

Electric Light Department

Town of South Hadley

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MINUTES OF THE MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THURSDAY MARCH 23, 2017 SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL

Present: Anne Awad, Chair
Vern Blodgett, Vice Chair
John Hine
Kurt Schenker
Gregory Dubreuil, Clerk

Also Present: Sean Fitzgerald

The Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining relative to the IBEW Contract because discussing in Open Session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of SHELD was called to order at 7:50 P.M. by Chair Anne Awad following the unanimous roll call vote in Open Session.

Sean Fitzgerald informed the Board that the IBEW contract ends on June 30, 2017 and that we should be receiving official notice of its termination directly from the IBEW. Mr. Fitzgerald has thoroughly reviewed the contract and has thoughts as to how we should proceed.

Chair Awad noted that we should try to have those benefits in the Contract as closely aligned with those of other SHELD staff as possible. Mr. Fitzgerald acknowledged. Mr. Fitzgerald noted there is a difference in vacation time for employees hired after a certain date. He said there are two employees who are impacted by the difference and these employees must be employed for a longer period, ten years, prior to achieving three weeks' vacation. He is recommending a uniform vacation policy be part of the negotiations. In addition he noted there is a waiting period for new employees preventing them from taking vacation in their first year of employment. He also recommends we allow vacation in the first year of employment. The Board had no objections.

Mr. Fitzgerald then discussed wage increases. For the past several years the contract provided a 3.0% annual increase. All felt the 3.0% was too generous and did not accurately reflect cost of living increases in the area. Mr. Fitzgerald agreed; however, he noted that the Chicopee, Holyoke and Westfield contracts all provided 3.0%. Mr. Hine suggested that we utilize data on other town employees and negotiate an increase consistent with those employees. Mr. Fitzgerald said although we may be able to utilize those figures to a degree, the IBEW will look to compare to increases for other electric workers rather than workers in other professions. Mr. Schenker noted that high increases in health care and retirement costs should also be used as a bargaining tool. The Board agreed that Mr. Fitzgerald should start low and negotiate from there.

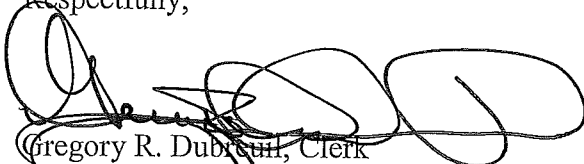
Mr. Fitzgerald also noted he will work to add performance based criteria in the evaluation process of the employees under the contract.

Mr. Fitzgerald also requested the approval to use Jack Welch only for the contract negotiations given his familiarity with the process and the IBEW. Mr. Fitzgerald knows there were some issues between Mr. Welch and the Board, as well as questions as to his representation of a former employee vs. the Department. After some discussion the Board agreed that Mr. Welch could be used only for the IBEW negotiations and contract process.

Adjournment

A motion made by John Hine and seconded by Kurt Schenker to adjourn the Executive Session was voted unanimously by a roll call vote; Hine-aye, Schenker-aye, Awad-aye, Dubreuil-aye, Blodgett-aye. The Executive Session adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully,



Gregory R. Dubreuil, Clerk
Municipal Light Board

April 27, 2017