



**SOUTH HADLEY ELECTRIC LIGHT DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' HYBRID MEETING
TRUSTEES ROOM AT THE LIBRARY
MAY 28, 2026, AT 5:00 P.M.**

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

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

The hybrid open session meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM by Chair John Hine who stated that the Board would move to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing trade secrets, confidential, competitively sensitive, or other propriety information pertaining to fiber 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.

Additionally present for SHELD: Manager of Marketing, Customer Service and Technical Support Compliance Kelly Frazier, Operations Manager Peter Jesionowski

Reorganization of the Board:

- Chair: John Hine and Ron Coutu were nominated for Chair. John Hine was re-elected as Chair with a 4-1 vote.
- Vice Chair: Paul Dobosh and Ron Coutu were nominated, Paul Dobosh re-elected as Vice Chair by a 3-2 vote.
- Clerk: Darren Hamilton was the only nomination and unanimously elected as Clerk.

Minutes Approval:

4/30/2026 Open Session:

On a motion by Mr. Dobosh, seconded by Mr. Hamilton, it was

VOTED: To approve the open session minutes of April 30, 2026. Mr. Terry was absent from that meeting and abstained.

Public Comment:

Kevin Hennessy inquired how the Longmeadow “no” vote would impact Fiberspring operations and staffing. Mr. Hine clarified that there is going to be another Longmeadow fiber vote. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that it would not impact current staffing or plans for the new building, as the space allocated for future fiber growth is independent of Longmeadow. Fiber will pay for its own space in the new building.

Robin Graves asked how Fiberspring would prioritize service during major outages (like a blizzard) if Longmeadow is added for fiber. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that SHELD would utilize or add to our existing subcontractors and/or hire additional technicians to handle the extra workload.

Cathy Allen said she spoke on behalf of the voters who opposed the new \$37.5 million building project on the non-binding ballot question. She thinks the Board should honor the “no” vote on the non-binding question. She questioned Mr. Hine on his comments at the last meeting and doesn’t think there was enough discussion by the

Board, who she feels is not listening to residents. She questioned the size of the building for 27 employees. Mr. Fitzgerald responded that the building is sized to accommodate all operations, warehousing, and the vehicle fleet, not just office space.

John Howard expressed disagreement with the residents who were speaking against the project and said they do not speak on behalf of the whole town.

Chair John Hine read from Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 164, Section 55 that legally separates MLPs from town government. This structure is intentional and long established. Municipal Light Plants (MLPs) are authorized to set rates, manage their finances and capital decisions independently from the town. Reliability services are not subject to Town votes. Voters elected the Board of Commissioners to make these decisions on their behalf. Commissioners are not delegates who defer each significant decision to a broader vote; they are trustees of the electric system, charged with acting in the long-term interest of all ratepayers.

Manager's Report:

Outages: There were two minor outages affecting 110 customers.

Fiberspring Update: Kelly Frazier stated that Fiberspring expects to connect its 3,000th customer in South Hadley within the next two weeks. This milestone is an amazing accomplishment and a testimony for the level and quality of service that we are proving to homes and businesses throughout Town. We will be serving a total of over 4,500 customers in three towns. The installation schedule continues to fill each week.

MDU Update: The Rivercrest Multi-Dwelling Unit (MDU) installations have begun and will have a highly successful 73% take rate (22 out of 29 units).

A Customer Survey was recently sent out to all South Hadley residents and in the first week it yielded 1,092 responses. The survey results show an overwhelming level of customer support for Fiberspring internet service. Customers have consistently identified affordability, reliability, quality, and the value of having a trusted local provider as the primary reasons for their support. Of the respondents, 62% have Fiberspring, and 97% of those customers would recommend Fiberspring to others. We continue to grow, with an installation schedule consistently booking 2 weeks out. The top four reasons they stay with Fiberspring are price, speed, quality and support of local business.

December 2025 Financials:

Mr. Conchieri presented a brief overview of the financials for the year ending December 30, 2025. It was a good year. Total assets and outflows increased by about \$2.4 million over 2024. Current assets increased by about \$475k, restricted assets increased by \$1 million, non-current assets increased by \$451k, net capital assets increased by \$57k, deferred outflows increased by \$341k.

Total liabilities, inflows, and equity also increased by \$2.4 million. Current assets increased by \$364k, long-term liabilities increased by \$308k, deferred inflow increased by \$41k, net position increased by \$1.6 million.

Our 2025 operating profit of \$1.1 million was less than our 2024 operating profit by \$230k and lower than the budgeted profit amount by \$67k. The period ended with a net YTD profit of about \$1.89 million, which was less than the 2024 net YTD profit of \$1.9 million but more than the net YTD budgeted profit of \$1.88 million.

Kilowatt hour sales of 111,253,000 for 2025 were up by 2.13% from 2024 or 2,316,000 kilowatt hours. Year-to-date operating revenues of \$18,409,000 were up from 2024 by 7.49% or about \$1,283,000. The 2025-kilowatt hour purchases of 114,385,000 were up by 1.22% from 2024, or 1,384,000. The 2025 cost of power sold of

\$11,892,000 was up by about 12.97% from 2024, or \$1,365,000. The increase in revenue was more than the cost of power; therefore, the net revenue of \$11,007,000 was up from 2024 by 1.79% or \$193,000. The actual net revenue was up from the budgeted amount by \$24,000. All other 2025 operating expenses of \$9,906,000 on a combined basis, were up from 2024 by about \$423,000 and up from the budgeted amount by \$85,000.

Fiberspring Financials:

Mr. Hine stated that earlier in executive session, the Board was presented with detailed Fiberspring financials. The Board again discussed whether to release detailed, competitively sensitive, financial information to the public. They were concerned that if they released some information, they would be pressed to release more of the financials, and competitors could use that information against Fiberspring which could jeopardize future contracts with other towns. Also, legal counsel advised against releasing any of the financials. The Board decided it was best not to change its current policy regarding fiber financials. No vote was needed as there was not a change to the current policy.

Master Plan Reporting:

At the last meeting, Nate Therien from the MPIC (Master Plan Implementation Committee) asked SHELDT to write a narrative to go along with the annual excel task sheet. Mr. Fitzgerald wrote the New Building Project Overview and asked the Board to review and approve it before he submits it to the MPIC.

On a motion by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Terry, it was unanimously VOTED: to approve the written narrative prepared by Mr. Fitzgerald.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he would email it to Nate and post it on the SHELDT website.

Planning Board & Conservation Commission Approvals:

Mr. St. Martin stated that the Order of Conditions was approved by the Conservation Commission on May 13th and the Planning Board Site Plan approval was given on May 18th. There were 3 public meetings with no public comments made at these meetings. The traffic study results were briefly discussed.

Willimansett Street Property Purchase:

Mr. Hine reviewed that the purchase of the property was contingent on the Planning Board and Conservation Commission approvals which happened earlier in the month. Since we now know we can construct the proposed building on that site, Mr. Hine read the certificate for the vote to allow the General Manager to complete the purchase of the property and construction of the building.

Mr. Terry motioned and Mr. Hamilton seconded to approve the certificate of vote.

Mr. Dobosh stated a new building was needed because the current building is not adequate for electric reliability for the Town. Mr. Hine said the Board has listened to the ratepayers about an increase in their electric bills, so they decided to use some funds from the rate stabilization fund which will bring the average increase down below \$10 a month for ratepayers. Mr. Coutu said he would be voting against the property purchase and building funding. Resident John Howard said electricity is a complex issue and he hasn't heard these opposing ratepayers speak at previous meetings and that he agrees with the Board's decision on the new building. Comments were made by ratepayers against the purchase.

The vote passed by a majority vote of 4 to 1 to move forward and complete the property purchase.

Old Business:

Mr. Coutu commented on the history of the MLDM reserve fund and wanted to discuss the use of those funds for the building costs. Again, Mr. Conchieri gave the reasons he does not recommend using the money for the

building. Mr. Coutu countered and asked if the Board could tell SHELD to use those funds toward the building. Mr. Fitzgerald said he would get a legal opinion for discussion at the next meeting.

Also, Mr. Coutu asked what will happen to the South Hadley Public TV station as Fiberspring continues to grow in South Hadley and Comcast customers dwindle. Comcast charges fees to their customers to support South Hadley public TV. Mr. Hine said that is going to be a topic for discussion in the future.

Mr. Coutu asked about selling the parcels of land owned by SHELD that are no longer needed now that the Board passed by a majority vote to purchase the Big Y property. Mr. Fitzgerald said the Board can discuss selling those parcels, but that SHELD still needs to close on the existing property. The intent was to hold the additional property until SHELD can complete approvals for the existing property.


New Business: No new business.

Adjourn:

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

The open session ended at 7:33 P.M.

Signed by:



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Darren Hamilton, Light Board Clerk

Approved: June 25, 2026

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents reviewed on May 28, 2026, at the Municipal Light Board Meeting

1. Draft Open Session Minutes of April 30, 2026
2. Financial Statements December 31, 2025, and 2024
3. SHELD New Headquarters Project Overview
4. Certificate for vote for Willimansett Street Property Purchase
5. Supporting Documents for Certificate of Vote
6. Purchase & Sale Agreement
7. Tecton Architects Proposal for Design Continuation