: Ms. Coleen O'Brien, General Manager; Mr. Hamid Jaffari, Director of Engineering and Operations; Mr. Charles Underhill, Director of Integrated Resources; Ms. Wendy Markiewicz, Director of Business, Finance and Utility Technology; Mr. John McDonagh, Assistant Director of Engineering and Operations; Mr. Gregg Phipps, Assistant Director of Integrated Resource; Ms. Joyce Mulvaney, Communications Manager, Ms. Kathleen Rybak, Operational Assistant Engineering and Operations; Ms. Margaret Quigley, Executive Assistant (Temp).

Other: Mr. Christopher Pollart, KP Law

Citizens' Advisory Board: Mr. Vivek Soni, Reading Representative

Invited Presenters: Ms. Catherine Veschi, Great Blue

Others: Mr. David Camadrese, NextEra Energy; Ms. Melva Deshmukh, NextEra Energy; Mr. Thomas Ollila, Wilmington; Ms. Gail Page, Green Sanctuary; Mr. James Satterhwaite, Reading Mr. Michael Carpenter, Reading; Mr. Robert Connor, Reading.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Mr. Philip B. Pacino, Secretary Pro Tem

Topics of Discussion:

PER GOVERNOR BAKER'S MARCH 10, 2020, ORDER SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE OPEN MEETING LAW, G.L. c. 30A, §20, THIS MEETING WAS HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Stempeck called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM and read RMLD's Code of Conduct.

2. Opening Remarks

Chair Stempeck announced that the meeting is being videotaped via Zoom and broadcast live on RCTV for distribution to the community television stations in North Reading,

Lynnfield, and Wilmington. Chair Stempeck explained, that as members of the RMLD staff speak they will be introduced accordingly. All votes must be taken by a roll call.

Chair Stempeck commented that our thoughts and prayers go out to the people of Texas suffering a triple trauma with no electricity, burst pipes, and huge electric bills.

Phil Pacino will be the Board Secretary.

Due to the later start of this evening's meeting, and the significant amount of material we need to cover, the public comment listed on the agenda will take place at the end of Regular Session.

3. Report on Citizens' Advisory Board Meeting on February 24, 2021 – Mr. Coulter

The Citizens' Advisory Board discussed the Customer Service Survey; and RMLD Policy 30, Renewable and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Regarding Power Supply Procurement. The meeting went extremely well considering the amount of material to be covered.

4. General Manager's Report – Ms. O'Brien, General Manager

Community Update - Ms. O'Brien reported that the Heat Pump 101 Customer Webinar is scheduled for March 2 at 7:00 PM. There are 192 registrations as of February 23 at 9:00 AM. We are expecting a virtual attendance rate of more than 50%. Two community TV stations will air the webinar live, and a recording will be available for those who are unable to partake. Due to the educational nature of the event, RMLD Board and CAB members are welcome to attend, but there may be no deliberation of any matter to conform with the Open Meeting Law.

The high school art contest has been launched. The artwork (due back March 15) is used for the cover of our annual report to keep costs down. Joyce Mulvaney will be recording a short welcome message next week to integrate RMLD's involvement in Wilmington's Welcome to Wilmington new resident presentation (remote event), an annual event for new residents to Wilmington.

Ms. O'Brien discussed the schedule for the fiscal audit and the annual report and noted that RMLD needs a photo of Mr. Coulter.

The Electric Vehicle (EV) workshop is being scheduled.

20-Year Agreement - Ms. O'Brien reported that due to COVID constraints the 20-Year Agreement voting, and signature process could not be performed in the same manner as with past extensions. Each town received notification from the RMLD, and based on each town's process, the extension must be voted at the Town Meeting or by the Board of Selectmen. Lynnfield's Town Meeting was extended until the end of last year. Now that all town bodies have approved, the agreement requires physical signatures. Ms. Rybak will work on the communication format to complete this process. The 20-Year Agreement extension will take us to 2040, and the RMLD Board's signature will constitute a memorialization of acceptance.

5. Customer Service Survey – Ms. Catherine Veschi, Project Manager, Great Blue Research

Chair Stempeck introduced Catherine Veschi and stated that the RMLD Customer Satisfaction Survey is quite exciting, and possibly the first customer survey performed to this extent at RMLD.

Project Overview: Ms. Veschi reported that Great Blue Research performed RMLD's Customer Satisfaction Survey this year, and results showed very positive ratings

throughout. Great Blue Research, a marketing research company, works with utilities, specifically MEAM Massachusetts. Ms. Veschi noted that the RMLD data was benchmarked against Massachusetts benchmarks, and both residential and commercial customers were surveyed. Ms. Veschi noted that Residential respondents reported a high online response rate, and a good margin of error. (*Customer Satisfaction Presentation, Slide 7*) Ms. Veschi noted that MEAM average includes the Municipal Massachusetts utilities that Great Blue Research works with and is the average scores of those utilities from the past 10 years. Residential respondents were on target with the MEAM average.

Key Study Findings: Ms. Veschi reported the Key Study findings (*Customer Satisfaction Presentation, Slides 15-34*).

- Residential respondents rated RMLD among a series of organizational characteristics, which yielded an average positive rating of 92.0%, Commercial respondents with an average rating of 88.6%.
- Both residential and commercial respondents showed strong satisfaction with RMLD customer service. Many reported that their issues are taken care of to their satisfaction the first time, and this influenced the high customer service scores.
- For net positive score, (Satisfied + Loyal + Advocate) Residential respondents provided 96.0% and commercial respondents provided 93.6%.
- Most residential and commercial respondents were aware that RMLD was a community owned municipality, felt that RMLD embodies the characteristics of a community owned utility, and felt that was important fact. (*Slides 19- 21*)
- A majority of residential and commercial respondents preferred to look at RMLD's website for information (*Slide 22*); reported acceptable outage times (*Slides 22- 23*); and had a low awareness of the Customer Notification System (*Slide 23*); and identified reliability as a top priority.
- Two – thirds (67%) of residential respondents and three- fifths commercial (61.8%) reported that they would like RMLD to be more aggressive in setting goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while one-third was not willing to pay more on their electrical bill to compensate for RMLD to expand their green initiatives. (*Customer Satisfaction Presentation, Slides 25-26*)
- Mr. Talbot asked a question regarding customer willingness to pay a percentage increase; are there tranches other than the 5% and 10%, to which Ms. Veschi replied yes. Mr. Talbot confirmed the cumulative percentage of those willing to pay (67%).
- Over half of residential respondents, and two-fifths of commercial respondents were interested in a time of use rate. (*Customer Satisfaction Presentation, Slides 26-27*)
- There is lower awareness of the newer programs that are being rolled out. These programs need to gain traction over time as more communication goes out. Moreover, there is room for further education about these programs as well as which programs would fit best for each customer. (*Customer Satisfaction Presentation, Slides 28-29*)
- Many residential respondents said that they do not know or are unsure on whether they would be interested in installing an air source heat pump. This is likely because they need more education around the topic to understand what it entails, and the benefits of doing so. (*Customer Satisfaction Presentation, Slide 32*)
- (23.6%) of commercial residents said that they are knowledgeable of the concept of air source heat pumps, which also attributes to the higher ratings for those respondents who stated they are interested in air source heat pumps or are unsure if they would install them at their business. (*Customer Satisfaction Presentation, Slide 32*)
- Chair Stempeck asked if COVID19 had any impact on the answers that were received especially regarding the energy saving programs, which we do push hard (Residential), especially on the residential side? Ms. Veschi responded, yes, the residential side has shown a higher response rate as many customers have been in their homes However, on the commercial side, we have come across the opposite

impact as businesses have become harder to reach which is reflected in their lower response rates.

- Mr. Talbot clarified that 58% of the respondents said they are willing to pay more for cleaner energy.
- Chair Stempeck noted the number disparity between the respondents who are willing to pay a lot and those who are willing to pay a little; he believes that if people are willing to pay more perhaps, we think how to implement something like that in terms of a specialized fund, etc. Then people can pay whatever they would care to in addition. We need to keep it separate from just the overall community. This needs to be discussed in our next meeting, it is a good idea.
- Ms. O'Brien stated that the survey's intention was an overall increase, not per year. Ms. O'Brien pointed out that when we go over Policy 30, there is green choice, community solar choice as well as the renewable choice which is specifically set up for customers willing to pay more. They can pay a premium which dovetails into this survey.
- Chair Stempeck noted that 20% of the respondents are likely to purchase electric vehicle within three years. The ramification on RMLD's load factors should be considered, to provide electric service to them. If we believe that the data is anywhere close to that within three years, how do we work backwards to meet that increased load?
- Mr. Pacino stated that these are all hypothetical numbers. We are going to see what the actual numbers will be when rates are proposed.
- Mr. Pacino asked if this survey identified any landlords, and/or any information from them. Ms. Veschi responded there may have been landlords in the commercial survey, but there is no way of breaking them out.
- Mr. Pacino asked why there is no EV charging station by the Reading train station. Ms. O'Brien responded that RMLD has been working diligently with the town for a grant for electric vehicle level three and two chargers. We are looking at five different locations in Reading one being near the train station.
- Mr. Hennessey noted that on reliability and satisfaction; the commercial rankings were a little bit lower than the residential. Mr. Hennessey asked if the same trend holds true for other municipal utilities? Ms. Veschi responded that commercial surveys tend to be much lower than RMLD. MEAM utilities tend to score higher than on a national level.
- Mr. Jaffari commented that Chair Stempeck's concern about the transformers and loading is one RMLD shares. Mr. Jaffari reported that the distribution transformer loading threshold is about 80. An EV charger is equal to the load of three or four homes. Distribution transformers are designed to take overload, they can handle load up to 120%, 130%. This will result in changing out those transformers earlier, but we are monitoring that. With purchasing the new MDM in the budget for 2021, we can better monitor the loading of those transformers.

Chair Stempeck thanked Ms. Veschi. We are looking forward to digging into it and making some impactful changes perhaps in our policy or funding to try and realize the benefits of the report.

6. Policy 30 Discussion - Mr. Greg Phipps, Assistant Director of Integrated Resources

Mr. Phipps provided context and considerations around the Policy 30 Discussion.

- Previously discussed the cost impact for RMLD relative to pending legislation, Roadmap 2050 (also goes by S9, S13, 4993), versus the RPS/CES.
- The customer survey demonstrated that our ratepayer's want us to focus on greenhouse gas emissions, but they want us to be careful in terms of the rate impacts.
- The process of buying power aligns with RMLD's mission (excellent customer service, competitively priced, system reliability)

- Mr. Jaffari mentioned, we are anticipating growing load volume. Also, we want to minimize any rate shocks or rate impacts, as has been expressed rates are going to continue to go up.
- Mr. Phipps discussed the current version of RMLD Policy 30 (Revision 0) approved in 2012.
- Policy 30 Version 0 covered renewable energy goals but did not focus on compliance.
- The current power portfolio was built around this policy, it did not focus on certificates, nor RECs,
- RMLD is ahead of the Policy 30 goals set in 2012 and is already ahead of the 2025 goals.
- RMLD was able to accomplish this through a combination of certain assets that have no certificates and certain assets that do have certificates (bundled or associated certificates).
- Historically, certificates were used as an economic mechanism and as a self-compliance mechanism, not for compliance.

Mr. Phipps reported on the RMLD Power Supply 2030, which reflects a ten-year snapshot 2020-2030 with the percent of RMLD's load (*Slide 4*).

- In 2020, 15% of RMLD's portfolio was kept open, to take advantage of market opportunities.
- In each year there is a portion for position not yet contracted, and that is where we need to fill that load with contracts or spots. Although some spots will remain open for purchases, the majority will be filled with contracts.
- Almost all the renewable assets below that gold line we have certificates for. We have no RECs on the hydro and on the solar because we bought those long-term contracts without a focus in terms of buying certificates.

The gold line that goes across the snapshot is what the Roadmap 2050 target would look like; When you put certificates against it, we are right on the line. Roadmap 2050 is a step function; 20% in 2020, and to 50% in 2030. RMLD is working to continue to manage our portfolio and the business on an ongoing basis is to strategize in incremental steps, so that we do not incur any rate shocks on our customers, or ratepayers.

- RMLD has historically and continues to purchase associated RECs to the best of our ability, because that is a driving force around idea of investment in new renewable assets. We are going to do our best to buy either refurbished or new renewable assets where there is an associated REC. The other key piece here is we also try and manage risk in terms of the portfolio so different types of assets.

Mr. Phipps reported a summary of the new legislation. (*RMLD Policy 30 Update, Legislation RMLD Must Comply Slide 5*)

- RMLD must comply with the new legislation and although the legislation is not in place today, it is imminent. In the past three months, the MLP portion of the legislation has remained very stable, and we are working under the assumption that we will need to meet this legislation.
- 2050 non-carbon emitting energy sales; it is important to notice that it is non-carbon. It is different metric that we are trying to achieve, and then renewable as well as RECs. The Policy 30 update recommendations reflects that.
- How the legislation defines non-carbon emitting is going to be important in terms of how we think about the types of power, sources that we buy from.
- As Mr. Jaffari mentioned, we need to be designing our rate structure, and our infrastructure to handle a growing load. For the past 10 years, that load has been flat. All the electrification efforts that we are driving, including those we already mandated to do, will impact the load.

- In terms of make versus buy, buy is important as many of our customers have no plans to put solar or generation on site yet. Going forward, RMLD will be balancing make versus buy and our ability to produce, or make, within our service territory. We are working to ensure we keep the flexibility to do that, particularly as our customers are not quite ready to make that change.
- Certificates for compliance are measured on retail energy sales; not what we buy. RMLD is purchasing energy and then reselling it, except for the small cases where we have solar generated on rooftops, etc. In following the Road Map 2050, the certificates must be retired to meet the compliance goals. The flexibility that we had of using certificates or the value of certificates to balance rate shocks, will be increasingly less to be compliant. RMLD will be retiring more RECs going forward to ensure compliance.
- In relation to Road Map 2050, there are reporting requirements in place to ensure compliance. These are mandated administrative requirements for us on a regular basis. RMLD intends to be fully compliant, but if we are not compliant for some reason; there is a penalty. That penalty is based on the portion that we would not meet, whatever is below the threshold. Those funds are called an alternative compliance payment; the funds go toward greenhouse gas reduction programs within our service territory.
- Mr. Pacino asked; Senator Barrett, former Reading State Rep, proposed the moratorium on biomass, in terms of putting it in this category, is that no longer the case? Mr. Phipps responded, yes there is a moratorium for five years until 2026 in the current drafted legislation.
- Mr. Talbot stated, isn't it true that we do not have to meet anything until 2030 and this does not affect compliance? Mr. Phipps responded that Mr. Talbot is correct. Our goal with the legislation, from a compliance perspective, is to make those incremental increases on a more consistent basis, (annual) because we must acquire, and more importantly, retire more certificates. Whatever we do from a cost perspective, whatever compliance we hit, basically goes back to our rates, and goes back to the ratepayers.
- Mr. Phipps noted that the team had structured the portfolio over the past 10 years, around the Policy 30, which is really focused on sustainable and renewable. Back in 2018, RMLD was one of the several MLPs calling leading the charge to have some legislation put in place around Road Map 2050 because MLPs were off on their own. The Roadmap 2050 we are familiar with it and understand what is coming down the road. The current structure of our portfolio allows us to meet Roadmap 2050 in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 with a minimal additional retirement of RECs that we have in our portfolio.

Mr. Phipps then addressed RMLD Policy 30 Update Roadmap 2050 Incremental Compliance Cost (*Slide 6*)

- The incremental cost is going to cost us about \$300,000 to \$400,000 each year over the next four years, and it will continue. In our budget, that is less than one percent and that incremental cost flows directly to the ratepayers.
- We are going to face less than half a percent increase (2023 and 2024 subject to change once the budget is finalized) to meet Roadmap 2050 compliance prior to 2050, without rate shock.
- If we were to incrementally make the compliance more stringent, through RPS/CES such as the IOUs do, (not specified in Roadmap 2050) it would require us to both buy and retire. This would be accomplished by some swapping out certificates that we have. We would increase the cost because what we would need make most of our portfolio Mass Class one RECs that we would subsequently retire, and we do not have a deep portfolio of Mass Class one RECs. Given what we need and would be required to retire to meet RPS/CES standard, it would cost us about \$6.3 million a year, for the next four years. If you look at our total operating budget, that reflects approximately a 6.8% increase for the REC management side of it alone; this does not include the (2.5-3.5) projected rate increase.

- We have many programs (energy efficiency, heat pumps, etc.) in place right now that are that are growing very quickly that are going to require us to move our ECC rate up as well.

Mr. Phipps discussed the Policy 30 Rev 1 elements relating to the following– (*Slide 8*)

- The RMLD shall comply with all applicable law pertaining to renewable and GHG reduction power procurement requirements.
- RMLD shall develop the Renewable Choice Program, as an option available to all ratepayers balance RMLD's customer priorities and franchise obligations with compliance with all applicable laws, the General Manager may retain or may market RECs.
- Plan for compliance with such changes that is consistent with RMLD's customer priorities and franchise obligations.
- RMLD Board may vote on changes to this Policy from time to time.

Mr. Soni summarized the two motions the CAB voted at the CAB meeting:

The Citizens' Advisory Board recommends that the Board of Commissioners vote to approve Policy 30 on the recommendation of the General Manager, he voted against this motion, but it carried. The second motion was that the that the Citizens' Advisory Board recommends that the Board of Commissioners vote to approve the exclusion of future biomass as an acceptable renewable greenhouse gas resource of the generation under Policy 30 on the recommendation of the General Manager. Mr. Soni added that in the elements slide, the CAB there was a recommendation that RMLD will retire only those certificates which go beyond what is required for compliance with the MLP regulations.

Mr. Soni stated that the CAB recommends that the Board of Commissioners review the policy every three years or sooner. The Policy 30 language now says RMLD will regularly review the environment and plan to report to the Board of Commissioners monthly.

Chair Stempeck asked if the commission members have any issue with adding the line item to our motion that the CAB has suggested? Mr. Pacino stated that he recommends adding language under item III B. (1) in Policy 30. At the end of III B (1) the language could read, "Responsible for approving this policy every three years by December 31 of the third year." His concern is that we are not going to all be here for the next 30 years like he has been on the Board, for future boards there needs to be some sort of requirement.

Mr. Coulter stated that his concern regarding the RECs; that the language being restrictive in the future. Chair Stempeck clarified with Mr. Coulter that in the we are not adding the REC language. Mr. Pacino concurred.

Mr. Pacino stated that the motion he is making is at the end of III B (1) the language could read, "Responsible for approving this policy every three years by December 31 of the third year."

Chair Stempeck said that he appreciates the three-year review, it does not hurt to put in a hard stop that prompts RMLD to look at the Policy every 3 years. It challenges the Board to have it on their radar. If future boards decide they do not want to do that, they could vote it out.

Ms. O'Brien said that legislative updates will be brought to the Board whether the language is added. Chair Stempeck concurred with the CAB suggestions to the policy, and Mr. Pacino noted that Policy 30 is going to be important moving forward.

Mr. Pacino made a motion seconded by Mr. Hennessy with the amendment to add to include that every three years by December 31 in the third year. Roll call vote: Chair Stempeck, Aye; Mr. Hennessy, Aye; Mr. Pacino, Aye; Mr. Talbot, Aye; Mr. Coulter, Aye.

Motion carried 5:0:0.

Ms. O'Brien stated that at the CAB meeting, there was public comment from Mr. Rogers, suggesting more language to address how we were going to be retiring RECs and how we are going to be looking at this; it is done incrementally over the time. Ms. O'Brien stated that we are not going to wait 10 years we will do it incrementally to prevent rate shock. Naturally, the way we run the business would be this way. Now, we do not want this to be a requirement. We want it to be a goal because it aligns with how we would be purchasing and retiring RECs.

Ms. O'Brien stated that the revised motion that she would be recommending in order to incorporate that would be as follows: "Move that the Board of Commissioners vote to direct the General Manager to revise Policy 30 to include incremental compliance with applicable law, where possible, to mitigate potential rate shocks and to improve Policy 30 under the recommendation of the General Manager with such changes."

That captures that will be not going every 10 years, but also gives us a little bit of wiggle room because to make sure these plants are being built that we can get the RECs, and you are going to be getting updates every single month. It is not a strict requirement. The law could change to go to annual increments. We have to follow the law at a minimum.

Chair Stempeck asked, where is that in the in the revision number one document? Ms. O'Brien replied it is not. It was brought up in the CAB meeting. In the past, we revised the motion to include that, and then we will add it in the policy, but you are voting on approval of the policy providing that the General Manager add that language in there, as she stated, "to include incremental compliance with applicable law where possible to mitigate potential rate shock".

Ms. O'Brien said that it will go into Policy Elements, A. Ms. O'Brien stated that it would read: "Shall comply with all applicable law and include incremental compliance with applicable law."

Mr. Hennessy asked Mr. Soni from the CAB; There was one "no" on this this motion, correct? Mr. Soni, replied, yes. Mr. Hennessy asked Mr. Soni if he could summarize what the reason was for the no on the vote? Mr. Soni replied that it was him and the reason being (since he is the Reading CAB representative) the biomass exclusion in that policy.

Chair Stempeck stated that we will be eliminating biomass in the second motion.

Mr. Coulter clarified that Mr. Rogers made a statement relative to the RECs, certificates and purchasing, and this statement may have gone a little be against what Mr. Phipps stated.

Mr. Phipps responded that Mr. Rogers had two key points. The first being he was trying to emphasize the concept of incremental increase to minimize rate shocks. The second point would be that his perspective, to comply with whatever legislation, in this particular case the MLP GGES, those RECs for compliance have to be retired and cannot be sold. Mr. Phipps stated that was not explicit in the draft of the Policy 30 because it was implied. To meet the compliance, the regulatory requirement would force us to retire not sell. Mr. Rogers wanted to make sure that everybody understood that retirement is the only way to comply, to which we agree.

Mr. Coulter commented that it was the selling point and retiring point that was causing him some confusion. Mr. Phipps explained that the RMLD is going to be required to retire

certificates to meet the compliance. We have historically been doing a certain level, but now it is going to be a regulatory or legislative compliance, and we are understanding that and in agreement.

Ms. O'Brien stated to add in Section IV, A., this sentence would follow the first sentence that ends with obligations. "The RMLD shall strive to incrementally comply, on a regular basis with applicable law, where possible, to mitigate potential rate shock."

Chair Stempeck stated that this was a good addition, then asked the Board for comment on the additional language added to the policy.

Mr. Talbot asked; what is the purpose of that addition? Ms. O'Brien stated that it is capturing the way we would normally be doing the business. If you have a compliance in 2030, and then 2040, we are not going to have a compliance in 2030, and then do nothing to 2050 then create rate shock. We are doing renewable linearly, in accordance with the line that Mr. Phipps showed you. Chair Stempeck noted that it makes a lot of sense to be explicit. The more explicit we can be is good in terms of meeting our requirements. Ms. O'Brien stated that there will be monthly updates to show you exactly every month where we are.

Mr. Talbot said that if the goal is to have us be meeting annual targets between now and 2030, then between 2030 and 2040 is a great goal. However, this language has a number of caveats. It says that the department shall strive, where possible, and then with applicable law. Yet, we know the law does not actually require anything between now and 2030.

Mr. Pollart explained that one of the reasons that he had suggested to Ms. O'Brien is that we have some of those carve outs is because we do not know what the law would do. We are going to comply with applicable law. And the goal would be to incrementally add these, which if we do not have an obligation until 2030, we can incrementally do that. But if the legislation were to change and suddenly, in 2022, we must increase our purchase amount by 50%, there is not an opportunity to incrementally comply. We are just going to have to do this step. That was the reason.

Mr. Talbot stated that he recalled we had a different version of Policy 30. He had suggested an edit that was explicit that said whatever the numbers are (22% in 2023, 25% in 2024) to put numbers in the policy annually or every other year. Mr. Talbot could not recall what he wrote but noted that is a type of benefit would really bind us and future folks.

Chair Stempeck said that he does not think that is appropriate. Since we do not know what the future is going to be, we do not know what the laws are, and to bind ourselves into something in the future, for example we did not know the COVID was going to be here a year ago. He does not suggest we put in explicit numbers, but bear with the best of intention for our customers, which we have been doing for 100 years, and trying to do the best for them. The intent of this is to say we are responsive to our customers on every possible level that we can possibly be. That is how he reads this. Mr. Pacino suggested putting the word "annual" in front of basis "Is on a regular annual basis." Chair Stempeck responded that he has no issue with that. He asked Ms. O'Brien or anyone else if they had a problem with this suggestion in language.

Ms. O'Brien stated that she does not have a problem with that. This is the first time we are going to have power supply legislative requirements. We do not know what renewable plants are going to be built we do not know if there is going to be RECs to buy. That is why we are committing to a monthly update. We are going to be doing it incrementally because it makes the most business sense. But Ms. O'Brien agrees with Mr. Pacino to put annual in there. She looks at this as if you are running power supply division it is going to be difficult. We should take it according to the law and look at it every month. If it looks like we can do more and do better, that is why we have attachment one and two. You can add more, and

we can give feedback and say this is going well, we can do a little bit more. We have got a lot of costs coming in from a lot of other directions, and we want to make sure that we can meet it. This is a goal, not a requirement.

Mr. Hennessy clarified, the first sentence we must comply with the law. The second sentence is just saying we want to smooth it out, right? He does not understand why comply is in the second sentence.

Mr. Pollart responded, that is a good point. We are not going to incrementally comply with applicable law. We are going to comply with applicable law. Maybe something along the lines of the "RMLD shall strive to make incremental changes on an annual basis and delete "where possible."

Mr. Hennessy agreed to this change. This sentence is making more sense to me because it is like Mr. Phipps, it is the straight line. There is going to be bumps up and down, but we are going to always try to stay on it to stay on the roadmap, right? Mr. Pollart replied, yes.

Mr. Talbot stated that, first, there are people who wanted to comment, and it is too bad they could not. He appreciates the efforts of the policy, but we are only seeing this for the first time as a board tonight. Public comment was not allowed before we deliberated, and the state law that this policy references has not yet passed. We also have fresh survey data showing that two-thirds of Readings customers want us to be aggressive on greenhouse gas emissions and 60% or almost that are willing to pay more.

Mr. Talbot knows the proposed policy has this opt in approach called renewable choice for such people, but what we do not know is whether opt in is really the best way to leverage all of that interest, while protecting those who can't pay. Mr. Talbot suggested doing additional research on what has been done elsewhere, learn more, before we vote on this. Because of those unaddressed questions, he will be voting no on this topic.

Chair Stempeck thanked Mr. Talbot and took note of his objection. Chair Stempeck noted that pushing this off for another year or two years, while we look at all possible permutations on it is the wrong thing to do.

Chair Stempeck stated that he would like to move forward and ask for a vote on this. Can we have a roll call vote for accepting the motion?

Mr. Pacino made a motion seconded by Mr. Hennessy that the Board of Commissioners vote to approve Policy 30 under the recommendation of the General Manager. Roll call vote: Chair Stempeck, Aye; Mr. Hennessy, Aye; Mr. Talbot, Nay; Mr. Coulter, Aye; Mr. Pacino, Aye.

Motion carried 4:1:0. Mr. Talbot voted against the motion.

Mr. Hennessy asked why did we not include wood burning biomass? Wood burning biomass is the one that a lot of us were concerned about. Why it was a just all biomass put into this motion?

Chair Stempeck stated that he understands the comment, because there are many different forms of biomass, many of which are very acceptable. T

Mr. Coulter commented that we are planning a future policy by removing the word biomass. He is a big proponent of going with what the legislation says. If we choose as a group not to purchase biomass from Palmer, which he believes is a consensus we are working towards, great.

Mr. Talbot said that he thinks Mr. Hennessy's modifier on wood burning might be not a bad idea.

Mr. Pacino made a proposed motion that the Board of Commissioners vote to approve the exclusion of future biomass as an acceptable renewable or greenhouse gas reduction resource of generation under Policy 30 on the recommendation of the General Manager. No motion was taken.

Mr. Hennessy questioned why we are not adding wood burning to the motion.

Chair Stempeck said that he has no issue with putting a wood burning exclusion in the motion.

Mr. Hennessy made a motion seconded by Mr. Pacino that the Board of Commissioners vote to add the word "wood burning" before biomass to read, "exclusion of future wood burning biomass".

Roll call vote: Mr. Hennessy, Aye; Chair Stempeck, Aye; Mr. Talbot, Aye; Mr. Coulter, Aye; Mr. Pacino, Nay.

Motion carried 4:1:0. Mr. Pacino voted against this motion.

Mr. Pacino made a motion s that the Board of Commissioners vote to approve the exclusion of future wood burning biomass as an acceptable renewable or greenhouse gas reduction resource of generation under Policy 30 on the recommendations of the General Manager, seconded by Mr. Hennessy.

Roll call vote: Mr. Hennessy, Aye; Chair Stempeck, Aye; Mr. Pacino, Aye; Mr. Talbot, Aye; Mr. Coulter, Aye.

Motion carried 5:0:0.

7. Public Comment

Chair Stempeck stated that we are now at the point in the meeting we would open this up to public comment, if there is anyone who would like to make a public comment limited to two minutes before we move into Executive Session. There was no response.

Next RMLD Board Meeting The next RMLD BOC will be March 18 at 7:30 PM. Ms. O'Brien stated that there are several policies that require review, and she would like to give the Board a week or so to review that and provide comments back to her. Ms. O'Brien noted that we are having the heat pump webinar on March 2 that RMLD may want to attend

8. CAB Meeting Coverage

Thursday, March 18, 2021 (tentative): Chair Stempeck

9. Executive Session

At 9:56 PM Mr. Pacino made a motion that the Board of Commissioners go into Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts G.L. c.164 section 47D, exemption from public records and open meeting requirements in certain instances, to discuss competitively sensitive issues regarding options for power supply and return to regular session for the sole purpose of adjournment, Seconded by Mr. Hennessy

Roll call vote: Mr. Pacino, Aye; Mr. Talbot, Aye; Mr. Hennessy, Aye; Mr. Coulter, Aye; Chair Stempeck, Aye.

Motion carried 5:0:0.

10. Adjournment

At 10:32 PM Mr. Pacino made a motion to adjourn the Board of Commissioners Meeting, seconded by Mr. Hennessy.

Roll call vote: Mr. Hennessy, Aye; Chair Stempeck, Aye; Mr. Pacino, Aye; Mr. Talbot, Aye; Mr. Coulter, Aye.

Motion carried 5:0:0

A true copy of the RMLD Board of Commissioners minutes
as approved by a majority of the Commission.


Philip B Pacino (Jul 20, 2021 14:02 EDT)

Philp B. Pacino, Secretary Pro Tem
RMLD Board of Commissioners