



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL
FEBRUARY 22, 2018 AT 6:30 P.M.**

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

Present for staff: General Manager Sean Fitzgerald, IT/Office Manager Paul Byrne and Administrative Assistant Kim Mendoza

The Open Session convened at 6:31 P.M.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Minutes Approval:

1/11/18 Open Session

On a motion made by Mr. Blodgett and seconded by Mr. Schenker, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the Open Session of January 11, 2018 meeting.

1/11/18 Executive Session

On a motion made by Mr. Blodgett and seconded by Mr. Schenker, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Executive Session minutes of the January 11, 2018 meeting and to release the minutes.

1/25/18 Open Session

On a motion made by Mr. Blodgett and seconded by Mr. Schenker, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve January 25, 2018 Open Session meeting minutes of the Board.

1/25/18 Executive Session

On a motion made by Mr. Blodgett and seconded by Mr. Schenker, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the Executive Session of January 25, 2018 and to release the minutes.

Manager's Report:

Outages:

There was one electrical outage in the last month, when a transformer failed. The thirteen customers on Granby Road were without power for five hours while the transformer was replaced.

Historical Outage Statistics:

Mr. Fitzgerald presented information on SHELD's System Reliability for the years 2013-2017. He then compared those statistics to the information from other regional utilities for 2015, as those were the most current figures available. SHELD's statistics are in line with other Northeast utilities and we have a very

high reliability of 99.99%. He then gave the definitions of the reliability metrics used in compiling the statistics.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated he was very proud of work that the Operations department does to keep us at that level. SHELD's advantage is having local control and local crews who know the system and can make repairs very quickly.

Online Bill Pay Usage:

Mr. Byrne presented information on the different ways customers can pay their bills. He explained the payment comparison graph which showed that SHELD collects more than 90,000 payments a year in three ways. The SHELD Portal was introduced in November of 2013 and is part of the SEDC billing system. The portal accepts manual and automatic payments. Ratepayers can make payments using their checking account information or a credit card. In 2017 SHELD instituted the Interactive Response System (IVR) which allows customers to make payments over the phone 24/7. Portal payments have increased by more than ten thousand over the past four years. In 2014 there were about 7,800 payments made through the portal, increasing to 18,500 in 2017. The portal also allows customers to view current and past invoices and payments. As the payment numbers increase, with use of the portal or customer's personal banks, the amount of processing that needs to be done in the office decreases.

Another payment category is the walk-in/drop off payments, which also includes the mail. The walk-in payments can be made by cash, check or credit card and have decreased by ten thousand over the past four years. The new cash registers, that were installed last summer, allow us to separate the number of walk-ins from the mail. SHELD accepts approximately 1,600 walk-in payments and 2,400 mail-in payments per month. These payments show immediately on customer accounts.

The last category is payments made through a customer's personal bank. These numbers have remained steady over the past four years, at approximately 20,000 per year. When customers use their bank's online payment system, the payments go through a clearing house and SEDC applies the payments to the customer accounts but, these payments have a couple of days' delay before showing on the customer's account.

Mr. Byrne stated that SHELD's systems are very secure. We are working with a vendor to upgrade the firewalls. Online payments go through SEDC, our billing system vendor. Their system is very secure. We are paying for added security. A customer's checking account number or personal information is not saved or seen by SHELD employees.

The processing of payments made through the mail, which is handled in the office, will be undergoing some automation also. Barcodes on the customer bills will allow us to scan customers' payment slips and we are now also scanning customer checks into the bank. Automation allows us to reduce errors and be more efficient in posting payments.

Year-End Rebate Summary:

Mr. Fitzgerald presented a summary of the rebates from the HELPS and GO Rebate Programs for 2017. Residents took advantage of 64 rebates, totaling \$8,470.00. These rebates were on several things ranging from energy efficient appliances to efficient heating and cooling units and insulation. On the commercial side, 8 companies took advantage of rebates to upgrade their facility lighting for a total of \$70,770.00. Commercial customers can receive up to \$25,000 to improve efficiency in their buildings.



South Hadley Electric Light DEPARTMENT

Mr. Hine asked how the rebates are funded. Mr. Fitzgerald explained that MMWEC manages the programs but the funds are from SHELD's general funds which come from the ratepayers. SHELD budgeted \$150,000 for rebates this year. Mr. Fitzgerald intends to promote these programs more going forward. The rebates that are currently available are on SHELD's website.

Strategic Planning Agenda:

The Board was given an outline of seven topics for discussion for the Strategic Planning meeting taking place at SHELD on March 5-6. The Board is scheduled to attend on March 5 from 1:00-5:00 P.M.

The vendor indicated the Board should set expectations pertaining to technology, the direction SHELD should go, and the vision for the future. Mr. Fitzgerald asked the Board if there were any initiatives he had left off the list that they would like to see included.

Ms. Awad stated she would like to see something related to community relations, education and marketing on the list. Mr. Dubreuil commented that SHELD does more than provide electricity for the Town. He would like to include SHELD's future role in the community, the growth of social responsibility, and building relationships in Town as well as with other area munis. Mr. Fitzgerald agreed that they were good suggestions and said he would add them to the initiatives.

New Business

There was none.

Adjourn:

On a motion by Ms. Awad and seconded by Mr. Blodgett, it was

VOTED: to convene in Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation. Mr. Dubreuil made a declaration that to have this discussion in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Municipal Light Board, and moved not to reconvene in Open Session, with the Board unanimously voting in favor of this motion

By a roll call vote; Hine-aye, Blodgett-aye, Awad-aye, Schenker-aye, Dubreuil-aye.

The Open Session ended at 7:12 P.M.



Anne Awad, Clerk

Approved: March 22, 2018

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents reviewed at the February 22, 2018 Municipal Light Board Meeting

1. Draft Open Session Minutes of the MLB January 11, 2018
2. Draft Executive Session Minutes of the MLB January 11, 2018
3. Draft Open Session Minutes of the MLB January 25, 2018
4. Draft Executive Session Minutes of the MLB January 25, 2018
5. Outages 2/19/2018 YTD
6. 2017 Year-End Reliability Metrics
7. Historical Reliability Values
8. Payment Comparison 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
9. HELPS and GO Programs 2017 Final Report