

Chairman Thomas Reynolds called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the BELD Board Room. Those present at the meeting included Chairman Reynolds, Vice Chairman Anthony Agnitti, Secretary Daniel Morrissey and General Manager William G. Bottiggi, all of BELD. Also present were Mr. Steve Leonard and Ms. Marta Googins from the Braintree Historical Society, Mayor Erin Joyce and Ms. Kate Naughton from the Mayor's office.

Chairman Reynolds announced that James Regan, a long-time serving member of the Municipal Light Board, was in attendance and he had just stepped down from his position in January. He continued: we want to present him with an award from the commissioners and employees of BELD – in recognition and appreciation of his nineteen years of exemplary service and dedication to the Braintree residents as a commissioner of the Braintree Electric Light Department. Mr. Reynolds thanked Mr. Regan and said, on behalf of Mr. Agnitti as well as himself, it was a pleasure working with him for all these years. There was some discussion – a lot of things happened during this group of commissioners' tenure. Mr. Regan said he really appreciated the award and his time working with the other commissioners and wished Mr. Morrissey, his successor, good luck.

I. Minutes of Prior Meetings

i. January 14, 2025 Open Meeting

Voted: on motion of Mr. Agnitti to accept the minutes of January 14, 2025 Open Meeting as written. Mr. Reynolds stepped down and seconded. So voted.

ii. February 4, 2025 Open Meeting

Voted: on motion of Mr. Agnitti to accept the minutes of February 4, 2025 Open Meeting as written. Mr. Reynolds stepped down and seconded. So voted.

II. Items for Discussion

i. Watson P30 Cooler Update

Mr. Bottiggi reported that the P30 cooler in Watson 2 that was failing and the one that we have ordered to replace it is supposed to come this month and they will install on a weekend. We are going to take one of the coolers and send it up to Canada and have it overhauled so we have a spare.

ii. Watson – IEP Days

Mr. Bottiggi said IEP stands for the Inventory Energy Program. We had three IEP days in January: 20, 21 and 22. It was a very cold month and Watson burned 195,000 gallons of oil in January. New England burned 24 million gallons of oil in one week. New England went through \$1.5 billion in energy in January as compared to \$833,000 in January 2024. That's how much colder it was this January. There was discussion – this is really expensive.

iii. MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) Clearinghouse Update

Mr. Bottiggi reported that item has to do with large building reporting among other things. ISO-NE is trying to get the municipal utilities to act like investor-owned utilities (IOUs). They want us to report to them on all our large buildings in Braintree – which is two hundred ninety-three buildings –

every month. We are pushing back on this – we have said we will work with them, but they want to make it a mandate. They do not regulate BELD – the Commissioners do. The Municipal Electric Association of Massachusetts (MEAM) is getting a legal opinion on this. We may end up suing them – because this is just the first thing. There is also the Clean Heat Standard which would penalize us if enough of our customers do not install heat pumps. We do a lot of heat pumps now and we rebated \$260,000 last year. The Clearinghouse might require us to raise our rate \$.04 to become more like IOUs. They are getting very aggressive, and we are going to push back hard. This is being done as a group – 41 Munis in MEAM. There was discussion on having a special counsel on these issues. Mr. Bottiggi said they are starting with Nick Scobbo – he is good with all the Chapter 164 rules. He may recommend someone if it goes into litigation. The push is coming from Governor Healey and Ms. Tepper, secretary of energy. There was discussion on green mandates and the political environment. Some of the reasons why we are against these proposals is they charge to administer the programs and it puts the state between us and our customers. Right now a customer picks up the phone and calls our energy advisor and says I want to install heat pumps and she speaks to them directly about the next steps. Mass Saves – they work with our customers and we get carved out of it.

iv. Enbridge

Mr. Bottiggi reported we had a meeting at BELD with the East Braintree Civic Association (EBCA) a couple of weeks ago and they are nervous about everything that is happening in this basin (called what?) because they live right here. There is BELD, Citgo, Clean Harbors, MWRA – this is an industrial basin. He continued he met with EBCA for a couple of hours – there were about a dozen people who came. Councilor Maglio is driving this all and she asked Mr. Bottiggi to reach out to Enbridge to find out how they test this gas line. There is a 1,000 pound gas line that runs right behind the BELD admin building. He explained the full route through town and that we tap into it for Watson. There was discussion.

v. March Bright Ideas

Mr. Bottiggi explained that the article about Mr. Regan and Mr. Morrissey would be in the March Bright Ideas. (Mr. Ritchie had taken pictures earlier)

III. Personnel Update

Mr. Bottiggi reported that we hired Mr. Riley for the custodian position. Mr. Sweeney has been hired as the technical assistant in IT – this position came about from Ms. Curran’s retirement. There is a customer service position open and we have been interviewing for that. There are two good candidates which will be interviewed in the second phase.

IV. Old Business (As Determined/Needed)

None.

V. New Business (As Determined/Needed)

i. Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB)

Mr. Bottiggi reminded everyone that the Board had voted to fund OPEB many years ago and BELD liability is about \$12 million. He continued if things stay the same then this will be the last year we have to pay into that fund. The money is invested. Then it will start to pay us a dividend of about \$400,000 per year.

ii. APPA National Conference

Mr. Bottiggi explained this conference is being held this year in New Orleans.

iii. NEPPA Annual Conference

Mr. Bottiggi explained this conference is being held this year in Burlington, VT.

VI. Public Participation (As Determined/Needed)

Mr. Reynolds recognized Mayor Joyce and Kate Naughton, Director of Community Affairs. He welcomed them to BELD and introduced Mr. Morrissey, the newest member of the Light Board. Mayor Joyce explained that she wanted to come and meet the members of the Light Board and she would like to continue to have a nice relationship with BELD into the future. There was discussion. The Board looks forward to working with the Mayor's office.

There was a discussion on continuing and bringing more economic development to the town. Working together is key. Mayor Joyce is bringing on an economic development liaison between the planning department and the Mayor's office. This position could work closely with Mr. Ford, BELD's Business Development Director. Mayor Joyce commented if we work in partnership this would hopefully help with a tax levy from a new growth perspective. Mr. Morrissey commented that energy costs are always a driving factor for any businesses coming into a community and BELD's are among the best in the state, which is a big help. There was further discussion regarding this and the possibility of restructuring the PILOT payment. Further discussions will take place.

VII. Items for Action

i. Braintree Historical Society

Chairman Reynolds recognized members of the Braintree Historical Society – Mr. Leonard and Ms. Googins. Mr. Leonard thanked the Board for allowing them to come to a board meeting again and spoke about some things for Mr. Morrissey's benefit since he was not on the Board at the time. He discussed the Society's mission and how it relates to the state and the country. He continued about activities that are held at their buildings throughout town. Mr. Leonard introduced Ms. Googins as the chairperson of an event to be held in May – Mothers' Day Tea. Ms. Googins discussed the speaker series and demonstrations that the Society has put on. She continued: they are in partnership with the Braintree public schools, Katz Academy, Thayer Academy and the Boys and Girls Scouts in an internship program.

Ms. Googins explained the Mothers' Day Tea has a dual purpose – as a social event for the community but more importantly a fundraising event – both purposes to increase membership at the Society. She continued: they plan to aggressively advertise this event and BELD would be the headliner. They hope to have a sold-out crowd. There is a one-woman performance that day which has high reviews so there is much hope for the success of this event and thus of the Braintree Historical Society. In response to Mr. Agnitti's question Ms. Googins said they will be putting flyers in the bulletins at the churches and doing all the various social media channels. Mr. Reynolds explained to Ms. Googins and Mr. Leonard that BELD needs to get some advertisement of the BELD brand from this – we are not allowed to just give a donation. Mr. Bottiggi said he would have our Marketing & Sales Specialist, Mr. Ritchie, work with them. There was further discussion. Mr. Bottiggi said he would speak with Mr. Ritchie about bringing some BELD and Thomas Watson information to the Mothers' Day Tea.

Voted: on motion by Mr. Agnitti, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, that BELD would be the sole sponsor - which includes advertising on their website, all print signage and electronic signage including Facebook, Instagram, X and any other areas that come up – in the amount of \$5,000. So voted.

VIII. Tabled Items

None.

IX. Next Regular Meeting – Upcoming Meetings

i. Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

X. Executive Session (As Determined/Needed)

Not Needed.

XI. Adjournment

Voted: on motion of Mr. Agnitti, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 p.m. So voted.

Daniel E. Morrissey
Secretary