

**Mansfield Municipal Electric Department
Minutes of Light Commissioners Meeting
July 19, 2021**

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TOWN ENGINEERING OFFICE
2021 SEP 23 A 7 56

Present: Chair Frank DelVecchio, Vice Chair Les Aptowitz, Commissioner Michael Trowbridge, and Light Department General Manager Joseph Sollecito

The meeting was held at the Mansfield Town Hall Room 3AB and called to order at 5:00 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair DelVecchio stated that this meeting is being televised and taped for future broadcast and asked if anyone in the audience was intending to record the meeting to please state their intentions. No one did so.

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.

Chairman DelVecchio stated that due to not all members being in attendance, item number five on the agenda, the Performance Review of the General Manager, would be postponed until a future meeting.

Citizens Comments- none

Motion: To approve the minutes from the June 21, 2021 Light Commissioners meeting. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge) Passes 3/0

General Manager's Report

Review of Financials - Manager Sollecito provided an update of the Department's financial statements through May 2021. After correcting some numbers on the statement, he stated that the numbers are comparable to last year. He stated that what drove the decrease in net income is transmission expenses and discounts. The Generation Charge is right on target. The energy sales were up 3% in May, but for the year-to-date the sales were up 3.7%. Vice Chair Aptowitz asked for clarification about what year-to-date was, whether it was fiscal year. Manager Sollecito confirmed it was for the fiscal year-to-date. He then referenced the charts showing the growth over the last 5 years in May.

MMWEC Project 2015A Update – Manager Sollecito reminded the Board that when they last met he informed them of the environmental concerns that were raised over this project. He explained that it is a 55-megawatt peaker plant, a capacity resource and not an energy resource. It is to be used only when the system is stressed. He attended a public in Peabody where the plant is to be built. It was almost five hours in length with two hours of explanation of all the details of the plant by MMWEC representatives. This was followed by three hours of a question and answer session with the public that gave a fair chance to express what was going on. He explained that the emissions from this plant would be lower than other comparable plants, such as those for hospitals and schools. Those other units would be displaced by this plant, which is projected to run only about 200 hours per year, therefore not making a huge environmental contribution. He then went on to state that the project already had all the relevant permits in place, and the last hurdle was the DPU hearing on the bond financing. However, the MMWEC board of directors voted to halt the project for at least 30 days in order to address the concerns.

The three main concerns raised by the Attorney General were project transparency, environmental justice, and application of other technologies. Part of the technical concerns was battery storage. Though there is a desire to increase wind and solar resources, this project is to provide a fixed capacity resource to be available when needed as required by ISO New England. However, it is not possible to have enough batteries to store the energy needed from these types of resources.

The second concern, environmental justice, was put in jeopardy when Peabody said they may not shut down one of their older units. Originally, they said they would, and that shutdown would offset the emissions from this new plant. After some discussion with Peabody, they agreed to shut down their (Unit 1) plant upon the completion of Project 2015A.

With that meeting in Peabody, all concerns that were raised by the Attorney General were answered. Therefore, the MMWEC board voted to continue the project. Manager Sollecito stated that the project now is optimistic of the project continuing. Commissioner Trowbridge asked about the timeline for this. Manager Sollecito replied that they still needed to negotiate with the DPU, Attorney General, and others, but that there is a short window to the decision. He reiterated that all requirements have been met and this was only about bond financing now.

Commissioner Trowbridge asked if the local legislators had been helpful in the project. Manager Sollecito stated he had reached out to Senator Paul Feeney, and Representatives Jay Barrows, Adam Scanlon and Ted Phillips. Manager Sollecito had a meeting with Rep. Barrows and the Joint House and Senate Chairman for Utilities in which he explained all the details about the project.

Manager Sollecito added that one concession was made to introduce green hydrogen into the natural gas plant, which is a level of technology that does not exist yet. This is being evaluated in a development project in northern New York, but there is a concern about how to get the green hydrogen to the location. Additionally, there was a plan to replace the three oil tanks on site with a larger one, but it was another concession to agree to eliminate the new tank. Since the plant would not be running much on oil, there would be no need for a larger tank.

Chair DelVecchio noted that MMWEC has been willing to listen to the concerns of the citizens. He raised the point that people believed that the plant would eventually have to shut down because it is not from renewable energy. But it has been pointed out that other technology does not exist to meet these needs. Perhaps in the future the plant could be retrofitted to use green energy. Manager Sollecito noted that ISO New England is depending to have this plant run when needed.

Vice Chair Aptowitz asked if other communities are still in on this. Manager Sollecito replied that yes, a contract was signed so that all the communities are committed monetarily. Mansfield has already contributed \$700,000, and is on the hook for \$2.2 million in total. He noted that MMWEC was wise to hold up the process and address the concerns. Commissioner Trowbridge pointed out that the letter of the law was followed in the permitting process. Manager Sollecito also commented that at the public meeting in Peabody, there were two convincing witnesses to speak in favor of the project: the DPU commissioner (Paul Hibbard) from the Deval Patrick era, as well as a selectwoman (Ann) from South Hadley, who is a professional board of health worker. She stated she was against the project in the beginning, but after listening to the information, she is now in favor of it.

Chair DelVecchio noted that MMWEC did not just meet the minimum standards. They did their due diligence and showed a lot of flexibility on this project. The Board of Light Commissioners has shown it supports green energy and the environment and will continue to support this project.

Contract Award Recommendation for MMED Security Access Control System – MMED hired a consultant who worked with staff to put a spec together for a new ‘Security Access Control’ system. A walk through to highlight the security needs was held and had 12 attendees. Of those 12, four submitted bids. The low bid was outside of the specs, and was therefore rejected. After reviewing the submissions, it is recommended to accept the lowest responsible bid, which was made by Pasek Security in the amount of \$51,446.76.

Motion: To approve the contract with Pasek Security in the amount of \$51,446.76 as presented. (Trowbridge/Aptowitz) Passes 3/0

Commissioner Trowbridge did ask what needed to be done to tie in the security package to the new building to be built in the yard. Manager Sollecito noted that it is in the base contract to have that building tied into the system.

MMED Branding Update – Several items are standard, such as the signage on the trucks and building, and the stationary. A new item is the promotional apparel. The idea is for each employee and official to have at least two articles of branded clothing. This was priced out through LL Bean and pictures of item samples were provided. The total cost would be approximately \$3,000. Manager Sollecito noted that the FR clothing for the operations staff was not included in this, and would have to be negotiated.

Commissioner Trowbridge questioned whether the stationary with the current logo would be discarded. It was confirmed that it would be used up and then replaced with the new logo.

MMED Community Engagement – The annual summer camp electrical safety presentation was held. The kids are very engaged and the linemen try to inspire them. In addition, MMED had a presence at the Downtown Family Fun Night. They gave out about 500 plastic construction helmets. Many people complimented MMED and our service. They also fielded questions about electric vehicle chargers and the rebate program.

House Bill #3257 – There was a virtual hearing and the Foxboro Town Manager and others were speaking positively about this bill. Manager Sollecito notes that he has the authority to have our line crews do any work for the Town of Mansfield. But any work outside the Town, the Line workers wouldn't be covered for retirement or disability. Commissioner Trowbridge asked to be sent a copy of the bill. Vice Chair Aptowitz stated that it seems as though there are lots of things for which we need legislative support. He asked to meet with all of the legislators and speak face to face about the issues as we want them to be aware of our needs and can help when necessary. Commissioner Trowbridge noted that when they run into them, many of these things are mentioned. Manager Sollecito stated that he will follow up with Senator Feeney.

Manager Sollecito noted his vacation days in July and August 22-30.

Item #5 will be rescheduled, possibly for the first or second Monday in August.

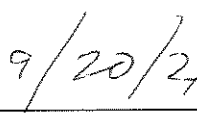
Comments from the Commissioners – None

Motion: To adjourn at 5:44 pm. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge) Passes 3/0

Respectfully submitted: Katherine Codella



Signature of Clerk



Date of Approval