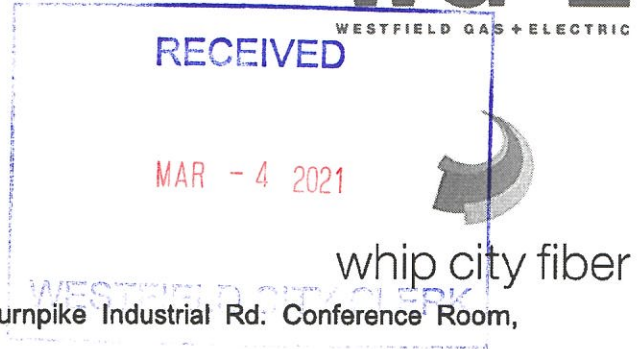


# Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board Regular Meeting Minutes February 10, 2021



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

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m.

## I. Call to Order

Chairman Roman stated that in accordance with Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting law, G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Municipal Light Board will be conducted via remote participation. The notice for this meeting invited members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting to do so by calling in telephonically to any of the numbers provided in the meeting notice. This virtual meeting will be audio recorded and, per the WG+E MLB Video Policy, the recording will be available on the WG+E website within one week. The Chairman asked if anyone, other than the Municipal Light Board, was recording the meeting. Hearing none the Chairman welcomed the public that may be listening to the meeting.

## II. ROLL CALL was taken as follows:

Present: Ward #1 Commissioner, Kevin M. Kelleher  
Ward #2 Commissioner, Ray Rivera  
Ward #3 Commissioner, Dawn Renaudette  
Ward #4 Commissioner, Francis L. Liptak  
Ward #5 Commissioner, Joseph B. Mitchell  
Ward #6 Commissioner, Robert C. Sacco  
Appointed Commissioner, A. Edward Roman

Absent:

Present: 7 Absent: 0

## III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

## IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

Due to some technical issues with the audio at 5:58 p.m. on the motion of Commissioner Sacco, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell it was unanimously:

VOTED: To recess the regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board meeting until 6:00 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 6:05 p.m.

## V. REPORTS FROM THE GAS & ELECTRIC:

### A. Action Required Items

#### a) General Manager Interviews.

**Hamid Jaffari** - The MLB interviewed Mr. Jaffari, who participated remotely. General and standardized questions as to background and interest in the position were initially asked by individual Commissioners. Chairman Roman asked for an outline of his educational background and relevant professional experience; Commissioner Renaudette asked about which accomplishments in his career he is most proud of; Commissioner Mitchell inquired about the biggest change he dealt with and how he adapted; Commissioner Liptak asked about his acumen and expertise in statutory and industry regulations, labor relations and negotiation of labor agreements; Commissioner Rivera asked about the rapidly changing utility industry and what trends the candidate believes are on the horizon; Commissioner Kelleher asked about how Mr. Jaffari manages relationships with ratepayers, employees, City officials and the general community; and Commissioner Sacco asked about the steps the candidate would take to integrate himself into the Department and identify issues and opportunities. Following the general questions, an open forum commenced and Commissioners made individual inquiries as to areas they felt were relevant to the search process. Commissioner Sacco asked about Mr. Jaffari's previous community involvement and how expects to become involved with the Westfield community. Mr. Jaffari spontaneously responded in detail to all the questions that were asked. He also indicated he would do a comprehensive SWOT analysis of the department as one of his initial tasks.

At 6:57 p.m., on the motion of Commission Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Sacco it was unanimously:

VOTED: To recess the regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board meeting until 7:10 p.m.

The Manager announced that the audio and video would be shut off until approximately 7:10 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:10 p.m.

**Robert C. Coates, Jr** – The MLB interviewed Mr. Coates. General and standardized questions as to background and interest in the position were initially asked by individual Commissioners. Chairman Roman asked for an outline of his educational background and relevant professional experience. Mr. Coates outlined his background, goals and objectives. He also provided a handout of his plans for the first 100 days of employment, should he be hired. Commissioner Renaudette asked about which accomplishments in his career he is most proud of; Commissioner Mitchell inquired about the biggest change he dealt with and how he adapted; Commissioner Liptak asked about hiacumen and expertise in statutory and industry regulations, labor relations and negotiation of labor agreements; Commissioner Rivera asked about the rapidly changing utility industry and what trends the candidate believes are on the horizon; Commissioner Kelleher asked about how Mr.

Coates manages relationships with ratepayers, employees, City officials and the general community; and Commissioner Sacco asked about the steps the candidate would take to integrate himself into the Department and identify issues and opportunities. Following the general questions, open forum commenced and Commissioners made individual inquiries as to areas they felt were relevant to the search process. Commissioner Rivera contrasted Mr. Coates' position as Vice President of Substations, Field Engineering and Field Communications at a large, regional electric utility to the responsibilities of WG+E with its much smaller footprint and asked how he'd adjust. Commissioner Liptak inquired about Mr. Coates' efforts being named Safety Officer brought in to lead his company's response to the Merrimack natural gas event. Commissioner Sacco acknowledged the candidate's great experience on the electric side and asked about his ability to lead the Department's gas and fiber divisions he may not have had experience with. Chair Roman asked the candidate about community involvement and how he expects to integrate himself into the Westfield community. Commissioner Mitchell asked Mr. Coates for a specific example of when he had to learn something in depth and on the fly and what was the result. Mr. Coates spontaneously responded in detail to all the questions that were asked.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:** None

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

On the motion of Commission Sacco, seconded by Commissioner Liptak it was unanimously:

VOTED: To adjourn the regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board meeting.

Chairman Roman declared the regular session portion of the meeting adjourned at 7:53p.m.

A TRUE RECORD.

Attest:

  
A. Edward Roman, Chairman

**Documents Presented at REGULAR SESSION February 10, 2021**

Resume of Robert C. Coates, Jr
Resume of Hamid Jaffari
Resume of Thomas P. Flaherty, Sr.
Resume of John J. Leary
Handout of Robert C. Coates, Jr of his background and 100 day plan.
Reference Letter for Robert C. Coates, Jr from Brian Kenney, Business Manager/Financial Secretary of IBEW Local 455
Reference Letter for Robert C. Coates, Jr from Jeffrey S. Franson