

Electric Light Department

Town of South Hadley

85 Main Street
South Hadley, MA 01075-2797

Telephone 413-536-1050
Fax 413-536-0741

MINUTES OF THE MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD MEETING OF TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015, AT 4:30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Jeffrey Labrecque, Vice Chair
Christine M. Archambault, Clerk
Peter Webster, Member

Also Attending:

Attorney John Welch
Wayne D. Doerpholz
Michael Conchieri
Andrew Orr
Steven King, Axia
Marc Bouvier, Axia
Philip Leaman, Consultant for SHELD

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Jeffrey Labrecque at 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Doerpholz announced that he was recording the meeting on behalf of the Municipal Light Board.

Minutes – October 30, 2014

Following a discussion, it was noted that Commissioner Webster was not yet on the Municipal Light Board on that date and, therefore, would not vote, on motion made by Commissioner Archambault, seconded by Vice Chair Labrecque, it was voted 2-0 with 1 abstention to accept the minutes of the meeting of October 30, 2014 as amended

Minutes – November 18, 2014

There being no need for a discussion, it was noted that Commissioner Webster was not yet on the Municipal Light Board on that date and, therefore, would not vote, on motion made by Commissioner Archambault, seconded by Vice Chair Labrecque, it was voted 2-0 with 1 abstention to accept the minutes of the meeting of November 18, 2014 as presented.

Electric Light Department

Town of South Hadley

*MINUTES OF THE MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD MEETING OF
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015, AT 4:30 P.M., continued*

Minutes – December 2, 2014

There being no need for a discussion, it was noted that Commissioner Webster was not yet on the Municipal Light Board on that date and, therefore, would not vote, on motion made by Commissioner Archambault, seconded by Vice Chair Labrecque, it was voted 2-0 with 1 abstention to accept the minutes of the meeting of December 2, 2014 as presented.

Minutes – December 16, 2014

Following a discussion, it was noted that Commissioner Webster was not yet on the Municipal Light Board on that date and, therefore, would not vote, on motion made by Commissioner Archambault, seconded by Vice Chair Labrecque, it was voted 2-0 with 1 abstention to accept the minutes of the meeting of December 16, 2014 as amended.

Minutes – Joint Meeting with Selectboard – January 6, 2015

Following a discussion, it was noted that Commissioner Webster was not yet on the Municipal Light Board on that date and, therefore, would not vote, on motion made by Commissioner Archambault, seconded by Vice Chair Labrecque, it was voted 2-0 with 1 abstention to accept the minutes of the joint meeting with the Selectboard of January 6, 2015 as presented.

Minutes – January 20, 2015

There being no need for a discussion, on motion made by Commissioner Archambault, seconded by Vice Chair Labrecque, it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the meeting of January 20, 2015 as presented.

Meeting with Axia regarding FTTH

At Mr. Doerpholz's request, the Board agreed to move the meeting with AXIA forward on the agenda. Mr. Doerpholz then introduced Mr. Steven King and Mr. Marc Bouvier of AXIA and Mr. Phil Leaman, consultant to SHELD on fiber designs. Mr. Bouvier introduced himself as Sales Director for AXIA in Massachusetts. He gave a brief overview of AXIA and mentioned that AXIA is the Run the Network Operator (RTNO) for the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) system. He mentioned the relationship between AXIA and SHELD and made positive comments regarding the Stonybrook facility. He added that AXIA has been fortunate to establish a relationship with South Hadley Electric Light Department and The Village Commons. He mentioned that The Village Commons was the first of what AXIA hopes to continue to work

Electric Light Department

Town of South Hadley

*MINUTES OF THE MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD MEETING OF
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015, AT 4:30 P.M., continued*

with SHELD to bring dedicated fiber, bidirectional bandwidth to each home and business in South Hadley and that this would be a great benefit for the municipality to take advantage of.

Mr. Bouvier continued by updating the Board on the infrastructure already in place at The Village Commons, that it is now live and connected to the internet and that customers may now subscribe to the AXIA network and have access to the internet at very low costs at very high bandwidth speeds.

Mr. Bouvier stated the pricing for the business applications as \$109.00/mo. for 50MBS, \$209.00/mo. for 100MBS, & \$309.00/mo. for 1GBS – less for a customer signing a two year commitment and a nominal \$75 installation fee. For the residential customers, the offering is 100MBS for \$59.00/mo. or 1GBS/mo for \$79.00/mo. Mr. Bouvier added that all quoted internet speeds or bandwidth are symmetrical or bi-directional unlike other internet providers. Mr. Leaman added that the system AXIA is providing will be the first active optical network in western Massachusetts. Mr. Bouvier added that the service that COMCAST is providing is a “best effort” service and he described this as a service shared throughout the community with 5MBS upload and 20MBS download but without guarantee on the bandwidth.

Several other questions were raised and answered regarding SHELD financial involvement in the AXIA beta site, return on investment, extensions of the fiber to other areas of Town, questions regarding bidding the project, etc.

Succession Plan

Vice Chair Labrecque asked Mr. Doerpholz to update the Board on past work on the Succession Plan and plans for the future. Mr. Doerpholz stated that, in 2012, a plan was developed to reorganize staff and divide the operations into three parts: administrative, operations and engineering. He further explained the plan for filling positions and indicated that adding a financial manager was the first step and, to implement the new software, an IT manager has been added. Vice Chair Labrecque commented that, several years ago, the Board members felt it was important to think of the future needs of SHELD and how to keep the “tribal knowledge” acquired by employees over the years. Vice Chair Labrecque then stated that the Board should keep this matter on the table and continue to move forward.

Payment In-Lieu of Tax (PILOT)

Vice Chair Labrecque recognized Mr. Mike Conchieri to speak to the Board about the status of the Payment In-Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) and its history. Mr. Conchieri discussed the formula that has been agreed upon and used as a guide for many years. A discussion continued about the level funding of the PILOT over the past few years, whether SHELD has in fact been overpaying and that the amount is a matter to be agreed upon by the Board each year. Mr. Conchieri

Electric Light Department

Town of South Hadley

*MINUTES OF THE MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD MEETING OF
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015, AT 4:30 P.M., continued*

continued with an explanation on how our facilities are depreciated. Commissioner Archambault stated that the town does not agree that the amounts of the PILOT are over and above the amounts in the formula. Attorney Welch then informed the Board that a PILOT should only be paid by a municipal light department from surplus and, if the department has a loss for the year, it should not be making the payment from a loss. After further discussion, it was agreed that the Board members would review the information given to them before any meeting with Mr. Sullivan.

LED Lighting

Vice Chair Labrecque then recognized Mr. Andy Orr to give an update on the LED lighting for the Town. Mr. Orr explained that SHELDT had looked at the current mast streetlight population and that he visited every street to come up with a proposal for the Town. Mr. Doerpholz stated that he met with Mr. Sullivan to explain the proposal and left it with him. Mr. Doerpholz explained the work involved by Mr. Orr and what should still be done to engineer the project. He told the Board that Mr. Sullivan indicated via email that they would like to reduce the number of lights even though the increase in the number of recommended lights would still result in an annual savings to the Town. Following a further discussion, it was suggested that Mr. Doerpholz reach out to the Town Administrator, since the number of lights and their placements are under the control of the Selectboard, to make him aware of the options: to do only the 320 lights initially agreed on, to do a one-for-one replacement or to review the new design.

Training for Municipal Light Board Members

Mr. Doerpholz indicated that he had contacted other municipal utilities to inquire about their policy on training for Board members and only one had responded. Attorney Welch explained that Westfield gets a monthly list of opportunities and the Board then decides who, if anyone, will participate. Mr. Doerpholz indicated that APPA had a webinar on legal obligations, duties and responsibilities of public governing boards on March 26th from 2:00 to 3:30 and that he would forward the information to each member.

Next Meeting

Mr. Doerpholz told the Board that it had scheduled the next meeting for April 14th, which is the election date. Vice Chair Labrecque then changed the next meeting to Wednesday, April 15, 2015, at 4:30 p.m. for a reorganization of the Board. The following meeting was set for Tuesday, May 12, 2015.

Electric Light Department

Town of South Hadley

*MINUTES OF THE MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD MEETING OF
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015, AT 4:30 P.M., continued*

Correspondence

Vice Chair Labrecque indicated that the first correspondence was from the South Hadley Public Schools for a luncheon on Wednesday, March 4th. He added that he had attended the luncheon, but not as a Commissioner.

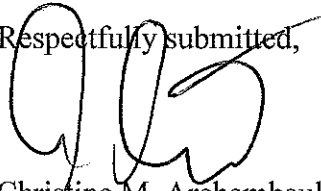
Vice Chair Labrecque said the next correspondence was a copy of a letter from the Town Democratic Committee that had actually been received by all Board members by email and had been published in the *Republican*.

Vice Chair Labrecque indicated that the next correspondence was an Open Meeting Law Complaint brought by Mr. Doerpholz that included sensitive information that would need to be reviewed.

Adjournment

On motion by Commissioner Archambault, seconded by Commissioner Webster, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Christine M. Archambault, Clerk
Municipal Light Board

6/24/15