

**Mansfield Municipal Electric Department
Minutes of Light Commissioners Meeting
April 12, 2021**

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Present: Chair Jess Aptowitz, Vice Chair Mike Trowbridge, Clerk Neil Rhein, Commissioner Frank Delvecchio, Commissioner Steve Schoonveld, Light Department Manager Joseph Sollecito, MMED Business Manager Joseph Pereira, Justin Humphreys of TBA Architects, Annika Nilsson Ripps of TBA Architects and Mayhew Seavey of PLM

The meeting was held remotely due to the pandemic and called to order at 4:30 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Aptowitz read the following:

“Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, 18, and the Governor’s March 31, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of Mansfield’s Light Commissioners is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.

This meeting has been posted on the Town’s website. To provide virtual access to this meeting by the public, the Town is utilizing the GoToWebinar platform. The instructions are below on how members of the public attending this meeting virtually will be allowed to make comments if they wish to do so, during the portion of the meeting designated for public comment. Again, these instructions can be found below or on the Town’s website at www.mansfieldma.com”

A complete copy of the Board packet containing all documents that are referenced in the minutes is on file at the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department office.

Citizen Comments – none

Motion: To approve minutes of the February 23, 2021 Light Commissioners meeting (Rhein/Trowbridge) Passes 5/0

Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Trowbridge-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Schoonveld-aye and Rhein-aye

Garage Exterior Project – Manager Sollecito said that last year the MMED garage exterior project was approved but had to be put on hold because of the erratic bids. There were three bids, one was very low while the other two were extremely high. The low bidder ended up backing out and since we were in the midst of the pandemic they decided to just delay the project and rebid it to this year. Annika Nilsson Ripps from TBA Architects explained that it just went back out to bid and that Kolodziej Construction was their recommendation as they were the lowest bidder.

Motion: To approve the recommendation that Kolodziej Construction be awarded the MMED garage exterior floor project.

(Rhein/ Trowbridge) Passes 5/0

Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Trowbridge-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Schoonveld-aye and Rhein-aye

Equipment Storage Facility – Manager Sollecito had previously presented a request for MMED to build an equipment storage facility on an existing storage lot. TBA Architects has completed the design and a memo outlining all of the details was presented to the Board. Manager Sollecito said he also addressed the Board’s previous concerns and did reach out to the neighbors that would be affected. Annika Nilsson Ripps from TBA Architects gave an overview of the plans.

Motion: To approve the capital project request to construct the Equipment Storage Facility for a total estimated cost of \$1,271,740.

(Rhein/Trowbridge) Passes 5/0

Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye

Power Supply Budget FY22 – Mayhew Seavey of PLM presented the power supply budget for FY22. He told the Board that the total cost will be 2.8% higher than the FY21 budget and that energy costs are 3% lower than the FY21 budget due to falling forward energy prices. He is forecasting lower prices for FY22. Residential sales are up because of the pandemic but commercial/industrial sales are down or just about the same as last year. Mr. Seavey said he is still waiting for prices to bottom out after the winter and expects spot market prices to come in slightly lower than the forward prices. He also said that base rate revenues are forecasted to be about the same this year. Net income will still be adequate to fund the PILOT and add to surplus so there is no need to increase base rates.

Operations and Capital Budgets FY22 – MMED Business Manager Joe Pereira presented the operating budget. One of the three main highlights of the budget is that purchased power is slightly lower which is driven by the lower spot market. The second highlight is a higher transmission charge driven by increased ISO-NE costs. The third highlight of the budget is the non-power expense increase driven by contractual increases. He pointed out that the over/under generation charge indicates a small increase may be needed. MMED’s expenses are slightly higher than what is being collected from the customers. He noted that 88.9% of all customers are residential.

Commissioner Schoonveld asked for the overtime labor rates for last year; this year and going forward. Joe Pereira said he would provide those.

Business Manager Pereira pointed out that MMED’s power is 56% carbon free in the FY22 budget. He reported that there is a 4.8% increase from last year in the PILOT payment which was driven by the commercial tax rate. He noted that MMED has the 2nd lowest rates in the state.

Motion: To approve MMED’s FY22 operating budget

(Trowbridge/Rhein) Passes 5/0

Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye

Manager Sollecito presented MMED's FY22 capital budget and said he also presented it to the CIP committee. He reviewed the proposed projects including replacing poles at Sweet's Pond and installing a new security system at the building on High Street. The current generator at High Street will also be replaced as it doesn't service the entire building. The storage building on West Church Street is a carry over project from the previous year. He also mentioned the purchase of the backhoe and fork truck which were requests that were discussed at the last meeting.

**Motion: To approve MMED's FY22 capital budget
(Rhein/Schoonveld) Passes 5/0**

Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye

DPU Report 2020 – Manager Sollecito presented the DPU report. He said that he needs the approval from the Board to file this report and then will send them the signature page.

**Motion: To approve the MMED 2020 DPU report
(Trowbridge/Delvecchio) Passes 5/0**

Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye

Maple Street paving – Manager Sollecito told the Board that the DPW is requesting that MMED reimburse them for the cost of road paving along Maple Street which was completed in 2017. Manager Sollecito said before he signs off on the warrant, he thought it best that it be brought forward to the Board for approval.

Chair Aptowitz thinks that the accountants will have an issue because it is a prior period cost and should have been paid in 2017. He suggested checking with the accountants as to how it should be recorded.

**Motion: To approve a transfer of funds from MMED's unappropriated earned surplus of \$115,292.58 to the Town for reimbursement of costs for road paving along Maple Street
(Aptowitz/Trowbridge) Passes 5/0**

Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye

Fiber Optic Connectivity – Manager Sollecito presented a request to extend fiber-optic connectivity to the Airport, Animal Shelter and the emergency response area at Xfinity Center. He is suggesting a preliminary budget of \$150,000. He also noted that the current estimate covers the cost of bringing the fiber to the Xfinity property line and not to their Emergency Response area.

There was a discussion about why Xfinity is not sharing in the cost. Manager Sollecito said it will make operations of the Town network better and public safety at Xfinity will be more reliable. Town Manager Dumas explained that it was not just for the connectivity aspect. He said that right now the Animal Shelter and Airport have no way of connecting with the Town

system and have to do everything manually which is a lot of work. He said the upgrades will benefit the Town.

There was extensive discussion about possibly bringing the fiber to the property line of Xfinity and inquiry as to whether Xfinity would assume some responsibility for the cost.

**Motion: To approve extension of the fiber optic connectivity to the Airport, Animal Shelter and to the property line of the Xfinity Center
(Trowbridge/Delvecchio)**

The motion was then amended to remove the Xfinity Center from the motion.

**Motion: To approve extension of the fiber optic connectivity to the Airport and Animal Shelter
(Trowbridge/Delvecchio) Passes 5/0
Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye**

Job Descriptions – Manager Sollecito presented a request for approval of two job descriptions for Electric Maintenance Worker Apprentice – 2nd Class and 1st Class. He explained about succession planning and he believes that two employees from this department will be retiring in two years and that it will take two years to properly train someone. He said that he negotiated with the union on the job description and salary structure and also reviewed it with the Town’s Human Resources. He clarified that it is one person being hired who will move through the two positions.

**Motion: To approve the job descriptions of Electric Maintenance Worker Apprentice – 2nd Class & 1st Class and authorize the General Manager to sign the ‘Side Letter of Agreement’ as presented
(Rhein/Trowbridge) Passes 5/0
Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye**

Logo designs – Manager Sollecito said that the internal committee was not ready as of yet with their branding designs.

Comments from Commissioners – Clerk Rhein said that he had not heard any complaints from his neighbors yet but he thinks the LED streetlights in his neighborhood appear to be very bright. Manager Sollecito said he would look into it.

At 6:18 the following motion was made.

**Motion: To adjourn at 6:18 PM
(Trowbridge/Schoonveld) Passes 5/0
Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye**

Respectfully submitted: Jacqueline Lee

Jeel Rhein
Signature of Clerk

8/21/21
Date of Approval