



March 27, 2024
 STERLING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT
 REGULAR SESSION
 MEETING MINUTES



DATE: March 27, 2024

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

BOARD MEMBERS: Joe Curtin (Curtin), Chairman
 Eric Darlington (Darlington), Vice Chair
 Andrew Gonsorcik (Gonsorcik), Clerk

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

MINUTES: Patty Page

5:00 pm. Meeting called to order. 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. Gonsorcik seconded, no discussion, all in favor, Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Gonsorcik aye. (3-0).

Manager’s report

1. The vacant customer service representative position has been filled – Ms. Amanda Manca starts on Wednesday 4/3/2024.
2. NISC financial software training is ongoing. Still have a go-live target for May.
3. Battery system outages - NEC inverter is having an issue (age related), and there is a fault on ½ of Greensmith.
4. Stelmach joined NEPPA in touring ISO-NE control center today along with a tour of a hydro-plant in Holyoke.
5. SLCTV submitted a proposal for a LAMB commercial. Stelmach provided the draft to Board members for review for future discussion.
6. Stelmach provided a 2023 residential rate comparison. Sterling is still among the lowest on the list.

Unfinished Business

- a) 2015A Update – The natural gas fuel tie-in and start of full commissioning is anticipated to be next week. Target COD Commercial Operation date is expected late-April. MMWEC shed May capacity obligation, but project is still cash positive on the ISO-NE capacity market.

New Business

- a) Fiber Update – Underhill stated that there are 385 subscribers. Take rate is up and revenues are trending up. The splicing contract has been awarded to Phoenix. Fiber equipment order has been processed and stock is coming in. As of Friday, there were 110 more fiber ready homes. Underhill also stated that the Affordability Connectivity Program (ACP) – a federal program for low-income individuals is running out of funding in April. This will cause a \$30 rise in monthly fees for some Comcast customers once the funding is gone.
- b) Fiber Retail Rate Structure – Underhill provided a grid showing the pricing structure. Darlington raised the question of reducing the number of internet offerings/plans for residential because it may be confusing to potential customers. He also noted that commercial has no customers signed up for the 2GB plan. Underhill stated that he will continue to work on the structure of pricing. LAMB will always outperform Comcast in customer reliability and customer service response. He warns that we don't want to drop our rates so low that we drive ourselves out of business – but he will compare our rates with others as well as Comcast.
- c) Verizon/Osmose Pole Inspections – SMLD has received three reports so far. At least 100 poles have been identified as needing replacement. Verizon will pay 50% of the cost of replacement. Stelmach indicated that the pole replacement is great training for the linemen and can continue as “filler work” for the crews without the need to hire outside contractors.
- d) Letter of Support – The Town of Sterling requested a letter of support for an Action Grant from the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MFP) Program for access improvements for the pump station located on 140. Stelmach presented a draft a letter of support which was signed by all Board members.
- e) Website Design RFP – Stelmach provided a copy of the RFP for the Board to review and he will reissue the RFP.
- f) Schedule GM Performance Review – the Board scheduled the review for April 17, 2024 at the regular scheduled Board meeting, in executive session.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES: Darlington made a motion to approve the 2/28/2024 regular session minutes as written, Gonsorcik seconded, no discussion, all in favor. Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Gonsorcik aye. Vote 3-0.

Customer Comments: None at this time.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND SCHEDULE NEXT BOARD MEETING: Future agenda items to include items on this agenda (manager's report, unfinished business, fiber update, pole inspections, website design, and GM performance review). Next meeting April 17, 2024 @ 5 pm.

At 5:39 pm Darlington made a motion to adjourn. Gonsorcik seconded. All in favor, 3-0.

ATTEST:



Andrew Gonsorcik, Clerk

DATE:

4/17/2024

BOARD APPROVAL FOR RELEASE:

4/17/24