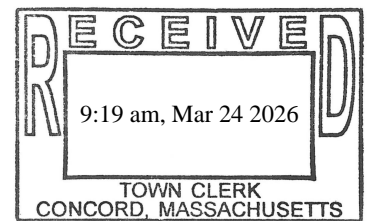


Concord Municipal Light Board Minutes
02/11/2026



Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Concord Municipal Light Board was held on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 7:30 am, via a Zoom meeting. Present were Board Members: Warren Leon, John Dalton, Brian Foulds, Bianca Taylor, and Chris Schaffner. Also in attendance were Jason Bulger, CMLP Director; Laura Scott, Assistant Director of Power Supply and Energy Management; Joe Repoff, Assistant Director of Engineering and Operations; Nan Okarma, Financial Manager; Donna De Gray, Customer Service Supervisor; Ann Breitenwischer, Meter Supervisor; Karin Farrow, Office Administrator; Jennifer Clougherty, Customer Service Manager; Jesse Wooster, AMI Analyst; Carole Hilton, Project Consultant; Cameron McKennitt, Select Board member; Town Manager, Kerry Lafleur; and residents Karlen Reed, Jim Terry, Andy Puchrik, Pamela Dritt, and Gordon Brockway.

Definitions for acronyms used in these minutes:

- **CMLP:** Concord Municipal Light Plant
- **TOD:** Time of Day

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Leon called the meeting to order at 7:33. Meeting recording will be posted to the Minuteman Media Network YouTube page as soon as it is available.¹

MEETING MINUTES (0:14)

Mr. Dalton moved to approve the regular session minutes for 01/14/2026 as distributed. Mr. Schaffner offered a second, and the motion passed, with members Foulds, Dalton, Leon and Schaffner voting in favor (Ms. Taylor arrived after the vote).

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE (0:53)

Jason Bulger thanked the staff who assisted during a power outage the previous Friday. An underground conductor failed near Main and Walden Streets, and the Line crew, Engineering, and Broadband staff worked in extremely cold and challenging conditions to restore power. Mr. Bulger noted that the business community was patient and that the outage was likely due to aging infrastructure.

Mr. Bulger reported progress on the 2024 and 2025 audits. Draft financial statements for 2024 have been received, and the auditors will present to the Financial Audit Advisory Committee on February 26th. While there was an issue with cash reconciliation due to a town financial migration, the draft audit does not currently list it as a major concern. A new firm, Goulet, Salvidio & Associates, has begun the 2025 audit process.

Mr. Bulger highlighted the success of the midwinter home tours, where 75 people viewed solar panels, EV charging, heat pumps, and more in action. Feedback from the tours was very positive, and we are grateful for the staff preparation and work.

Regarding the middle school solar project, Mr. Bulger addressed concerns about roof penetrations after a discussion at a recent School Committee meeting. He clarified that the design will either use a ballasted system or one that chemically adheres the racks to the roof so that the roof membrane remains intact. This was the design

¹ Minuteman Media YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Y9MtFY5k1U>

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from the beginning and, while it may have a minor impact on the number of bidders and cost, it is not a barrier to the project moving forward. The school is applying for a Green School Works grant for the rooftop solar, which would significantly defray costs.

Finally, retirements were discussed. John McGarry is retiring after 46 and a half years of service as of April 1. Anne Breitenwischer and Donna De Gray are also retiring from the organization (as of March 2). CMLP thanks them for their dedicated service. Bianca Taylor and other Board members expressed their gratitude for the service of these employees.

Mr. Schaffner noted that flat roof installations at schools are typically self-ballasted, and he asked if there was a discussion about a battery. Mr. Bulger responded that CMLP did not currently hold a site license for energy storage at the site. Mr. Foulds expressed concern about the time it took to get site licenses and suggested moving forward with the project as a whole. Mr. Leon asked if the grant would affect ownership of the solar system. Mr. Bulger explained that if the grant is successful, the benefits would likely be split between the school and the Municipal Light Plant based on the resources each party brings to the project.

BROADBAND REPORT (15:01)

Mr. Bulger provided an update on the XGS-PON migration, which is scheduled for the end of February into March. The project will involve four maintenance windows to move fibers to new equipment. Customers will be notified directly and can expect brief service interruptions between midnight and 6:00 am. A maintenance window people will go down for around 15 minutes as their fiber is moved. Once the migration is complete, residential customers will receive a free increase in speed.

TIME-OF-DAY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES (18:09)

Mr. Leon opened the discussion by framing the upcoming transition to Time-of-Day (TOD) rates on April 1st. He emphasized that given the limited time remaining, the Board's goal should be to keep the transition as simple and straightforward as possible to avoid unnecessary complications.

Mr. Bulger presented a timeline of TOD discussions dating back to January 2023 to illustrate the iterative process staff and the Board have undertaken to understand the implications and interdependencies of various rates. He noted that CMLP's software provider frequently reminds staff that our rate structure is among the most complicated of its customers, and unwinding that complexity has been a big challenge. Mr. Bulger specifically credited Donna and a former employee (Carole) for returning after her retirement to assist with building the new rates into the system. The rate changes as recently as January of this year have been of particular concern in getting a complete snapshot of all the rates going forward.

In the area of bill print, CMLP's vendor had long ago scheduled a complete bill refresh for December of 2026, so the TOD changes needed to fit inside "minor" adjustments, limiting possibilities. This step of the process is entirely handled by the software vendor, NISC. It's a black box that CMLP has little visibility into and represents the largest schedule risk for TOD rates going live on time. The amount of time between bill completion and bill configuration testing will be smaller than is ideal.

Regarding customer outreach, Mr. Bulger reported that bill inserts and emails from the marketing firm Questline have seen high engagement, with open rates exceeding industry standards. He explained that staff are now working on individualized outreach for specific groups, such as solar, heat pump, and rate assistance customers, to

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address their unique use cases without overwhelming the general public with irrelevant details. To further reduce the burden on the customer service team during this transition, the Board was informed that rate assistance participation will be automatically extended this year and the delinquency process will be modified to be less resource-intensive. Staff have and will continue to attend public events through the month of March to discuss TOD.

On the “Tools and Resources” front, Mr. Bulger outlined some of the “set-it-and-forget” options for customers, like the Connected Homes program, and cost calculator that are both simple and complex. Mr. Leon asked about making it easy to opt-in after already opting out. Staff agree this is important to find and will make sure that’s clear. Mr. Dalton raised a concern regarding the tools provided to customers, referencing Ms. Taylor’s earlier experience where her smart thermostat defaulted to a different utility’s settings. He asked if guidance could be provided for popular smart thermostats to ensure they correctly reflect the new TOD rates. Ms. Scott explained that thermostat manufacturers are not allowing the Connected Homes program to throttle the settings every day (but will allow a few changes per month to hit monthly transmission peaks). Communication going out directly to customers in these programs, and it does include specific language regarding the programming of different models. Ms. Scott clarified that heat pump users should not take any action to try to avoid the evening peak since those devices are intended to run steadily throughout the day.

Mr. Foulds requested that the Board members be sent the templated outreach emails to better understand the information being shared with the public. Mr. Bulger agreed to provide these along with an updated version of the online rate comparison tool.

Finally, Mr. Bulger outlined the criteria for the “go-live” decision, which will be finalized around March 1st. He stated that the fundamental requirement is that the system accurately flows data from meters to billing. Beyond technical functionality, he emphasized that the decision would also depend on whether the number of expected errors is within a tolerance that maintains public trust. He assured the Board that staff would be open and honest about any glitches discovered during final testing and would prepare contingency plans if the vendor or system is not ready by the deadline. Mr. Dalton expressed his preference for a short delay rather than a roll-out that had major issues.

LIGHT BOARD TOD FORUM PLANNING (1:05:16)

Mr. Bulger introduced the planning for the upcoming Time-of-Day (TOD) public forum by detailing a proposed agenda that included an introduction, a section on the “why” and benefits of TOD rates, a “what you can do to save” segment, and a timeline for next steps. This structure allows the Board take a lead role in introducing sections of the forum to make it more of a community-oriented event rather than just a staff presentation. Mr. Bulger proposed that Board members speak on the foundational reasons for the change and the associated benefits, such as lower system-wide costs, reduced peak usage, more consumer control over bills, and less pollution.

Mr. Foulds agreed to take the lead on explaining the “why” behind the transition. He suggested that the presentation should include revenue-neutral values from the cost of service study to help the public understand the long-term impacts. Mr. Foulds thought that showing these figures would illustrate that while the first phase might only have a small bill impact, the 2027 phase would involve a more significant peak rate increase, highlighting the importance of behavioral changes now. Mr. Bulger agreed that this was a good suggestion for providing customers with clearer context.

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Ms. Taylor agreed to speak on the specific benefits of the TOD rates. Mr. Bulger noted that staff would provide supporting materials and example language but encouraged Board members to put the points into their own words or speak off the cuff to maintain a personal connection with the audience. He also mentioned that this collaborative approach would allow staff and individual Board members to coordinate their sections without violating open meeting laws.

The background and history section will explain that this Time-of-Day initiative has been a decade in the making, with planning extending back to at least 2017 in previous Light Plant Strategic Plans. It took time implementing a new billing system and deploying new meters, and now that those phases are complete, TOD is ready to take effect. Mr. Dalton offered to introduce this topic.

Staff will then cover an overview of the program, including specifics like timing, rates.

Mr. Schaffner agreed to assist in any section, so being that there was only one left, he will introduce the section on what customers can do to save under the new Time-of-Day rates.

The Board then discussed the logistical details of the forum. Mr. Bulger confirmed it would be a hybrid event with a Zoom component to ensure accessibility in case of poor March weather. He explained that after the formal presentation and recorded question-and-answer session, the Board could adjourn the official meeting and stop the recording. This would allow for an informal period where attendees could mill about and speak with staff and Board members individually to address unique concerns or follow-up questions. Mr. Leon concluded the topic by agreeing with the plan and confirming that staff would reach out to individual Board members to workshop their specific presentation points.

RATE HEARING (1:22:38)

Mr. Schaffner moved to suspend the meeting in progress and enter into a rate hearing for the purpose of discussing the rates listed in the posted agenda, and with a second by Mr. Foulds, the Board voted unanimously to enter into the rate hearing.

Mr. Leon opened the session by reminding the Board that the goal was to keep the transition as straightforward as possible.

Assistant Director of Power Supply and Energy Management Laura Scott presented two rates for current Residential Rate Assistance customers. For the first, as requested by the Board, the service/meter charge \$0 per month, and the Time-of-Day rates in each period have been lowered such that the total cost of the program, including the waived service/meter fee, is equal to the total program cost the year earlier.

The next rate discussed was the Opt Out rate for those who qualify for Rate Assistance. This remains a rider and mimics the current structure, showing a credit equal to the service/meter charge and a discount of \$0.08185/kWh for the first 657kWh. Mr. Foulds asked that the Opt out information provided to customers mention that the credit ends after 657kWh, and Ms. Scott said that was possible.

While the Residential Service – Electric Vehicle Charging Separate Meter rate was initially expected to go away, it became clear that doing so would penalize those customer due to the phased approach of Time-of-Day rates.

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The rate is currently about \$0.17/kWh, and the lowest rate under Time-of-Day is around \$0.20/kWh until Phase 2, when it drops down to the \$0.16-0.17 range. The proposal is to maintain the current rate of \$0.17056/kWh until Phase 2 takes effect and then retire the rate at that time. Mr. Foulds said that since the Board continued the ETS rates a while longer, doing this extension was logical. The service/meter charge was removed from the rate so that it could be added to the Terms and Conditions.

The Board briefly discussed the multiple meter fee, and they agreed to keep it at the current level of \$6.50/meter until a future rate change when they would consider moving it toward the cost of service, which is \$9.00/meter.

Regarding the New York Power Authority (NYPA) residential credit, Ms. Scott explained that the state requires the benefits of cheap NYPA power to be allocated strictly to residential customers. Today that credit is given to the first 75kWh on residential customer accounts. She recommended shifting from the current variable credit to a fixed monthly dollar credit for administrative simplicity due to complexities of the TOD bill programming. Ms. Scott noted that this change would mean a small number of solar customers, who previously might not have received the credit because they weren't receiving 75 or more kWh from the grid each month, would now see a consistent monthly credit on their bills. Mr. Foulds voiced his support, calling it a small but good change.

Bianca Taylor praised the level of detail in the presentation. Mr. Leon then asked if there were any public comments specifically regarding the tariff sheets; hearing none, he entertained a motion to close the hearing.

Mr. Foulds moved to adjourn the Rate Hearing and resume the regular meeting with a second by Mr. Dalton, the Board voted unanimously to close the rate hearing.

Mr. Foulds moved to approve the rates presented (starting on page 50 of the materials packet): Residential Rate Assistance TOD Rate; Residential Rate Assistance Opt-out Rider; Residential Electric Vehicle Charging Separate Meter; and NYPA Power Credit Rate. With a second by Ms. Taylor, the Board voted unanimously to approve the rates.

PUBLIC COMMENT (1:40:00)

- Pamela Dritt stated she strongly approved any rate changes that increase the cost of electricity for only those residences still using fossil fuel as heat sources; since that is not possible, she supported lowering the cost of electricity for heat pump and EV customers.

ADJOURN (1:44:00)

Mr. Foulds moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Schaffner offered a second, and members voted the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:17am.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Dalton, Clerk