



November 28, 2023
 STERLING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT
 REGULAR SESSION
 MEETING MINUTES



DATE: November 28, 2023

LOCATION: SMLD, Rear Board Room
 50 Main Street, Sterling, MA

BOARD MEMBERS: Joe Curtin (Curtin), Chairman (via ZOOM)
 Eric Darlington (Darlington), Vice Chair
 Andy Gonsorcik (Gonsorcik), Clerk

SMLD STAFF: Matt Stelmach (Stelmach), General Manager
 Bill Underhill (Underhill), Network Coordinator
 John Kwasniewski (Kwasniewski), Accountant

Also Present: Goulet, Salvidio & Associates, P.C., Auditors

MINUTES: Patty Page

5:43 pm. Meeting called to order; Curtin stated that the meeting is subject to audio recording. Roll Call Attendance: Darlington present, Curtin present, Gonsorcik present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board members in attendance pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

Safety Announcement - Equipment in office.

Approval of Agenda - Darlington made a motion to approve the agenda as amended (continue “unfinished business” to next meeting and move the auditors to the beginning of the agenda). Gonsorcik seconded, no discussion, all in favor, Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Gonsorcik aye. (3-0).

Auditor’s Report – Goulet, Salvidio & Associates P.C.

The auditors were present to review the 2022 audit and internal control report with the Board members. This is the first year that they separated SMLD from the LAMB.

Manager’s report

1. The operations team put up the Christmas lights on the common with lots of positive feedback.
2. SMLD assisted with procuring and installing new flags on Main Street for the Veteran’s Day parade within 4 hours of notification of the need.
3. Baltic Hydro – Stelmach will discuss further at a future meeting – currently operates at 100% capacity.
4. 2012 F250 – was supposed to be transferred to the DPW, but it is not in acceptable condition for their use. Discussed putting it on MuniBid, but the Police Department expressed interest in it for snow plowing at the station. The Board supports this donation.

5. Stelmach is providing a holiday luncheon for the staff and board members on December 20, 2023 as a personal Christmas gift to the department.
6. SMLD, MMWEC, and Princeton Municipal Light submitted an APPA DEED grant application for system interconnection and getting PMLD off of National Grid transmission. Awarded a \$15k grant which will offset some of the engineering costs. Stelmach will continue to update on the project. Benefit of working with PMLD is potential access to wind turbine power with no transmission cost. Serving PMLD would be similar to having an additional large customer and may also present other future opportunities.

Unfinished Business (Continued to future meeting)

New Business

- a) Fiber Update – 332 subscribers, 26% pass rate and 32% of the pass sign up. Still lots of interest. Based on monthly numbers, fiber will be billing about \$300k annually. The most popular packages is the 250MB for residential. Campground, Clemence & John Dee will be fiber ready by December – then on to Chace Hill to Wiles. Northgate building 2 is fiber ready (already 4 customers in Building 2). Sholan Terrace could possibly have fiber in place in December if enough interest exists there. West Boylston Light has requested a back-up internet link. Darlington asked about the public Wi-Fi – still waiting on logistics for the common, but will be working to put it in place behind the fire department and at the town beach.
- b) Depreciation Transfer – Darlington made a motion to transfer \$514,053.34 from depreciation to operating cash. Gonsorcik seconded, no discussion, all in favor, Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Gonsorcik aye. (3-0).
- c) First Draft SMLD 2024 Budget – Some of the highlights of the review: There was an overall increase in payroll. There are some facility renovations in there – Stelmach will work on the numbers to review with the Board. Pulled the Main Street URD project off the books until there has been some movement on the project. Continuation of the reconductoring project as well as the recloser project. Purchase of fault locators and possible IR inspection drone. Continue pole testing and getting rid of the #6 copper wire. Verizon reimbursements are in there as well. The total budget decreased. Projecting the electric supply down (overestimated in the past). Transmission costs had been underestimated and are increasing. There were a number of other items, but Stelmach wanted to work with numbers and base his numbers on actuals instead of projections. Underhill discussed the fiber budget, but right now it's a placeholder as this is a work in progress and the first year that fiber has been separated from electric. A future board meeting will be scheduled dedicated to the 2024 budget.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES: Darlington made a motion to approve the 10/18/2023 regular session minutes as amended, Gonsorcik seconded, no discussion, all in favor. Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Gonsorcik aye. Vote 3-0.

Customer Comments: Mr. Paul Austin attended the meeting and expressed concern over the pace of the roll-out of the fiber. Underhill discussed some of the major obstacles they have encountered. He also emphasized that they are doing most of this work through grants with no charge to SMLD and not taking on debt.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND SCHEDULE NEXT BOARD MEETING: Future agenda items to include items on this agenda (unfinished business/budget/manager's report). Next meeting December 13, 2023 @ 5:00 pm.

At 7:17 pm Darlington made a motion to go into Executive Session (1) under M.G.L. Chapter 30A: Section 21(a), (to discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive or other proprietary information provided in the course of activities conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier.) 9.1 Energy Stream, LLC and 9.2 Saywatt Hydroelectric, LLC. Gonsorcik seconded, no discussion, Roll Call Vote, Gonsorcik aye, Darlington aye, Curtin aye. All in favor, 3-0.

The Board reconvened in Open Session, only to adjourn. 7:29 pm meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:


Andrew Gonsorcik, Clerk

DATE:

2/26/24

BOARD APPROVAL FOR RELEASE:

12/13/23