

**SOUTH HADLEY ELECTRIC LIGHT DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' VIRTUAL MEETING
AUGUST 26, 2021 AT 5:15 P.M.**

Present for the Board: Chairman Gregory Dubreuil, Vice-Chair John Hine, Anne Awad, Kurt Schenker, Peter McAvoy (arrived 5:25)

Present for SHELD: General Manager Sean Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant Kim Mendoza, Financial Manager Michael Conchieri, Sr Engineer Mark Gilmore (arrived 5:18)

The virtual meeting was called to order at 5:15 P.M. by Chairman Dubreuil.

On a motion by Mr. Hine, seconded by Ms. Awad, it was
VOTED: To move to Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 164, for the purpose of discussing competitive negotiations regarding real estate, as discussing in open session may have a detrimental effect on SHELD's negotiating position, and to reconvene in open session at 6:00 PM by roll call vote: Mr. Hine – aye, Ms. Awad – aye, Mr. Schenker – aye, Mr. Dubreuil – aye.

The open session reconvened at 6:00 P.M.

Mr. Dubreuil started the meeting by stating that Vern Blodgett, the previous Vice-Chair of the Board, had recently passed away. After Mr. Dubreuil highlighted some of Mr. Blodgett's accomplishments, he asked for a moment of silence.

Minutes Approval:

7/22/2021 Open Session:

On a motion by Mr. Hine, seconded Ms. Awad, it was
VOTED: To approve the Board of Commissioners' virtual meeting minutes of July 22, 2021, at 6:00PM, by a roll call vote: Mr. Hine – aye, Ms. Awad – aye, Mr. Schenker – aye, Mr. McAvoy - no, Mr. Dubreuil – aye.

Public Comment:

Mr. Joel Patrino stated that Fibersonic was working on his street and while his neighbors were excited, he expressed his concern that people who were not tech savvy were struggling to figure out how to watch TV. He feels there is a lack of resources in town to help them through that process.

Mr. Dubreuil disagreed with Mr. Patrino. He feels that the Fibersonic team has done an extraordinary job in educating people. Mr. Fitzgerald said that there were significant resources invested in the streaming center and events at SHELD where people can get one-on-one help and instruction. There are also educational videos posted on the website and the technicians are directed to spend extra time with customer education in the home. There have been educational events at the library, and other places, and while it's a challenge to reach every customer,

Fibersonic is exceeding its take rate and outperforming comparable projects in the 2-year period. Ms. Awad suggested the possibility of seeking out volunteers who could help people who are struggling with streaming.

Manager's Report:

An intense storm on August 12th caused an outage on Industrial Drive after 2 poles and a transformer came down. Another transformer, on Lyman Street, tripped during this same storm but had a lesser impact. The oppressive heat index and damage made the job a challenge. Tropical Storm Henri caused two outages, one on Pearl Street and one on East Street. The forecast initially was calling for much stronger wind speeds and storm damage, so SHELD prepared for a far worse storm than materialized. SHELD had all personnel available and participated in Western Mass Public Utilities Commission's (WEMPUC) emergency planning activities which included pre-storm mobilization of mutual aid crews and equipment should we have experienced severe damage. Fortunately, we dodged a major bullet and were able to release standby crews Monday morning.

SHELD is open and available for customers to come to the streaming center to learn about Fibersonic and streaming. There are 16 constructed fiberhoods with construction continuing to move at a good pace. Sales are above expectations, approaching a 40% take rate. The staff spends lots of time on the phones helping customers and inviting them to come to the streaming center for education. Our techs will go out to homes to help solve issues, usually on the same day we are called.

Seabrook and Milestone nuclear generators are audited quarterly for safety. Both have received exemplary ratings from the three regulatory agencies for the past three years. The audit agencies are the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and an independent third-party nuclear audit agency Polestar. Mr. McAvoy asked for a copy of the reports.

June 2021 Financial Report:

Mr. Conchieri referenced PowerPoint slides as he gave a brief overview of the financials for the month ending June 30, 2021.

Kilowatt hour sales for 2021 were up by 1.8% from 2020, or 959,000 kilowatt hours. Year-to-date operating revenues were up by .2% from 2020, or about \$10,000. The \$10,000 increase consisted of an increase of \$124,000 in volume and a decrease of \$114,000 in selling price. We had budgeted for a \$325,000 revenue decrease; the actual was a \$335,000 increase.

The 2021-kilowatt hour purchases were up by 2.9% from 2020, or 1,513,000. The 2021 cost of power sold at \$4,478,000 was up by about 6.9% from 2020, or \$290,000. The \$290,000 consisted of an increase of \$119,000 in kilowatt hour purchase volume, and an increase of \$171,000 due to a higher purchase price. We had budgeted for a cost decrease of \$315,000; the actual was a \$604,000 increase.

The increase in revenue was more than an increase in the cost of power; therefore, the net

revenue was up from 2020 by \$13,000. The actual net revenue was down from the budgeted amount by \$192,000. All other 2021 operating expenses of \$3,353,000 were up from 2020 by about \$534,000 and up from the budgeted amount by \$494,000.

April 2021 ended with a net YTD loss of about \$418,000, compared to the 2020 net YTD loss of \$63,000 and was short of the budgeted amount of a \$273,000 profit.

Titans Pier Road:

This topic was tabled until the next meeting.

2021 Employee Survey:

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that SHELD has conducted Employee Surveys for the past three years and he displayed a graph of those results for each category: Job & Work Conditions, Supervisor Performance, Management Performance, Company Satisfaction, and Benefits. We have maintained consistent ratings year after year. A few ratings slid slightly because of the effect COVID had on the company over the past year, such as being unable to have in person trainings or company meetings. The line crews went straight to job sites and back home, without coming into the building. Overall, the results are very good.

Safe & Sustainable Education Program Award:

SHELD received state recognition for our commitment to safety education. SHELD received two awards of recognition, one from the State Senate and one from the House of Representatives.

SHELD is pleased to share these with the board in recognition of our commitment to electrical safety in South Hadley. None of this would be possible without the services provided by Mr. Ray Gouley who develops and delivers effective safety education programs.

Old Business:

None

New Business:


None

Adjourn:

On a motion by Mr. Hine and seconded by Ms. Awad, the meeting was

VOTED: to adjourn by a roll call vote: Mr. Hine – aye, Ms. Awad – aye, Mr. Schenker – aye, Mr. McAvoy - aye, Mr. Dubreuil – aye.

The open session ended at 6:32 P.M.



Anne Awad, Clerk

Approved: September 23, 2021

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents reviewed at the August 26, 2021, Municipal Light Board Meeting

1. Draft Open Session Minutes July 22, 2021
2. Financial Statements Ending June 30,2021
3. 2021 SHELLED Employee Survey
4. Safe & Sustainable Awards from the State Senate and House