

Electric Light Department

Town of South Hadley

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SOUTH HADLEY ELECTRIC LIGHT BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 22, 2016 AT 6:30 P.M.

Present for Board: Anne Awad, Vernon Blodgett, John Hine, Gregory Dubreuil,
Kurt Schenker - arrived 6:59PM

Present for Staff: Paul Byrne – Interim Co-Manager, Edward Morrin - Interim Co-Manager

Ms. Awad convened the meeting at 6:31 PM.

Public Comment:

Mr. John Howard inquired as to how many ratepayers there are in town. Mr. Morrin indicated there are 8600 meters.

RET (Renewable Energy Trust) insert to mailing of bills:

Ms. Awad asked the Board to look at the insert management prepared to go out with the October bills. She thanked John Hine for composing the RET piece, to be included with next month's bills, so more ratepayers would be aware of what the Board is considering. Staff, within SHELD, thought it would be good to add info on other items and make it a newsletter. If we get good feedback, it may be done again in the future. Ms. Awad asked the Board to have a final look at it and asked for any comments. Mr. Hine and Mr. Dubreuil thought it was excellent. Mr. Dubreuil indicated he would like his cell number listed instead of his home number. Ms. Awad indicated we could make small edits by tomorrow as the printer is holding until the morning.

Mr. John Howard brought in an insert sample that Holyoke Gas & Electric recently sent out to their ratepayers.

Ms. Awad said it did not require a vote from the Board. It can go with the phone number change.

Fiber Optics Committee Update:

Mr. Hine indicated the Committee reconvened but did not have a quorum for the last meeting. He has nothing to report from that meeting. He was contacted by a member of the Charlemont fiber optic committee, who has had discussions with Axia, and they were asking about our experience with Axia. Mr. Hine told her we have not had any contact from them for a while and he asked for her contact info for the people she had been dealing with lately. He emailed those people. A week later he received an email from Robert Price, who has been busy lately, with a buyout that is taking up his time. If they do have any extra time, they have spent it working with

their Canadian Territory and said he will get back to us with in a week. Mr. Hine has not heard back yet and he is not sure if they will say Axia is ready to pick up where we left off or that they do not want to pursue this. We are unsure what will happen next, hopefully we will hear shortly. Depending on what they say, this will dictate what the Fiber Optics Committee's focus will be. If they don't want to pursue, the committee will need to look at other options to proceed. If Axia re-engages, the Board needs to determine what it wants from the advisory committee in terms of that process.

SHELD Administrative Assistant:

Ms. Awad introduced and welcomed Kim Mendoza who was recently hired as the administrative assistant to the organization to help support all the moving parts of the organization. We have had a stenographer for months, when we had no other support, and have greatly appreciated her help.

SHELD Purchase Price of 5.5 cents for PPA Solar Installations:

Ms. Awad explained that the Town has put out a RFP for solar installation at the landfill and golf course, separating it so the companies will tell them what they will pay to lease the land at each of these locations. The selling of the power they generate will be negotiated with SHELD. We need to decide what we will do in terms of a price.

Ms. Awad recalled that in February, Michael Sullivan and Beth Greenblatt spoke about collaboration and what the Town is looking for in generating alternative energy by using land like the landfill. Mr. Sullivan asked us to respond with what we will pay per kilowatt hour. MMWEC assisted Mr. Conchieri and they came up with a price the Town staff considered low. We won't necessarily increase it. We now have an experienced engineer on staff and will ask management (Mr. Byrne) to engage Mark Gilmore and to coordinate with Mr. Conchieri to decide what we will respond with, since the RFP is due October 19, 2016. We want to be ready. We want to know what we are going to offer and be fair and consistent with all the applicants.

Mr. Dubreuil spoke relative to the fixed amount. The bulk of our energy is purchased thru MMWEC under contract and we have to supplement the balance of that rate. He asked why we would not try to negotiate a rate that is indexed to some wholesale rate. Locking in a rate at 5.5, we could expose ourselves if the market comes down – we would be best served if we indexed it. We would get a better payback if we could get it cheaper but would spend no more than we would to supplement our contracted electric while doing something good for the environment.

Ms. Awad agreed with him.

Mr. Hine suggested we reach out to other municipalities who are going through this too. He thinks this should be public knowledge once the contracts are signed.

Ms. Awad mentioned that MMWEC will know which towns to contact and asked that Mr. Byrne and Mr. Morrin get MMWEC involved to develop a strategy.

Mr. Byrne will set up a meeting with Mr. Gilmore and get MMWEC involved to come up with a plan. He thinks indexing is a possibility. There were 18 people at the meeting earlier today reviewing the RFP. Ms. Awad mentioned the front desk at SHELD be alerted that there may

inquires on SHELD's position and suggested writing a fact sheet that can be sent to those who inquire so they have the parameters they can put in the grant to the Town.

Minutes Approvals:

September 1, 2016 - Open Session. There were several edits made. Mr. Hine moved to approve the minutes as amended and Mr. Blodgett seconded. The vote was unanimous.

September 1, 2016 - Executive Session. Mr. Hine moved and Mr. Blodgett seconded the motion to approve the minutes but not release them. The vote was unanimous.

August 25, 2016 - Open Session. There were several edits made. Mr. Hine moved to approve the minutes as amended and Mr. Blodgett seconded. The vote was unanimous.

August 25, 2016 - Executive Session. Ms. Awad did not bring those minutes. She will have them at the next meeting.

July 28, 2016 - Open Session. There were edits made. Mr. Hine moved to approve the amended minutes and Mr. Blodgett seconded. The vote was unanimous.

June 30, 2016.....those minutes were approved August 25, 2016.

Ms. Awad asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Hine asked about how the Manager search was coming. Ms. Awad commented that the search description went out and there were about 18 solid resumes, some local and some from out of state, that are in the utility industry. They are from municipals, public and larger utilities. On Monday Ms. Awad and Mr. Blodgett have a conference call with the consultant firm to review the entire list.

In October the full Board will be meeting to narrow the list. The Board, in Executive Session, will conduct semi-finalist interviews of 6-8 candidates in late October or November to reduce the list to 2-3. Final interviews are expected in December and will be open to the public. We should have a new Manager in place in January 2017.

Adjourn:

Mr. Hine moved and Mr. Blodgett seconded a motion to adjourn. The vote was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:08PM.



Clerk

Approved: October 27, 2016