

**Mansfield Municipal Electric Department
Minutes of Light Commissioners Meeting
September 20, 2021**

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Present: Chair Frank Delvecchio, Vice Chair Jess Aptowitz, Clerk Neil Rhein, Commissioner Mike Trowbridge, Commissioner Steve Schoonveld and Light Department Manager Joseph Sollecito

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The meeting was held at the Mansfield Town Hall Room 3AB and called to order at 5:30 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.

Citizen Comments – none

Motion: To approve minutes of the August 16, 2021 Light Commissioners meeting (Aptowitz/Trowbridge) Passes 4/0

Clerk Rhein joined the meeting at 5:35.

Introduction of New Staff – Manager Sollecito introduced three new MMED employees, John Ciulla, Electric Maintenance Worker Apprentice; Benjamin Ingemi, 3rd Class Lineworker and Shane Walsh, 1st Class Lineworker.

Customer Payment and Billing Trends – Manager Sollecito reviewed a memo from Business and Finance Manager Joe Pereira regarding customer payment types which indicates that electronic payments are increasing. Currently 70% of payments made to MMED are made electronically and the amount of customers on autopay is also increasing. He said that MMED renegotiated better credit card fees a few years back. Another benefit is to get payments more timely by having credit card payments as an option.

Fiber Optic Cable Management Project – Manager Sollecito told the Board that when he came to MMED there was already a fiber optic network in place. Up to now, MMED has not invested in a fiber optic management software database and has relied on one vendor, Phoenix, to manage their network. At this time he feels it is not a good idea to continue on the same path with Phoenix as they have had a reorganization and the people who knew MMED's system no longer work for them. Also, MMED recently hired a contractor who found significant errors in the existing records. Manager Sollecito believes MMED has to come up with a solution and is recommending two major initiatives. One is to purchase specialized fiber optic network software and to have all current paper records converted into the new software at a cost of approximately \$30,000. The second is to hire a fiber optic vendor who will respond to emergencies when the network is compromised and will also perform an analysis of the existing network.

Motion: To approve the purchase of specialized fiber optic network software at an approximate cost of \$30,000 and to hire a fiber optic 'contract service' vendor (Trowbridge/Rhein) Passes 5/0

Roadmap to 2050 – Manager Sollecito presented to the Board, “Road Map to 2050” which is regarding emission limits. There is legislation in Massachusetts which establishes goals for emission limits of no less than 50% for 2030; no less than 75% for 2040 and reaching Net Zero by 2050. Based upon the current power portfolio, MMED is currently at 51% non-carbon emitting. There was a discussion about how some utilities buy a lot of ‘Renewable Energy Credits’ (RECs) so that they can say they are green. Manager Sollecito’s opinion is that buying RECs is just for the purpose of filling in a gap you may have. He said he has had a conversation with Mayhew Seavey of PLM about this. Manager Sollecito proposes that it is better for MMED to own and have a vested interest in some specific renewable project rather than a REC.

MMA Presentation on Light Pollution – Manager Sollecito said light pollution has always been a topic of conversation especially when it comes to streetlights. It is difficult to balance illuminating the street without having the lights diffracting up and being an annoyance. MMED did receive grant money from the state to change over all of the streetlights to LED lights which are bright and efficient. MMED has over 4000 LED lights and does have the ability to dim them or put a shade on them to help prevent the light pollution.

Comments from Commissioners – Clerk Rhein said he was at Newton City Hall which has a charging station that can be used by the public. He was wondering if there was any chance that MMED could offer something similar. Manager Sollecito said that previously there was a grant but it had to have been used by a certain date. He said that there was discussion about having a charging station at either the Town Hall, library or train station but this was pre-pandemic conversation so it wasn’t something that could be done then. This will be a topic for future discussion.

Commissioner Schoonveld questioned if there was a plan for retained earnings. Manager Sollecito said that MMED does have a plan in its financial statements. He said he had put the plan in front of the Board a while back and had discussed the appropriate amount to have in retained earnings.

Vice Chair Aptowitz said that residents want to know the status of the lights at the library. Manager Sollecito said that he did get a plan approved by the Board approximately nine months ago. He said it is similar to what MMED did for Old Colony Way. MMED has purchased the equipment and is currently trying to schedule the work. He hopes they will start next week.

Vice Chair Aptowitz said that every time he drives by Branch Street Solar, he is frustrated by how terrible it looks. He specifically mentioned the bunting and the landscaping and would like it cleaned up. Manager Sollecito said he would look into their contract to see if there is anything he can do about it.

The following motion was read at 6:45 PM.

Motion: To enter into Executive Session for the following reasons and not to return to open session

- a. Pursuant to M.G.L.Ch. 164, Section 47D and M.G.L. Ch. 30, Section 21, Exemption 2, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.
- b. Review and possible approval of the Executive Session minutes from the following meeting dates:
 - i. April 29, 2020, where Exemption 3 was declared.
 - ii. September 21, 2020, where Exemptions 2 & 10 were declared
 - iii. November 02, 2020, where Exemption 10 was declared
 - iv. February 23, 2021, where Exemption 3 was declared
 - v. April 26, 2021, where Exemption 10 was declared
 - vi. June 21, 2021, where Exemption 10 was declared

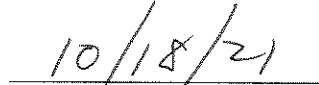
(Rhein/Aptowitz) Passes 5/0

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

Respectfully submitted: Jacqueline Lee



Signature of Clerk



Date of Approval