



Municipal Electric Utilities Association of New York State

News and Views

January
2023

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2022-2023

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To foster and advance the efficient operation of publicly owned and operated electric systems, including the production, distribution, conservation and prudent use of electric power and energy for public service for the mutual benefit of all members.

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Municipal Members

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Executive Director's Report

Hello Everyone,

January is whizzing by. So far, temperatures on average have been relatively moderate, with manageable loads. There is of course, a lot of winter ahead, and things could

change before Spring finally arrives.

As reported in this issue by John Jennings and Chris Wentlent, the flurry of activity in Albany will continue through February and March as the budget process unfolds. Climate related initiatives that have been previously proposed may have a better chance of gaining the Governor's support this year and will likely have significant impacts on the utility sector. These are certainly changing times in the energy world, and we are working hard to digest all the information and vigorously represent our common interests as new legislation and regulations are proposed.



Threats to substations remain in the news. Just a reminder to check the integrity of all fences and gates, the grade of all locks and the

functionality of all camera systems. Also make sure you have an accurate inventory of all components for insurance purposes should you incur a loss.

I hope your new year has started off well and that 2023 is a safe and prosperous year for all of you and your communities.

Jim

Pole Attachments – Part 2

Pole Attachment Audit – Why It's A Good Idea

*Thanks to: Erin Bonacci, Bath
Matt Hegarty, Fairport
Ken Podolny, Esq.*

Last month's News and Views included an article about the increase in municipal pole attachment rates and encouraged everyone to review their existing pole attachment agreements. Well, if you are anything like Bath, your municipally-owned electric utility has experienced turnover at all different levels over the years. As a result, and because some of the attachments may predate even your oldest employees, these agreements may be impossible to locate. Do not let this paralyze you. **Start somewhere.** You might ask "Where?" Well, let's start with the easiest task first: check your files for copies of pole attachment agreements you may have with attachers you know are on your poles. If you don't know who is attached to your poles, don't panic! The next step is to conduct a pole attachment audit.

What is a pole attachment audit? It involves physically checking attachments to see who is on your poles, and then making sure that they are (and have been) paying you the appropriate fees. The industry standard interval for performing a pole attachment audit is every five years, and the audit is typically performed during your system inspection (plan for that to be discussed in a future News and Views article!). However, you can complete this audit more frequently if you choose. And while another industry standard is for all parties – pole owners and pole attachers – to contribute to the cost of a pole attachment audit, it may be more trouble and headache than it's worth.

As a secondary benefit, conducting a pole attachment audit provides you an opportunity to take an inventory and assess the condition of your poles, equipment, hardware, *etc.* (again, your system inspection will be discussed in a future article). Grouping these tasks together allows you to

save time and cost and gives you a chance to improve your utility's financial health. System reliability can be improved by addressing deficiencies that are identified during the inspection. Lastly, and most importantly, safety issues and concerns can be identified and eliminated (e.g., stray voltage).

If you don't know how many utility poles are in your system, who owns them (solely owned or jointly), and exactly who is attached to each one of your poles, it is likely your electric utility is missing out on pole attachment rental fees (i.e., revenue). While \$16.75 per pole may seem insignificant, these numbers add up quickly.

The above may all seem overwhelming, and the first time you undertake this audit it very well may be, but ***it will get easier!*** The benefits you will realize – improved safety and reliability along with an increase in revenues – will be worth your efforts!

In sum, the process is simple:

Step 1 – check your files for pole attachment agreements.

Step 2 – physically check your poles and see who is attached. Attachments will typically be tagged. This will help you create an accurate record of (1) your poles, and (2) the number and ownership of attachments on them.

Step 3 – check your records to see if your attachers have been paying you the correct amounts.

Semi - Annual Meeting Save the Dates!

The MEUA Semi-annual meeting will be held from the afternoon of **May 31st through June 1st** at the Embassy Suites Destiny in Syracuse. In response to member requests to make the most efficient use of your time away from your communities, this meeting will follow the NYMPA annual meeting which will take place at the same location on the morning of Wednesday, May 31st. Please keep an eye out for registration information that Ashleigh will be sending out.



Albany Update: John Jennings Harter Secrest & Emery LLP

The 2023 legislative session commenced this week in Albany. One of the first orders of business for the legislature was to appoint the chairs of legislative committees. The committees that will most often address our issues include the following: Assembly Energy (Didi Barrett - new chair); Assembly Energy Conservation (Deborah Glick - new chair); Assembly Local Government (Fred Thiele - returning chair); Senate Energy (Kevin Parker - returning chair); Senate Environmental Conservation (Peter Harckham - new chair); Senate Local Government (Monica Martinez - new chair). We will prioritize meeting with the new chairs early this legislative session to educate them regarding the unique challenges of municipal electric utilities.

In her State of the State address, Governor Hochul will lay out her legislative priorities for the year, and preview what will be included in her proposed budget. She will release the budget legislation by February 1st, each house of the legislature will release their versions by the middle of March, and then all sides will negotiate furiously to agree on a final version before the close of the state's fiscal year on March 31st. The budget typically includes numerous policy proposals related to energy and local governments, so we will be actively engaged in this process.

Because this is the beginning of a new legislative session, all previously introduced bills will need to be reintroduced. We track dozens of bills that could affect MEUA members, and we will be watching as these new bills drop. We stay in close communication with MEUA leadership and consultants as the year progresses as we advocate on behalf of the MEUA. As always, do not hesitate to reach out to Executive Director Jim Stokes if you

are concerned regarding a particular piece of legislation that you hear about.

Finally, we want to update you regarding a piece of legislation that we had been working on at the close of the last legislative session. A.7256a/S.1979a would have directed utilities to include additional information and data on bills to customers, and it passed both houses of the legislature. Several of our members would have experienced difficulty complying with these new mandates, so we were working with the bill sponsors and the Governor's office to agree to a Chapter Amendment that would exempt our municipal electrics. In the end, the Governor decided to veto the legislation outright.

After several years of disruption because of COVID-19, it appears that things have returned to normal order in the legislature. We are looking forward to a very active year on the legislative front, and we will keep you all apprised as the session progresses.



NYISO Update Chris Wentlent

Governor Hochul – 2023 State of State Address – Key Energy & Environmental Highlights

Governor Hochul presented her 2023 State of the State Address (Address) on Tuesday, January 10. The 2023 SOS Book, text of her speech and key proposals documents are attached. The major energy and environmental highlights of her Address are summarized below:

- **Advancing an economywide Cap-and-Invest-Program** that supports universal rebates to consumers which will be created by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

- **Investing \$500 million in clean water funding** to support water quality and infrastructure projects and protect public health.
- **Establishing a program offering financial assistance to municipalities to investigate sources of contamination** and remediate contaminated sites over the next five years.
- **Requiring zero-emission new construction**, with no on-site fossil fuel combustion by 2025 for smaller buildings, and by 2028 for larger buildings.
- Prohibiting the sale of any new fossil fuel heating equipment by **2030 for existing smaller buildings** and **2035 for larger existing buildings**, along with related fossil fuel systems for all buildings.
- **Advancing a benchmarking system** to assign letter grades to larger buildings statewide based on their energy usage to help building managers make informed choices to cut electricity bills and emissions.
- Directing the Department of Public Service (DPS) to **identify and remove the barriers to deploying charging infrastructure** for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles efficiently and timely.
- **Directing the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to source all facilities' electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030** by generating its own electricity and prioritizing other green resources such as community solar or purchasing renewable energy from other local facilities.
- **Creating an Office of Just Transition** to centralize and direct State planning for a just transition; New York will be the first to advance a structure dedicated to the achievement of an economywide just transition for affected workers and communities that looks beyond the transition from coal and addresses the shift away from other fossil fuels.
- Addressing Energy Affordability - **proposing a series of policies to insulate our most vulnerable households from rising energy prices**

while advancing the transition to lower emissions including:

- **Providing \$200 million in relief for high electric bills.** New York State will provide a credit to approximately 800,000 households that make under \$75,000 to help pay burdensome electric bills.
- **Pairing affordability support with modernizing low-income homes through EmPower Plus Pilot.** EmPower Plus will help 20,000 low-income families improve their homes by adding insulation, upgrading to energy efficient appliances, and switching from polluting fossil fuel heating to clean, efficient electric alternatives.
- **Directing the Low-Income Energy Task Force,** composed of State agencies that administer energy affordability programs, to undertake immediate efforts to improve the alignment of existing programs and streamline administrative processes to increase access to these services and the impact of public dollars.
- **Reducing Waste and Invest in Local Recycling Programs** - propose the Waste Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act, which shifts the responsibility of recycling to the producer and away from taxpayers. New York State will develop a new, more efficient waste reduction strategy that will increase recycling rates, save local governments money, create jobs, and protect the environment. The program will require that New York meet material-specific recycling rates, create binding post-consumer recycled content rates, and help ensure recycling is convenient for consumers.

This begins the 2023 budget and legislative negotiations between the Governor and legislature. Governor Hochul will issue her proposed budget in the upcoming weeks, which will be followed by legislative review and other legislative senate and assembly proposals. The state budget is normally completed by the end of March 2023, while the legislative session will continue into June 2023.

MEUA MUNICIPAL MEMBER EMPLOYMENT ADVERTISEMENTS

Village of Bath: Deputy Director of Municipal Utilities

The Village of Bath's Electric, Gas and Water Systems encourage those interested in exploring the following employment opportunities to apply!

The Village of Bath's utility department, Bath Electric, Gas and Water Systems (BEGWS), is seeking a candidate who possesses soft skills of flexibility, adaptability, strategic, critical and independent thinking, collaboration and teamwork, resiliency, sense of humor, strong interpersonal skills, and a "can do" attitude. This a full-time, non-union, competitive (*i.e.* tested) civil service position. This is an important administrative position that requires performing the duties of the Director of Municipal Utilities in his/her absence as directed by the Village of Bath Municipal Utility Commission. This position has direct responsibility for assigned supervisory duties.

BEGWS is seeking an experienced professional who possesses a combination of education and experience in electric, natural gas, water, and/or sewer/wastewater fields as outlined in the job description. The starting salary for the position will be commensurate with qualifications including but not limited to experience, education, training, and skills. BEGWS benefits include medical, dental and vision insurance; paid vacation, personal time, holidays, sick time, and enrollment in the New York State Retirement benefit pension plan.

Potential candidates can obtain a more complete job description and application by contacting Erin Bonacci, Director of Municipal Utilities, ebonacci@begws.com. This position is open until filled; however, interested applicants are encouraged to submit applications to the Director of Municipal Utilities by Friday, December 30, 2022. Potential candidates are encouraged to a submit cover letter and resume in addition to the application.

Village of Bath: Business Manager

The Village of Bath's utility department, Bath Electric, Gas and Water Systems (BEGWS), is seeking a candidate who possesses soft skills of flexibility, adaptability, strategic, critical and independent thinking, collaboration and teamwork, resiliency, sense of humor, strong interpersonal skills, and a "can do" attitude. This a full-time, non-union, competitive (*i.e.* tested) civil service position. This is an important management position with technical and supervisory responsibilities. The successful candidate will be a part of the management team and responsible for the planning and directing of financial operations for BEGWS, including financial planning, budget administration, general accounting and reporting, payroll, purchasing, forecasting, debt administration, revenue billing and collection, personnel management and employee benefits administration. The successful candidate will also be charged with supervising BEGWS managed information technology (IT) service provider, along with the software and hardware solution providers including accounting and personnel, fixed assets, and meter data collection and management solution.

BEGWS is seeking an experienced professional who possesses a combination of education and experience in finance, accounting, business administration, public administration, or related field as outlined in the job description. A Certified Public Accountant (CPA) designation, experience in forensic auditing or forensic accounting, and/or municipal utility experience is desirable. The starting salary for the position will be commensurate with qualifications including but not limited to experience, education, training, and skills. BEGWS benefits include medical, dental and vision insurance; paid vacation, personal time, holidays, sick time, and enrollment in the New York State Retirement benefit pension plan.

Potential candidates can obtain a more complete job description and application by contacting Erin Bonacci, Director of Municipal Utilities, ebonacci@begws.com. This position is open until filled; however, interested applicants are encouraged to submit applications to the Director of Municipal Utilities by Friday, December 30, 2022. Potential candidates are encouraged to a submit cover letter and resume in addition to the application.

Village of Bath: Operations Manager

The Village of Bath's utility department, Bath Electric, Gas and Water Systems (BEGWS), is seeking a candidate who possesses soft skills of flexibility, adaptability, strategic, critical and independent thinking, collaboration and teamwork, resiliency, sense of humor, strong interpersonal skills, and a "can do" attitude. This a full-time, non-union, competitive (*i.e.* tested) civil service position. This is an important management position with technical and supervisory responsibilities. The successful candidate will be a part of the management team and responsible for the planning, directing, and reviewing the field utility operations activities and personnel of the electric, natural gas, water and sanitary sewer utilities to ensure public health, safety and welfare. This includes the operation, maintenance, repair, rebuild, replacement, and installation of power distribution system, natural gas distribution system, drinking water supply, treatment, distribution, and storage systems, sanitary sewer/wastewater collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal systems. BEGWS is seeking an experienced professional who possesses a combination of education and experience in electric, natural gas, water, and/or sewer/wastewater fields as outlined in the job description. Candidates must possess a valid New York State commercial driver license (CDL), or ability to obtain within one year. The starting salary for the position will be commensurate with qualifications including but not limited to experience, education, training, and skills. BEGWS benefits include medical, dental and vision insurance; paid vacation, personal time, holidays, sick time, and enrollment in the New York State Retirement benefit pension plan.

Potential candidates can obtain a more complete job description and application by contacting Erin Bonacci, Director of Municipal Utilities, ebonacci@begws.com. This position is open until filled; however, interested applicants are encouraged to submit applications to the Director of Municipal Utilities by Friday, December 30, 2022. Potential candidates are encouraged to a submit cover letter and resume in addition to the application.

Village of Hamilton: Lineworker

The Village of Hamilton Municipal Electric Department is seeking a qualified individual for the position of Electric Utility Line Mechanic-Meter Technician. Minimum qualifications are high school diploma, valid NYS drivers' and eligibility for a NYS CDL driver's license at time of application, graduation from high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma and either:

(A) Three years' experience as an apprentice lineman on power distribution systems, as a meter technician in the installation, maintenance, and repair of electrical power demand and energy consumption metering devices; or

(B) An equivalent approved combination of experience and training. Graduation from an approved two year technical school in a related field or from an approved apprentice training course may be substituted for two years of experience.

The applicant must be able to perform skilled work in the construction and maintenance of electrical overhead and underground distribution systems,

including substations. Work requires the ability to climb poles, working with high voltage, working in all weather conditions and ridged observance of safety protocols. The position also involves, from time to time, being assigned to other duties within the scope of the other utility and governmental operations of the Village of Hamilton.

This position offers a salary of \$36.21 to \$37.92 per hour, depending on number of years of prior experience, with an additional benefit package including group health insurance and NYS retirement program.

Pre-employment background and drug tests are required. Applications may be obtained from by contacting the Village Clerk, Kim Taranto, by telephone at 315-824-1111, or via email at kimt@hamilton-ny.gov. Detailed job description is available upon request. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The Village of Hamilton is an equal opportunity employer.

Skaneateles: Electric Line Leader

The Village of Skaneateles is seeking a full-time line leader for our electric department. This is a non-competitive civil service position involving overhead

and underground work on our distribution system. Work will also involve other Village duties as necessary.

Qualifications include 4 years of Journeyman level work, with all certifications. Knowledge of distribution electric systems and substations. Ability to plan, develop strategies and implement ideas for crew leadership while performing line construction duties. Must have the ability to direct subordinate employees.

This is a Union position with the benefits commensurate with negotiated contracts. Salary commensurate with contract. Mail resume to Laurie Walter, Village Clerk, 26 Fennell St., Skaneateles, NY 13152.

Village of Penn Yan Applicants; Employment Ads listed below:

These positions are offering **UP TO A \$25,000 RECRUITMENT BONUS.**

Interested applicants should apply **by Wednesday 2/1/2023** by submitting an application to the Yates County Personnel Office at 417 Liberty St, Penn Yan, NY 14527 or online at

<https://mycivilservice.yatescounty.org/jobopps>.

Candidates will be subject to drug and alcohol testing prior to employment.

The Village of Penn Yan is an equal opportunity employer and a drug free workplace.

Village of Penn Yan: Apprentice Lineworker

The Village of Penn Yan Municipal Electric Department is seeking candidates for the full-time position of 3rd and 4th year Apprentice Lineworker.

This is a trainee position. The applicant must be able to perform manual work in support of the Penn Yan Municipal Electric Line Crew as they complete the 4 year training program. The work requires working in all kinds of weather conditions and rigid observance of safety precautions to protect the lives of themselves and others and is performed under the

direct supervision of the Line Crew Chief, Deputy Line Crew Chief or Senior Lineworker.

Compensation rate is \$33.34 - \$41.35/hour, dependent on years of experience. Penn Yan also offers a competitive benefits package. Please visit <https://www.villageofpennyan.com/employment.html> for more details regarding qualifications, duties, responsibilities and benefits.

Village of Penn Yan: Senior Lineworker

The Village of Penn Yan has an opening for one (1) Senior Lineworker. This is a competitive NYS Civil Service position that is full time, 40 hours per week and subject to Civil Service rules for eligibility.

Compensation rate is \$43.79 to \$48.74/hour, dependent on years of experience, Penn Yan also

offers a competitive benefits package. Please visit <https://www.villageofpennyan.com/employment.html> for more details regarding qualifications, duties, responsibilities and benefits.

Village of Penn Yan: Lineworker

The Village of Penn Yan Municipal Electric Department is seeking candidates for the full-time position of an experienced Electric Lineworker.

Compensation rate is \$41.66 to \$45.95/hour, dependent on years of experience, Penn Yan also offers a competitive benefits package. Please visit <https://www.villageofpennyan.com/employment.html> for more details regarding qualifications, duties, responsibilities and benefits.

Village of Penn Yan: Line Crew Chief

The Village of Penn Yan has an opening for one (1) Line Crew Chief. This is a competitive NYS Civil Service position that is full time, 40 hours per week and subject to Civil Service rules for eligibility.

The applicant will supervise the Line Crew; manage the operational budget and maintain an adequate inventory for the Electric Department; must be able

to perform skilled work in the construction and maintenance of electrical overhead and underground distribution systems, including the rebuilding and maintenance of electrical substations. The work requires climbing poles, working in all kinds of weather conditions and rigid observance of safety precautions to protect the lives of themselves and others.

Compensation rate is \$46.32 - \$52.30, dependent on years of experience, Penn Yan also offers a competitive benefits package. Please visit <https://www.villageofpennyan.com/employment.html> for more details regarding qualifications, duties, responsibilities and benefits.

Village of Penn Yan: Deputy Line Crew Chief

The Village of Penn Yan has an opening for one (1) Deputy Line Crew Chief. This is a competitive NYS Civil Service position that is full time, 40 hours per week and subject to Civil Service rules for eligibility.

Compensation rate is \$44.63 to \$49.59/hour, dependent on years of experience, Penn Yan also offers a competitive benefits package. Please visit <https://www.villageofpennyan.com/employment.html> for more details regarding qualifications, duties, responsibilities and benefits.

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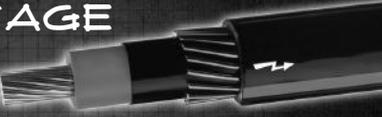
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