



May 18, 2022
 STERLING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT
 REGULAR SESSION
 MEETING MINUTES



DATE: May 18, 2022

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

BOARD MEMBERS: Joe Curtin (Curtin), Chairman
 Brian Pierce (Pierce), Vice Chair
 Eric Darlington (Darlington), Clerk

SMLD STAFF: Darren Borge (Borge), Manager

MINUTES: Patty Page

6:00 pm. Meeting called to order; Curtin stated that the meeting is subject to audio recording. Roll Call Attendance: Darlington present, Curtin Present, Pierce 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 agenda** Pierce seconded, no discussion, all in favor, Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Pierce aye.

Manager’s report given by Darren Borge

1. The ReConnect grant Public Notice Filing closed 4/30/2022 – no news.
2. Met with new Town Administrator Bill Caldwell
3. Kevin Ronan has resigned to take a job near his hometown. Phillip Worzbicki is scheduled to start June 6th pending a CORI check and drug screening.
4. The draft of the 5-year plan will be ready to present to the Board at the next meeting.
5. Comcast at 27 Pratts Junction has cancelled and all equipment returned.
6. SMLD 2022 Tree Trimming Bid has been awarded to Dillon Tree Services. They will do tree removals for SMLD & DPW on a flat or hourly rate. Presented Board with 2022 Street Trimming List.
7. Downtown URD – Weston & Sampson handling the engineering. It is not ready for preliminary or final design. Walked the downtown project with Town Administrator, DPW Superintendent, Weston and Sampson and other Town of Sterling Staff. Discussed Downtown Revitalization project and Winter Shared Streets projects. Winter Shared Streets project design has been completed and should not interfere with SMLD Downtown Underground project. August/September is anticipated start date on the underground.
8. SMLD has repaired the underground primary and secondary services that were damaged by ice in the winter. Jill Lane Primary URD and 6 Beaman Road
9. SMLD Residential Welcome Packet presented to the Board.

10. 5 Year Rate Study Forecast Update – Bruce is back from vacation and Borge has been sent him the unaudited 2021 DPU report and he is currently working on the 5-year Rate Study Forecast. Will have an update at the next meeting.
11. Peg’s Pond/Griffin Pond Fountain – SMLD is looking to purchase a \$3,968 fountain and light feature for Peg’s Pond. Previous fountain motor seized in 2021. Borge met with the Rec Director and the DPW Director about a plan to help mitigate the algae growth. DPW has installed 2 of the 3 water filtration pumps. Working with both departments for rate type and programming for best interest of the town. SMLD Board agreed to fountain and light feature but suggested to make purchase through Sterling Energy Committee. Next Sterling Energy Committee meeting (TBD).
12. Reminder Thursday June 23, 2022 from 11am to 2pm is the Annual SMLD Open House.
13. Battery Storage & Community Solar & Storage project have hit the \$2.5 Million in avoided cost. Actual amount is \$2,516,933.15. Posted the \$2.5M milestone sign on the solar sign in front of 50 Main Street.
14. Town of Sterling was awarded the \$137,276 Municipal Fiber Grant.
15. Discussed rebates or incentives to get more engagement and incentivize customer to consider all electric home heating. Additional Incentive and rebate programs continue to be researched

Unfinished Business

- a. SMLD Policy Review – Attorney reviewed and made minor changes. Be sure to check page numbering. After review, **Pierce made a motion to approve the amended employee handbook 2022 (rev. 5/18/2022)**, Darlington seconded. All in favor, Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Pierce aye.
- b. Land RFP Update – RFP has been drafted, cleared through legal and ready to send.
- c. GDS Energy Audit Proposal – SMLD will conduct a follow-up audit on the town facilities that were identified in the 2013 energy audit. This will show the benefits that the changes made per recommendation of the original and follow-up audit in 2018. The Sterling Energy Committee to be updated on status at next meeting (TBD). **Pierce made a motion to proceed with the audit at a cost of \$29,880.** Darlington seconded. All in favor, Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Pierce aye.

New Business

- a. SMLD Current Billing Software – SMLD has been using the UPN software through SEDC since 2012. UPN was recently purchased by Meridian. Meridian is still supporting UPN. UPN can do basic billing, reporting and financing as needed. Right now, the allocation of payments for electric and fiber have staff moving the payments manually within the existing software. Discussions to create an RFP in the next 2-3 years for a new billing software.
- b. 2006 International Bucket Truck – as in the past, the SMLD would like to gift the bucket truck to the DPW with an agreement to borrow if needed. **Pierce made a motion to gift the truck to the DPW with the agreement to borrow if needed.** Darlington seconded. All in favor, Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Pierce aye.
- c. SMLD Solar Capacity Discussion – given the current economics for electrification and the incentives for more electric vehicles, the SMLD System load has grown substantially from 2012 to 2022. The total 10-year electrical sales have increased by 4,000,000 kWh. The bulk of that load is in the Residential sector and is 3,000,000kWh of the 4,000,000kWh in total system sales growth. The 2022 Q1 monthly average sales is 600,000kWh above, the same Q1 in the previous 5-year average. Borge wanted to bring this to the Board’s attention so that they can discuss again with more current system load data points throughout 2022. A recommendation would be to cap the commercial sector, based on lack of interest and expand the current residential sector cap of 275kWh to 300 kWh. The SMLD would continue to entertain discussion from vendors and Sterling Property owners of large-scale solar arrays but only if these arrays are coupled with a battery storage unit(s). This would allow the SMLD to enroll the battery storage system(s) into the current SMLD Resiliency and Peak Shaving Program.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES:

Darlington made a motion to approve the regular 4/13/2022 minutes, Pierce seconded, no discussion, all in favor. Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Pierce aye. **Darlington made a motion to approve the executive session minutes of 4/13/2022, not to be released.** Pierce seconded, no discussion, all in favor. Darlington aye, Curtin aye, Pierce aye.

Customer Comments: No new comments, but still seeing positive feedback on Facebook. SMLD did respond to a new business in town – Emma’s Café, when they lost power and internet due to an imbalance flashover. SMLD restored both electric and fiber services same day.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND SCHEDULE NEXT BOARD MEETING: Next meeting June 22, 2022 @ 6 pm.

Please see attached for the Monthly Summary update!

At 7:05 pm Pierce made a motion to go into Executive Session (1) under M.G.L. Chapter 30A: Section 21(a), Clause 10 (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) E.H. Perkins/Battery Project (9.2) New Vendor Inquiry Update and (9.3) PMLD Interconnect Discussion , only to return to regular session to adjourn, Darlington seconded, no discussion, Roll Call Vote, Curtin aye, Pierce aye, Darlington aye, all in favor.

The Board reconvened in Open Session, only to adjourn. 7:37 pm meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:



Eric Darlington, Clerk

DATE:

7/27/22

BOARD APPROVAL FOR RELEASE:

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