MGE Energy (MGEE)

Updated August 20th, 2024 by Samuel Smith

Key Metrics

Current Price:	$87.0	**5 Year CAGR Estimate:**	0.4%	**Market Cap:**	$3.2B
Fair Value Price:	$64.4	**5 Year Growth Estimate:**	4.1%	**Ex-Dividend Date:**	8/30/24
Fair Value:	135%	**5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:**	-5.8%	**Dividend Payment Date:**	9/15/24
Dividend Yield:	2.1%	**5 Year Price Target**	$79	**Years of Dividend Growth:**	47
Dividend Risk Score:	A	**Retirement Suitability Score:**	B	**Rating:**	Sell

Overview & Current Events

MGE Energy has grown from a small power station in Wisconsin built in 1902 to a $3.2 billion market capitalization integrated energy company. The company has paid consecutive dividends for more than 100 years and has raised its payout for the past 47 years. MGE principally operates gas and electric utilities, in addition to transmission and construction businesses.

MGE Energy, Inc. (MGEE) reported its financial results for the second quarter of 2024, showing a decrease in earnings compared to the same period in the previous year. The company recorded GAAP earnings of $23.8 million, or $0.66 per share, down from $28.7 million, or $0.79 per share, in the second quarter of 2023. This decline in earnings was primarily driven by higher fuel costs during 2024, which exceeded the fuel cost plan approved by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW). Additionally, weather conditions contributed to a reduction in electric and gas sales for the quarter, with electric residential sales decreasing by approximately 4% and gas retail sales by about 10% compared to the same period last year. Despite these challenges, MGE Energy continued to benefit from increased investments included in its rate base. For the three months ended June 30, 2024, the company reported operating revenues of $145.7 million, a slight decrease from $148.0 million in the same quarter of 2023. Operating income also declined to $29.7 million from $38.4 million in the previous year. For the first six months of 2024, MGE Energy reported operating revenues of $337.0 million, down from $365.3 million in the same period in 2023. Net income for the first half of the year was $57.6 million, compared to $59.8 million in the first half of 2023, resulting in earnings per share of $1.59, down from $1.65 in the prior year. The company's financial results highlight the impact of higher fuel costs and lower sales due to weather conditions, though it continues to maintain a strong investment base to support future growth.

Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2029
EPS	$2.32	$2.06	$2.18	$2.20	$2.43	$2.50	$2.60	$2.92	$3.07	$3.25	***$3.68***	***$4.50***
DPS	$1.11	$1.16	$1.21	$1.26	$1.35	$1.39	$1.44	$1.52	$1.63	$1.67	***$1.80***	***$2.20***
Shares[1]	34.7	34.7	34.7	34.7	34.7	34.7	36.2	36.2	36.2	36.2	***36.2***	***37.0***

Earnings-per-share have grown consistently over the past decade, though they did encounter a brief bump in the road in 2015. Recent results have been strong, and we believe that between its two sustainable growth catalysts of customer acquisition and renewable asset growth, the company should be able to achieve mid-single-digit earnings-per-share growth going forward. Investors would do well to consider that weather can contribute positively but can easily swing results in the other direction. We see mid-single-digit growth for the dividend as well as MGE is comfortable with where the payout ratio is today. MGE is on par with other utilities in terms of dividend growth in the mid-single digits.

[1] In millions

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Valuation Analysis

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Now	2029
Avg. P/E	17.2	20.3	24.9	22.9	26.7	31.6	27.4	24.9	22.5	20.9	***23.6***	***17.5***
Avg. Yld.	2.8%	2.8%	2.2%	2.5%	2.1%	1.8%	2.0%	2.1%	2.4%	2.5%	***2.1%***	***2.8%***

MGE's price-to-earnings multiple has moved significantly higher in the past half-decade to the mid-20s to low 30s and has since fallen back into the low 20s. It sits at 23.6 times earnings today, and as a result, we believe MGE is still overvalued. The lack of robust earnings growth it has exhibited and a lack of catalysts for it to pick up in the coming years means that the current multiple seems unsustainable. Thus, we are forecasting a headwind to annual total returns in the coming years from multiple contraction. The dividend yield also tells us the stock is overvalued as it is still at the lower end of its range over the past decade. We think the combination of continued payout growth and a stock price that should come down over time will produce a higher, more normalized 2.8% yield against the current 2.1%. The current valuation multiple for MGE has not only made the stock expensive, but it has made the dividend less attractive as well.

Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

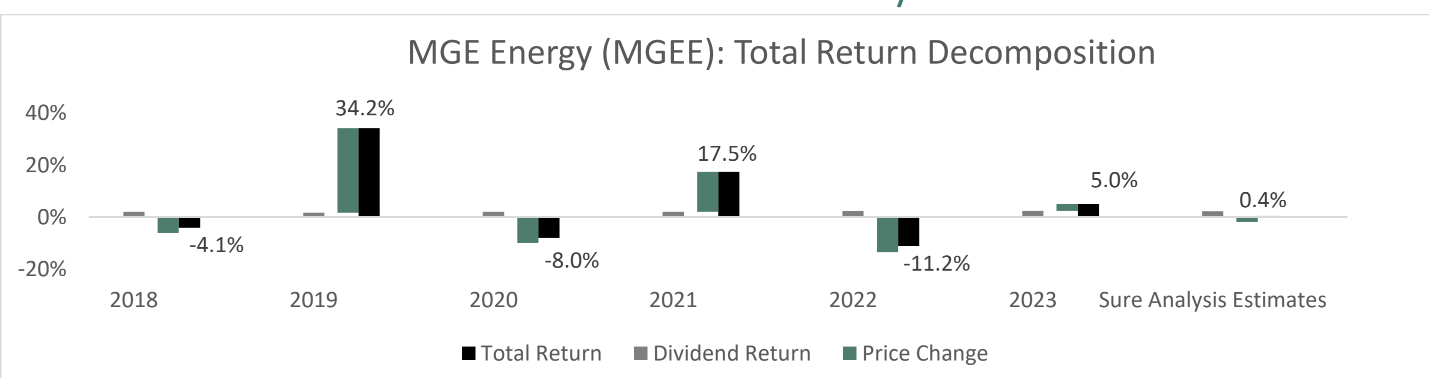
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2029
Payout	48%	56%	56%	57%	56%	56%	55%	52%	53%	51%	***49%***	***49%***

MGE's quality metrics have been roughly flat over the past decade, as it does not go after growth via acquisition, and its business has not really changed. Gross margins have drifted up over time but appear to have plateaued. MGE's interest coverage is outstanding for a utility, and we forecast this will improve slightly over time as earnings grow and MGE keeps its debt at manageable levels. The payout ratio should remain around 50% as dividend growth will likely lag earnings growth, but the two should be very close. Overall, MGE is conservatively financed and run basically the same way year after year, meaning changes in the quality metrics will likely be few and far between. MGE's main competitive advantage is its virtual monopoly in its service area. Like many other utilities, MGE has a small but profitable service area where it is continuing to grow its customer base. That helped it hold up well in the Great Recession as earnings-per-share dipped slightly but then recovered quickly.

Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Overall, MGE appears overvalued right now. We are forecasting total annualized returns for the next five years to be 0.4% as multiple contraction will offset some of the dividend and earnings-per-share growth. MGE has failed to grow its earnings faster than a mid-single-digit rate, but the valuation is pricing in a bit more growth than that. MGE therefore is rated a Sell right now.

Total Return Breakdown by Year



Disclosure: This analyst has no position in the security discussed in this research report, and no plans to initiate one in the next 72 hours.

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Income Statement Metrics

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue	620	564	545	563	560	569	539	607	715	690
Gross Profit	198	188	189	197	190	202	204	214	244	269
Gross Margin	32.0%	33.4%	34.6%	35.0%	33.9%	35.6%	37.9%	35.2%	34.1%	39.0%
Operating Profit	41	44	45	53	56	72	74	77	86	100
Operating Margin	138	124	124	125	114	111	110	117	138	146
Net Profit	22.3%	22.0%	22.7%	22.1%	20.4%	19.5%	20.4%	19.3%	19.3%	21.2%
Net Margin	80	71	76	98	84	87	92	106	111	118
Free Cash Flow	13.0%	12.6%	13.9%	17.3%	15.0%	15.3%	17.2%	17.4%	15.5%	17.0%
Income Tax	36	69	64	23	(59)	(34)	(31)	(16)	(21)	15

Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Assets	1,694	1,726	1,801	1,855	1,989	2,082	2,254	2,372	2,518	2,675
Cash & Equivalents	66	81	96	108	83	23	45	17	12	11
Accounts Receivable	42	37	40	42	44	40	41	46	55	47
Inventories	46	48	41	44	42	45	47	52	74	73
Total Liabilities	1,035	1,036	1,077	1,077	1,172	1,226	1,278	1,344	1,436	1,535
Accounts Payable	42	41	48	48	46	55	55	64	59	65
Long-Term Debt	406	391	387	427	511	543	577	625	710	762
Shareholder's Equity	659	690	724	778	817	856	976	1,027	1,082	1,140
LTD/E Ratio	0.62	0.57	0.53	0.55	0.63	0.64	0.59	0.61	0.66	0.67

Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Return on Assets	4.9%	4.2%	4.3%	5.3%	4.4%	4.3%	4.3%	4.6%	4.5%	4.5%
Return on Equity	12.6%	10.6%	10.7%	13.0%	10.6%	10.4%	10.1%	10.6%	10.5%	10.6%
ROIC	7.7%	6.6%	6.9%	8.4%	6.7%	6.4%	6.3%	6.6%	6.4%	6.4%
Shares Out.	34.7	34.7	34.7	34.7	34.7	34.7	36.2	36.2	36.2	36.2
Revenue/Share	17.88	16.27	15.71	16.24	16.15	16.41	15.13	16.77	19.75	19.08
FCF/Share	1.04	1.99	1.85	0.67	(1.71)	(0.97)	(0.86)	(0.43)	(0.59)	0.43

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.