

# *Electric Light Department*

## *Town of South Hadley*

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### **SOUTH HADLEY ELECTRIC LIGHT DEPARTMENT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL NOVEMBER 30, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Present for Board: Anne Awad, John Hine, Gregory Dubreuil, Vernon Blodgett, Kurt Schenker

Present for Staff: Paul Byrne – Interim Co-Manager

Ms. Awad convened the Open meeting at 7:01 PM.

#### **Interview of candidate for General Manager:**

Ms. Awad indicated that this meeting was to interview the final candidate, Sean Fitzgerald, for the General Manager position. Ms. Awad gave some background on how they engaged a professional search consultant and indicated that Mr. Fitzgerald spent the day at SHEL D meeting with staff, Board members and touring the facilities.

The Board then asked Mr. Fitzgerald several questions (attached), for the benefit of the Public, starting with asking him for a summary of his background.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated he started in the power business at ISO New England, where all electricity in New England is controlled and energy is traded, as a recruiter and worked his way into Market Support. He then worked for MMWEC, Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company as a Municipal Relations Manager. For the past 6 years he has worked at Westfield Gas & Electric as the Key Accounts and Customer Service Manager managing public relations, customer service, fiber optic marketing communications and renewable energy business development.

The Board members asked Mr. Fitzgerald to comment on topics such as his experience in working with Boards, his vision for SHEL D in the future and what he sees as the benefits of fiber optics and renewable energy sources.

Mr. Fitzgerald spoke about his experience in working with Boards at MMWEC. He sees the expansion of fiber optics as the future for SHEL D. He feels his business background experience, on the wholesale power side of the business, would benefit SHEL D.

He mentioned that there are several ways to go about incorporating renewable energy programs. Renewables can be more expensive to purchase but there are Federal and State incentives that would lower the price. He would look at what other communities are doing, as options going forward, and have discussions with the Board and Ratepayers so they would know how each choice would affect their rates. It would take some investigation to decide which would be best opportunity for SHELD. Mr. Fitzgerald also feels that customer satisfaction feedback is very important. It helps steer the direction of renewable energy, rebate and solar programs and he would seek more ways to obtain information from the community.

Mr. Fitzgerald's career goals include a position with more responsibilities and challenges. He sees the General Manager opportunity at SHELD offering him the ability to grow. He looks forward to building a strong rapport partnering with Town officials.

Mr. Fitzgerald's top three priorities to address, should he be hired, would be fiber optics, internal efficiencies and renewable energy.

After a few follow up questions from the Board, Ms. Awad asked Mr. Fitzgerald if he had any questions for them. He asked the Board about their plan for hiring the Manager. Ms. Awad stated the plan is to interview him tonight and then take a formal vote on whether to make an offer to him, at the next meeting, on December 7. He also asked about the terms of the Board members and the continuity of the Board moving forward. Ms. Awad said the Board terms were staggered and it would take three years to completely turn over the Board. Ms. Awad then asked that people attending or watching the meeting to send feedback to her at [aawad@sheld.org](mailto:aawad@sheld.org) before next week's meeting. Ms. Awad thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for the time he put into the process.

**Review Proposals for Audit Services and Vote to Award:**

Mr. Dubreuil reviewed the process that was used to go out to bid for Auditor for 2016-2018. The RFP was sent to 10 firms with 5 responding. Mr. Dubreuil and Ms. Awad independently reviewed each of them and arrived at the same opinion, which was, that Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP was the top firm. They are a little more expensive but are a National firm and have more services to offer. They will help with organizational planning and will look at risk. They also have experience, in Massachusetts, in the utility industry.

The SHELD staff recommended staying with Melanson Heath & Co, P.C., who did last year's audit, since it was nearing the end of the year.

Mr. Dubreuil and Ms. Awad felt that Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP has deeper resources and will add additional year-round support to a new Manager. This information was reinforced when references were checked. Therefore their recommendation to the Board was for Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP for the next three years.

Mr. Hine thanked Ms. Awad and Mr. Dubreuil for the work they did on this project.

On a motion made by Mr. Hine and seconded by Mr. Dubreuil, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept Baker Tilly Virchow Krause for Audit services.

Mr. Dubreuil thanked Ms. Awad and Mr. Blodgett for all their efforts on the search process for the General Manager.

Ms. Awad, in turn, thanked Scott Fry from Mycoff Fry & Prouse LLC for all the work he did, as the Search Consultant for the Manager search, by handling all the details of the process and moving it along.

**Adjourn:**

Ms. Awad asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Hine moved and Mr. Blodgett seconded a motion to adjourn. The vote was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:53 P.M.

The next meeting is December 7, 2016 at 6:30 P.M. in the Selectboard Meeting Room.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Dubreuil', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Greg Dubreuil, Clerk

Approved: January 26, 2017