

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
SHELD, 85 MAIN STREET, SOUTH HADLEY, MA  
MAY 2, 2018 at 1:00 PM**

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

Present for staff: General Manager Sean Fitzgerald, Michael Conchieri, Paul Byrne, Ed Morrin, Mark Gilmore, Kim Mendoza, Jonathan Szymonik, Greg St. Onge

Guest: Steve VanderMeer, Hometown Connections

The meeting was called to order by Gregory Dubreuil, Chair.

Mr. VanderMeer re-introduced himself as the Strategic Planning facilitator from Hometown Connections. He reviewed some of his background and information on Hometown Connections. He also talked about the background of Public Power Utilities and the IOUs (Investor Owned Utilities). He reviewed how to build a strategic plan and the eight steps of the strategic planning process.

Mr. VanderMeer outlined the progress the Implementation Team (SHELD Staff) had made since their first meeting on March 5. He explained to the Advisory Team (the Board) that the first step that the Implementation Team took was to develop 'themes' or priorities for SHELD's future. Then the themes were narrowed down. After a discussion on each topic, a possible 'end' statement was written. The end statements summarized the desired outcome for each theme. This had been completed earlier in the day. Now the Implementation Team will present the information to the Advisory Board who will add their ideas. It will then get passed back to the Implementation Team for fine tuning. These steps will then be followed by building in the goals, which will drive the action plans. The Advisory Team may decide to develop some plans for itself too. It is important to focus on the key issues, build a plan by establishing goals, take action, and be able to measure the progress of each action.

The Implementation Team presented each of the Themes to the Advisory Team. Paul Byrne spoke about Customer Engagement. Paul listed all the improvements SHELD had made recently, along with things that could be done in the future to promote customer relationships. There was a discussion and the Board also added their ideas on the topic. SHELD needs to look for new ways to engage customers. The Board needs to investigate ways to learn more about all of the customers and what is important to them. The possible end statement could be: To increase and improve the customer experience between SHELD and its customers.

Greg St. Onge presented the second theme, which is Community Development/Enhanced Quality of Life. Greg highlighted the ways in which SHELD is currently adding value to the community. There was a discussion of additional ways SHELD could improve community engagement and possibly be a catalyst for community development. It was agreed that everyone is committed to enhancing the quality of life in South Hadley.

Mr. Dubreuil thinks this is where the greatest opportunity lies and it would be in everyone's best interest to try and make South Hadley a better place to live. The possible end statement could be: To add value to the community while maintaining competitive rates.

Michael Conchieri highlighted the third theme, which is Finance. He stated that SHELd is in solid shape but also mentioned some things that needed more attention. It is important to maximize the ratepayers' investments while being careful how we spend their money. A strong financial position gives SHELd the opportunity to look at where it wants to be in the future. It was mentioned that the Board should work on fostering community conversations. The possible end statement could be: To maintain and enhance financial stability while ensuring long term viability.

The fourth theme is Reliability. Mark Gilmore stated that SHELd does a great job keeping the lights on. The plant, poles and wires are in great shape. Customers judge us on our reliability. There are some concerns, for the future, that are being addressed. Solar could have an impact on the circuits. The ability to build more circuit ties, with neighboring towns, is very important since there is only one substation. The possible end statement could be: To maintain and enhance system reliability and redundancy of power sources.

Sean Fitzgerald presented the final theme of Workforce. He stated that OSHA is introducing more regulations for MLPs and SHELd is updating its recordkeeping to comply. SHELd will need to leverage technology to improve the workforce, conditions, communication and transparency. SHELd, and the industry, has an aging workforce with many employees eligible to retire over the next 5 years. The hope is to upgrade some technologies which will require a more modern workforce. We need to think about where we will get qualified people to replace those who will be leaving. SHELd has implemented performance evaluations and more training for staff. After a discussion by the Board, it was also suggested that internal employee surveys may be a helpful tool. The possible end statement could be: In order to respond to a rapidly changing environment, SHELd will develop and sustain an empowered, well-trained and highly competent team.

Once the Implementation Team finished presenting the five themes, Mr. VanderMeer asked if they had left anything out that should be a priority. Mr. Schenker asked about the new building. He said he didn't see it mentioned anywhere. Mr. VanderMeer explained that it was an end goal that could fall under several of the themes. He said he would be returning for another session, in about a month, and thought that a discussion about a new building, renewables, and the possibility of broadband would be helpful in determining where SHELd wants to be in the future.

Mr. Dubreuil stated that he was enjoying the process and being able to work closely with the staff. Since the Light Board meetings are at night, and several Commissioners have day jobs, it makes it difficult to interact with the staff at SHELd. He was looking forward to continuing to work on the plan with them.

**Adjourn:**

On a motion by Mr. Hine and seconded by Mr. Schenker, it was unanimously  
VOTED: to adjourn.

The meeting ended at 4:09 PM.

  
Peter McAvoy, Clerk

Approved: May 24, 2018