

# Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board Regular Meeting Minutes February 4, 2026



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Location: Gas & Electric Operations Center, 40 Turnpike Industrial Rd. Conference Room, Westfield, MA

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

## Call to Order

Chairman Parks stated that this meeting of the Municipal Light Board is being electronically recorded in both video and audio by the Municipal Light Board. As stated, in the WG+E MLB Video Policy the recording will be available on the WG+E website within one week. Is anyone, other than the Municipal Light Board, recording the meeting and if so state whether it is an audio or video recording and whether the recording is being live streamed.

## I. ROLL CALL was taken as follows:

Present:

Ward #2 Commissioner, Ray Rivera (absent)  
Ward #3 Commissioner, Dawn Renaudette  
Ward #4 Commissioner, William Parks  
Ward #5 Commissioner, Robert Goyette  
Ward #6 Commissioner, Robert C. Sacco (arrived after roll call at 6:03pm)  
Appointed Commissioner, TBD  
Ward #1 Commissioner, Tom Fanion

Present: 4 Absent: 2

## II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

## III. READING OF THE RECORD

On a motion made by Commissioner Renaudette and seconded by Commissioner Goyette and based on a 4-2 roll call vote it was:

VOTED:

To accept the minutes of the January 7, 2026, regular session meeting of the Municipal Light Board as presented.

Rivera	absent
Renaudette	"aye"
Parks	"aye"
Goyette	"aye"
Sacco	arrived after the vote
Fanion	"aye"

Motion passed 4-2

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

V. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

a) Remote meeting policy

- i. **Video Policy** The General Manager reviewed the updates to the video policy with the Board and informed them that the department consulted both the City Clerk for the City of Westfield and legal counsel to confirm that WG+E procedures are aligned with Massachusetts General Laws. This review was prompted due to a Zoon bombing incident that occurred during the January 7, 2026 meeting.

There was no further discussion of the video policy.

On a motion from Commissioner Fanion and seconded by Commissioner Renaudette it was;

Voted:

that the Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board has historically video recorded Board of Commissioners Meetings and posts such recordings on the WG+E website for public access within one week of the meeting date; and that due to the fact that the public is duly notified of the location of the Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board meetings in advance, and is provided the opportunity to attend in person, there is no obligation to live- stream the video recording for public viewing; and that this practice is in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law is codified at **M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18–25**; and that the Board hereby adopts the Video Policy of even date herewith in furtherance of its mission; and

that the Manager is hereby authorized and directed to take any action he deems necessary or advisable to carry out the purposes of this vote.

Rivera	absent
Renaudette	"aye"
Parks	"aye"
Goyette	"aye"
Sacco	"aye"
Fanion	"aye"

Motion Passed 5-1

**b) Order of the meeting- (verbal)**

Chairman Parks reminded the Commissioners that the Municipal Light Board follows Robert's Rules Order during meetings. He also noted that he is researching simpler ways to review and understand Open Meeting Laws as it relates to the Municipal Light Board. Chairman Parks will have information to discuss with the Board at the next meeting.

**VI. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE GAS AND ELECTRIC**

- a) **Acknowledgement- WMS Administration & Counseling Teams**  
The Westfield Middle School administration and counseling teams sent a note thanking the WG+E for attending and supporting the WMS Community Coffee Hour on December 10.
- b) **Acknowledgement-Warchol Family & Ashe Family**  
The Warchol and Ashe family expressed their excitement on the snowflake lights that were hung up on the northside of the City this year.
- c) **Acknowledgement-Paul Drapeau Family, 125 Franklin Street**  
The Drapeau family sent a thank-you note expressing appreciation for the holiday discount provided to residents, which was reflected on their December bill.
- d) **Acknowledgement-Miles for Miracle**  
Katie Warner Mitchell of Westfield sent a thank you note to the WG+E for their generosity, support to the Miles for Miracle program supporting the Boston's Children Hospital.
- e) **Acknowledgement-Amelia Park Arena**  
General Manager, Billy Fellows sent a thank you letter to the General Manager on behalf of the Amelia Park Arena staff and the Board of Trustees for the generous donation to their Compressor Fundraiser.

- f) **Acknowledgement-Baystate Health Foundation**  
Kathy Tobin, Executive Director for the Baystate Health Foundation, sent a letter to the General Manager thanking WG+E for supporting the 2025 Baystate Noble Ball.
- g) **Customer Compliment-Kathleen Labombard, 626 Western Avenue**  
Kathleen Labombard expressed that she was very impressed with how friendly and helpful IT Support Technician, Steven Bird, was when she reported and issued with her router.
- h) **Scot Stebbins, Associate Lineman Fiber Technician**  
**Customer Compliments:**
1. **Courtney Elder, 45 Day Avenue**  
Courtney shared how pleased she was with Scot's receptiveness while removing an old router and installing a new one at her home.
- i) **Daniel Terry, Associate Lineman Fiber Technician**  
**Customer Compliment:**
1. **Don & Diane Webb, 440 Dewey St., West Spfld., Ma**  
Don and Diane rated their overall experience with Whip City Fiber as excellent. They noted that Dan called ahead to inform them he would arrive earlier than scheduled for the internet installation and was courteous and personable while explaining the installation process, which put them at ease.
- j) **Bradley Brown, Telecom Installer Technician**  
**Customer Compliment:**
1. **Alan Moore, 57 Morton Street, West Spfld., Ma**  
Alan rated his overall experience receiving Whip City Fiber as excellent. Bradley did a phenomenal job with the installation and was very particular, making sure everything was neat and the internet was up and running smoothly.
  2. **Meagan Cocchi, 99 Morton Street, West Spfld., Ma**  
Meagan rated her overall experience of receiving Whip City Fiber as excellent. She noted that Bradley was extremely efficient and made the process easy and smooth.
  3. **Michael Crochier, 271 Thompson Road, Colrain, Ma**  
Michael sent an email to the Assistant General Manager impressed by the performance of Bradley with his promptness, excellent communication, and knowledge of installation procedures.
- k) **Alex Guerra, Associate Lineman Fiber Technician**  
**Customer Compliment**
1. **Craig Purdy, 8 Brentwood Drive, West Spfld., Ma**  
Craig rated his overall experience receiving Whip City Fiber as excellent. Alex was very pleasant, knowledgeable, and meticulous. Craig added he went above and beyond to fix the issues in a very timely manner.

**I) Jamie St. Pierre, Telecom Installer Technician**

**Customer Compliment**

**1. Elizabeth Fugiel, 18 Fourth Avenue**

Elizabeth rated her overall experience receiving Whip City Fiber as excellent. Jamie was very knowledgeable and efficient in the installation process.

**2. Jim Warner, 20 Brookline Avenue**

Jim rated his overall experience receiving Whip City Fiber as excellent. He added that Jamie was fantastic hooking up WCF to his home and didn't leave until all devices were operating properly.

**VII. REPORTS FROM THE GAS & ELECTRIC**

**A. Action Required**

**a) PHMSA Update (verbal)**

Marty Kulig, Utility Supervisor, gave an update to the Board on the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) grant project progress. There are two phases to the grant.

Below is the highlighted overview of both phases as presented.

**PHMSA Phase I**

- \$10MM federal grant to replace leak-prone, aging infrastructure.
- Construction began in Spring 2025 will be completed by Fall 2027.
- Approximately 25,250ft of new gas main was installed by award contractor RH White during 2025.
- They replaced 321 existing gas services during 2025.
- WG+E crews worked with RH White and abandoned approximately 35,900ft of leak prone gas main.
- As of today, WG+E is 48% complete with the main installation and 41% complete with service replacements these completions put the Phase I project on track for completion within the proposed 3-year timeframe.

**PHMSA Phase II**

- \$7.3MM federal grant to replace leak-prone, aging infrastructure.
- Burns Construction Company awarded for PHMSA Phase II construction project.
- Burns will replace approximately 24,000 ft of gas main and 240 gas services during 2026 construction season.
- WG+E will install approximately 44,300ft of new high pressure gas mains and will replace 411 existing gas services as part of this project.
- WG+E will abandon approximately 44,700ft of leak-prone gas mains as part of this project.
- Construction will begin in 2026 and will conclude by end of year 2027.

**b) Westfield Warm Fund Program Annual Report**

Betsy Loiko, Customer Service Manager, presented the annual report for the Westfield Warm Fund program, which supports Westfield residents experiencing financial hardship with heating costs, particularly during the winter months. In addition to seasonal heating assistance, the program provides targeted financial support to eligible households, including customers with outstanding account balances throughout the year.

In 2025, the program assisted 229 customers, and the full \$100,000 in available funds was distributed.

Ms. Loiko reminded the Board that the Customer Service Department continues to collaborate with key community partners to identify and support residents in need, including:

Westfield Public Schools

St. Mary's Schools

Westfield Council on Aging

Westfield Veterans' Services

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Westfield

YMCA of Greater Westfield

Of the 229 customers assisted in 2025, 94 were referred through communication and outreach efforts from the community partners listed above.

To date in 2026, 24 customers have been assisted, totaling \$9,125 in distributed funds. The program helps customers to keep services on, if services are off WG+E are able to assist them with what they can pay.

Commissioners inquired about the amount provided to customers under the program. It was explained that customers may receive \$100, with a maximum benefit of \$500. If circumstances warrant exceeding the \$500 limit, the Customer Service Manager will consult with the General Manager for review and approval.

**c) 2025 Drug and Alcohol Testing Annual Report**

Robin Krok, HR Coordinator, updated the Board on the 2025 Annual Drug and Alcohol Testing Program.

Nine years ago, the department contracted with DISA to manage its drug and alcohol testing program to ensure compliance with Department of Transportation regulations. DISA administers the random testing pool for PHMSA-covered employees (49 CFR Part 199) and employees holding a CDL subject to DOT regulations (49 CFR Part 382).

The Department remains in compliance with FMCSA and PHMSA random drug and alcohol testing requirements. During the reporting period, 27 random drug tests and 4 random alcohol tests were

conducted. Two positive results (one in 2024 and one in 2025) resulted in required SAP follow-up testing, which will continue through the fourth quarter of 2027. Ten pre-employed drug screens were completed in 2025, all with negative results.

The Department and IBEW Local 455 have agreed to include all IBEW-represented employees in a random drug testing program, and a non-DOT testing pool aligned with the 50% DOT rate is expected to be implemented by the end of the first quarter. Also, working with Guild Management to include a random drug testing program to non-DOT covered management personnel in the random drug testing pool.

**d) 2025 Electric Services Installed**

Joe Mitchell, Assistant General Manager, provided an overview of electric services installed in 2025.

A total of 40 new electric services were installed, including 31 residential and 9 commercial. The commercial installations included services for Verizon 5G and Comcast equipment, as well as traffic control systems.

Over the past 10 years, the installation of new electric services has averaged 47 per year, demonstrating a consistent trend. The exceptions were 2020 and 2021, when Liberty Manor was undergoing a large expansion. During that time, new electric services were installed for those additions, as well as for new condominium units on Union Street.

**e) 2025 Gas Services Installed**

Greg Freeman, Operations Superintendent, provided a summary of new gas services installed in 2025. A total of 48 new services were installed, including 43 residential and 5 commercials.

Over the past ten years, the Department has averaged approximately 75 new gas services annually. The decrease in 2025 installations is attributed to fewer main gas extensions, the costs associated with converting to natural gas, and rebate incentives promoting non-carbon-emitting air-source heat pumps.

**f) 2025 FTTH Services Installed**

Telecom Superintendent Jamie Cincotta provided the Board with an overview of the Whip City Fiber Fiber-to-the-Home project.

As of December 31, 2025, all public way construction in Westfield has been completed. The system reached 18,432 active customers, including 8,720 active customers in Westfield. Much of the business district has also

been completed, including FSA 84, covering the Elm Street and Butcher Block areas.

During 2025, the team completed 121 commercial installations and 538 residential installations in Westfield.

In West Springfield, construction efforts included nearly nineteen underground neighborhood builds and fiber construction across five new fiber service areas (FSA 6, 8, 14, 36, and 54). The total number of active installed customers in West Springfield now stands at 696, with 17 additional installation appointments scheduled.

Partnership work in the Hilltown region through Hilltown Partnerships resulted in 59 new installations and 27 new phone service customers in 2025.

Overall, the in-house technician team completed approximately 1,700 installations in 2025, marking a highly productive year for operations.

**g) 2025 Gas Leak Compliance Report**

Greg Freeman, Operations Superintendent, reported to the Board on the gas leak compliance report mandated by the DPU and DEP regarding underground gas leaks. Leaks are classified as hazardous (Grade 1) and non-hazardous (Grades 2 and 3).

During the final quarter of 2025, the department repaired or eliminated through replacement all identified leaks, with the exception of one Grade 2 leak discovered in the final weeks of the year. This leak will continue to be monitored and is included in the planned abandonment work for the 2026 construction season

**h) 2025 Traffic Light Report**

Joe Mitchell, Assistant General Manager, gave a brief overview of the traffic light repairs and maintenance efforts that are carried out throughout the year by Westfield Gas + Electric.

**i) 2025 Capital Electric Projects Report (Bi-Annual)**

Joe Mitchell, Assistant General Manager, provided the Board with an update on the status of several 2025 capital electric projects. Mr. Mitchell reported that the Elm Substation fence replacement project has been completed, enhancing security at two of the utility's substations.

He also noted that the underground electric work on Broad Street has been delayed due to engineering-related issues and is now anticipated to begin in the second quarter of 2026.

Lastly, Mr. Mitchell informed the Board that Phase 2 of the Crescent Circle underground direct electric infrastructure project is projected to be completed in the second quarter of 2026.

**j) 2026 Capital Gas, Electric, Telecom Construction Plans**

Operations Superintendent Greg Freeman presented the proposed 2026 capital gas and electric construction plans.

On the electric side, the discussion included work associated with Fairway Condos, which contracted with Westfield Gas and Electric in 2025 to replace aging natural gas infrastructure on their property. That system has since been integrated into WG+E infrastructure. Other electric projects included underground work along Broad Street Underground Project, planned fence replacements and miscellaneous upgrades at Buck Pond Substation, and potential removal of the Falcon Drive Substation project from this year's capital plan.

Gas projects will largely focus on PHMSA-related compliance work, along with the proposed boiler replacement at Southwick Gate Station and the Southampton Road and Massachusetts Turnpike Utility Project.

Telecom Superintendent Jamie Cincotta informed the Board that in 2026 the focus will be on expanding installations in Westfield with the goal of attracting additional commercial customers. On the network side, efforts will continue to improve distribution reliability by addressing aging legacy fiber infrastructure. Many older fiber closures are failing and will be upgraded to ensure splices are secure and reliable for existing customers, most of whom are commercial accounts. The long-term plan is to transition these customers onto the GPON network.

Additional 2026 initiatives include completing the West Springfield backhaul connection, which will provide fiber connectivity from Westfield to West Springfield. This work will follow the completion of West Springfield's Fiber Service Area 5 (FSA 5), located near the Little George's area.

The department also plans to purchase fiber testing equipment along with general tools to support both telecom installers and lineman.

He also noted plans to complete approximately 10 Fiber Service Areas (FSAs) in West Springfield in 2026, with a continued emphasis on expanding underground infrastructure work as part of the overall network development strategy.

Commissioner Sacco asked what West Springfield's take rate is currently. Cincotta let him know that it's close to a 40% take rate.

**k) Energy Supply Outlook (verbal)**

Keziah Benardsky, Energy Supply Manager/Quantitative Analyst, provided the Board with the monthly Energy Supply outlook, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. This information is detailed below.

US natural gas in storage totaled 2.823 Tcf for the week ending January 23rd, reflecting a withdrawal of 242 Bcf. This figure was larger than market expectations and confirmed that winter demand heavily relies on storage. Inventories now stand 7.9% below last year and 5.3% above the five-year average. A record-breaking pull is expected for the week ending January 30th as severe cold caused an intense spike in heating demand and production freeze-offs. If expectations are met, the surplus against the five-year average will be depleted.

January energy markets faced extreme volatility, driven by a late-month cold snap and Winter Storm Fern that sent US natural gas and power prices to historic highs. Natural gas futures spiked to multi-year peaks as heating demand surged and wellhead freeze-offs decreased supply, while day-ahead peak power prices also reached record levels. In New England, oil-fired generation surged to 30% of the fuel mix for electric generation as high natural gas prices led generators to switch to oil. ISO-NE received approval from FERC to allow maximum output of certain power generation sources during this stretch of cold weather, regardless of air quality or other typical considerations that may inhibit generation. Power on the newly-operating NECEC transmission line abruptly stopped as Hydro-Québec restricted exports to meet surging Canadian demand, forcing ISO-NE to reverse the usual flow and send electricity back to Canada. Following the storm, prices fell as forecasts shifted to milder conditions, output rebounded, and LNG flows strengthened. Daily prices remain elevated as another, even colder surge is forecast for this weekend, which could prove more challenging than last week given depleted oil inventories, LNG imports already at capacity, and the risk of further import disruptions. With gas and power systems running near their limits, all eyes will be in operations to maintain reliability during what may be the final stretch of severe winter cold.

European natural gas prices saw the sharpest monthly increase since mid-2023, driven by cold weather, heavy storage withdrawals, and temporary US supply disruptions during Winter Storm Fern. Prices eased late in the month as milder conditions boosted US LNG exports to pre-storm levels, reducing supply concerns, though inventories remain well below seasonal norms. Geopolitical risk premiums had elevated earlier on tensions with the Middle East but faded after signs

of discussion between the US and Iran. Overall, the market remains exposed to cold and supply shocks.

Zone-6 winter gas is trading at \$16.76/Dth for January 2027, down from an earlier spike to \$17.22/Dth on January 30th. Day-ahead peak power pricing is at \$144/MWh for January 2027, also retreating from recent highs following the gas market. Prior to these elevated prices, future volumes were hedged for both the gas and electric divisions, reducing risk in the outer years while either improving or maintaining current weighted average costs. The Department continues to monitor both domestic and international market trends daily to identify strategic hedging opportunities for the coming years.

#### **I) Monthly Financial Reports**

Jamie Naughton, Director of Finance, gave a monthly report for the December financials to the Board.

The Gas Division reported a net loss of \$4.0MM for the month, approximately \$3.3MM greater than the original budgeted loss, driven by higher-than-expected gas rate revenues and supply costs as colder temperatures increased sales volumes and required larger purchases.

The Electric Division reported a net loss of \$3.94MM, exceeding the forecasted loss by nearly \$3.93MM, as slightly higher revenues were offset by elevated supply costs from increased daily purchases.

Year-end adjustments in December resulted in a decrease in net income.

These adjustments include deferrals and contributions to various funds, including the Mederios Way construction fund, green energy fund, transmission fund, and the capital planning fund for new software. The reported figures continue to reflect ongoing entries for OPEB and pension. In addition, stabilization fund contributions continue at \$50K per month for the Gas Division and \$25K per month for the Electric Division.

On a year-end basis, the Gas Division's net income is projected to be \$2.4MM, which is on target with the original budget. The Electric Division's net income is projected to be \$3.8MM, exceeding the original forecast by \$49K. Please note that our books remain open pending December invoices and other adjustments, which will affect these variances. A reconciliation of all adjustments will be provided once the December financials are finalized later this year. Also, an analysis of the reserve funds will be presented at next week's meeting.

The Telecom Division's year-end net income is projected to be \$3.9MM, exceeding the original forecast by \$1MM, primarily due to continued new customer growth.

Overall Financial Summary:

While December results reflect higher operating losses driven by power and supply costs, as well as year-end accounting adjustments, the

organization remains financially strong. Year-end performance for the Gas and Electric Divisions is aligned with budget expectations, and the Telecom Division continues to exceed projections. Sustained reserve funding for stabilization contributions and strategic long-term planning ensure the organization's overall financial health.

**B. Informational Items**

- a) **Utility Issues-** as presented.
- b) **Utility News-** as presented.
- c) **Utility Courses Update-** as presented.

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

a) **Sub-Committee Assignment Review**

Chairman Parks postponed the sub-committee assignments for the Commissioners until the next Board meeting scheduled on March 4, 2026 when all Commissioners will be present. The General Manager added, if any Commissioner is interested in an specific sub-committee to reach out to Chairman Parks ahead of the meeting.

b) **99 Medeiros Way Update (verbal)**

The General Manager provided the Board with an update on 99 Medeiros Way, noting that a pre-construction meeting held two weeks ago went very well. Another project meeting is scheduled for February 5th.

As of two weeks ago, Western Builders has 270 days to complete the project based on the contract terms and is required to notify the department of any potential supply chain delays affecting project components. He also reminded the Board that Elm Electric is serving as one of the contractors on this project as well.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

a) **Multiple Service Lines Policy**

The Board took a vote on the updates to the policy as follows with a motion from Commissioner Fanion and seconded by Commissioner Renaudette it was;

Voted:

that the Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board adopts the Multiple Service Lines Policy as presented and of even date herewith; and  
that, historically WG+E generally provides single service locations per customer building; and  
that this practice is generally the most efficient manner by which to serve WG+E customers and meets good utility practice standards; and

that Accessory Dwelling Units standing as separate structures each shall be served by separate dedicated service lines; and

that the Board recognizes there may be good cause to allow WG+E discretion to install multiple service lines when justified; and

that the Manager is hereby authorized and directed to take any action he deems necessary or advisable to carry out the purposes of this vote.

Rivera	absent
Renaudette	"aye"
Parks	"aye"
Goyette	"aye"
Sacco	"aye"
Fanion	"aye"

Motion passed 5-0

**b) General Manager Review Due February 20, 2026**

The General Manager gave a quick reminder that the GM review evaluation form from each Commissioner is due back to Leanne Cloutier, Executive Administrator on February 20.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

On the motion made by Commissioner Fanion and seconded by Commissioner Renaudette it was;

VOTED: To adjourn the regular session of the February 4, 2026 Municipal Light Board meeting.

Rivera	absent
Renaudette	"aye"
Parks	"aye"
Goyette	"aye"
Sacco	"aye"
Fanion	"aye"

Motion passed 5-0

Chairman Parks declared the regular session portion of the meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

**A TRUE RECORD.**

Attest:



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Robert Goyette, Vice Chair