



**SOUTH HADLEY ELECTRIC LIGHT DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' HYBRID MEETING
TRUSTEES ROOM AT THE LIBRARY
MAY 22, 2025, AT 5:15 P.M.**

Present for the Board: Chair John Hine, Vice Chair Paul Dobosh, Ron Coutu, Tom Terry, Darren Hamilton

Present for SHELD: General Manager Sean Fitzgerald, Director of Operations Adam St. Martin, Administrative Services Specialist Kim Mendoza, Finance Manager Michael Conchieri

Guest: John MacMillan, Architect, Caolo & Bieniek Associates, Inc.

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 5:15 PM by Chair John Hine.

Reorganization of the Board:

The Board decided to push the election of new officers to 6:00PM, when the Board would reconvene open session.

Chair John Hine then stated that the Board would move to executive session for the purposes of discussing trade secrets, confidential, competitively sensitive, or other propriety information pertaining to fiber projects AND pursuant to M.G.L. c.164, § 47D, to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property, and return to open session at approximately 6:00PM.

On a motion by Mr. Terry, seconded by Mr. Dobosh, it was unanimously VOTED: To move to executive session for the reasons stated by the Chair and return to open session at approximately 6:00 PM.

The Board returned to open session at 6:00 PM.

Reorganization of the Board:

Mr. Hine explained that each year, after the Town elections of new board members, the Board must elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk. Mr. Hine asked for nominations.

Mr. Coutu stated that he felt that reorganization of the board should be a change in leadership and should rotate each year. Mr. Coutu nominated himself for Chair. Mr. Dobosh nominated Mr. Hine, stating that there are several public relations projects this year and he felt Mr. Hine's town official experience would be an asset to the Board. Mr. Hine asked for a roll call vote: Mr. Coutu voted for Mr. Coutu, Mr. Terry voted for Mr. Hine, Mr. Hine voted for Mr. Hine, Mr. Dobosh voted for Mr. Hine, and Mr. Hamilton voted for Mr. Hine. Mr. Hine would remain as Chair.

For Vice Chair: Mr. Coutu nominated himself. Mr. Hine nominated Mr. Dobosh. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Hamilton voted for Mr. Dobosh, Mr. Dobosh voted for Mr. Dobosh, Mr. Hine voted for Mr. Dobosh, Mr. Terry voted for Mr. Coutu. Mr. Coutu voted for Mr. Coutu. Mr. Dobosh would remain as Vice Chair.

For Clerk: Mr. Hine nominated Mr. Hamilton. The roll call vote was unanimous: Mr. Hamilton is the new Clerk.

Minutes Approval:

4/24/2025 Open Session:

On a motion by Mr. Coutu, seconded by Mr. Dobosh, it was unanimously
VOTED: To approve the minutes of April 24, 2025, open session.

Public Comment:

There were none.

Manager's Report:

Outages: There were two minimal outages. One on Sullivan Lane due to a blown fuse affecting 11 customers for 1.5 hours, and one on Kendrick Street from animal contact causing a blown fuse which impacted 42 customers for 26 minutes.

Fiberspring Update: A summary of fiber call statistics this past month was displayed. Slide #1 had all telecom calls broken down by town: South Hadley, Shutesbury, and Leverett and showed the volume of calls, the types of calls received, the number of escalations, and the number of truck rolls. Mr. Coutu would like to see the results over a period of time. Slide #2 showed 100% network uptime between HG&E and Fiberspring.

The Longmeadow fiber project design is being finalized. The team is in the process of scheduling a meeting to present the design to Longmeadow and discuss submitting pole applications. The first fiberhood to be constructed has been identified. Longmeadow will have to designate funds to move forward.

December 2024 Financials:

Mr. Conchieri displayed an overview of December 2024 financials. It was a slightly better year than 2023. The power markets remained stable, and the investments markets returned positive results. 2024 current assets and current liabilities were consistent with 2023. 2024 restricted assets increased by \$857,000 from 2023, due to the replenishment of the rate stabilization fund and earnings on investments. Total capital assets increased by about \$1,600,000, consisting of continued telecom plant expansion, completion of the AMI conversion, and upgrades and renewals to the electric distribution system.

During 2024, long-term liabilities decreased by \$607,000 from 2023. The decrease was attributable to a small decrease in the benefits liabilities and payment on long-term debt. SHELD increased its net position by about \$1,750,000.

2024 kilowatt hour sales were up from 2023 by 1.1% or about 1.1 million. SHELD has not yet seen the impact of "electrification". While there are ongoing conversions, new demand is currently being offset by efficiency measures.

2024 revenues increased by about \$1.8 million over 2023. This increase was from both electric and telecom business. 2024 kWh purchased increased by about 3.3 million and the cost of power sold increased about \$569,000. 87% of SHELD's 2024 power supply was derived from non-carbon emitting sources.

SHELD's other operating expenses were up from 2023 by about \$589,000. Overall wages increased due to an increase in the number of employees to facilitate a smooth succession process and a reduction in capitalized construction projects. Pension and benefit costs remained stable. Supplies and expenses increased equal to inflation rates.

For the sixth consecutive year, SHELD's electric operations achieved the maximum allowable 8% return on net plant value. For the third consecutive year, Telecom operations were profitable and for the second consecutive year, Telecom operations were cash flow positive. The audit report is expected in June.

Spatial Needs Assessment Discussion:

Mr. Fitzgerald introduced Architect John McMillian, from Caolo & Bieniek Associates, who updated the Spatial Needs Assessment report for the new building. The report and floor plan were sent to the Board for review and discussion. The location of the property for the new building is owned by Big Y and is the undeveloped parcel just past the store parking lot.

Mr. MacMillan described the approximate 5 acres of land, and the concerns and processes done to prepare to build. The property is zoned commercial. Conceptual drawings were displayed of the site, and the inside and outside of the building. Mr. MacMillan walked everyone through the building drawing and answered questions. Mr. Dobosh asked about solar panels and was told the building would be built ready for solar panels. Mr. MacMillan said the building was designed for efficiency, to be cost effective, and to be built quickly. Mr. Coutu said he thought there were too many meeting/lunchrooms for the number of staff. He would rather see multi-purpose rooms that could be used for multiple occasions instead of separate rooms designated for specific uses. Mr. Fitzgerald said they were planning for possible fiber growth and staff expansion, so some of these rooms could be converted into more office space if needed in the future.

Owners Project Manager (OPM):

Mr. Fitzgerald said the Board received evaluation information on the vendor submissions for the RFQ for the new building Owners Project Manager. Management had evaluated the vendor submissions and met with the two highest rated vendors. Management is recommending Skanska for Board approval to become the OPM for SHELD. Skanska has recent MLP experience in building Middleborough Gas & Electric and currently with Shrewsbury Electric Light & Cable. Skanska is also the vendor selected for the Mosier School project. Their references outweighed the other vendors' references. Included in the board packet was a proposal from Skanska. Management is requesting Board approval of the full amount of the proposal.

Mr. Hine asked for a motion for the Board to engage Skanska as the building project manager.

On a motion by Mr. Dobosh, seconded by Mr. Hamilton, it was unanimously VOTED: To approve the recommendation of management for the selection of Skanska as the building Owner Project Manager with a contract not to exceed \$1.2 million dollars.

Old Business:

There was none.

New Business:

Mr. Fitzgerald is not available for the next MLB meeting on the evening of June 26. He asked the Board if they were available to have an earlier meeting that day. After discussion, the meeting was changed to 9:00AM on June 26th and it would be a virtual meeting.

Next, Mr. Fitzgerald congratulated Commissioner Hine on being recognized by MMWEC, Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company, for his dedication to public power. At their annual conference, MMWEC presented John with the Phil Sweeney Award for being a champion of the values and benefits of public power. It is well deserved recognition for John for his leadership and commitment to SHELD and its customers.

Adjourn:

On a motion by Mr. Dobosh, seconded by Mr. Terry, it was unanimously VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

The open session ended at 7:18 P.M.

Signed by:

Darren Hamilton

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Darren Hamilton, Light Board Clerk

Approved: June 26, 2025

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents reviewed on May 22, 2025, at the Municipal Light Board Meeting

1. Draft Open Session Minutes April 24, 2025
2. April 2025 Telecom Call Stats
3. Financial Statements December 31, 2024, and 2023
4. Spatial Needs Assessment
5. RFQ #2025OPM Evaluation Form and Vendor Summary
6. SHEL D Conceptual Site Plan
7. SHEL D Conceptual Floor Plan
8. SHEL D Conceptual Building Elevations