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BOARD OF LIGHT COMMISSIONERS
August 12, 2020
ZOOM PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

The public meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

Present were: Commissioner/Chairman- Rick Rys, Commissioner- Richard Chase, PMLD Interim General Manager Gary Harrington, Brian Booth, Jack Austin, Linda Nash, Phil Gott, Hunter Strong, Ashley Reddy and Karen Mammone

Commissioner Conway was unable to attend this meeting

Agenda:

The Board voted unanimously in favor (2-0) to accept the August 12, 2020 agenda as written.

Meeting Minutes:

July 8, 2020 Public Zoom Meeting Minutes will be reviewed at the September 9, 2020 meeting.

July 15, 2020 Special Public Zoom Meeting Minutes will be reviewed at the September 9, 2020 meeting.

General Manager's Report:

- **Current Bank Balances** – Mr. Harrington presented the Board with the bank account balances report dated August 12, 2020. A copy will be placed on file. The Citizens Bank Operating account has a balance of \$224,945.95, MMDT Depreciation account has a balance of \$1,240,407.39, MMDT Reserve Fund account has a balance of \$943,352.63, Unibank online payment account has a balance of \$26,996.01, Citizens Bank Meter Deposit account has a balance of \$40,308.98, Fidelity Bank Operating Account has a balance of \$385.00, PMLD Accounts Payable as of August 12, 2020 has a balance of \$267,769.83, PMLD Customer Accounts Receivables as of August 12, 2020 has a balance of \$374,202.88, PMLD Total Wind Farm Debt is currently at \$4,240,905.84 and PMLD Total OPEB Liability is \$771,796.00-for the Period Ending on the Measurement Date of December 31, 2019. (OPEB- Other Postemployment Benefits). All bills are paid in a timely manner.
- **2020 Cashflow Budget Review** – Mr. Harrington presented the Board with a copy of the 2020 budget detail dated August 12, 2020. A copy will be placed on file. The cashflow figures were for January-June 2020 with a target of 50.00%. Mr. Harrington stated that revenues were at 51.32% and expenses were at 50.83%. Mr. Harrington stated the accounts receivable was high this month because the Worcester County Retirement was paid (once a year) 77.79% and Jack Austin's training 76.09%.
- Mr. Harrington stated the Wind Turbines maintenance was completed
- Tree trimming bids were sent out yesterday; deadline is September 22nd to submit bid.
- Grass mowing has been completed on Mountain Rd.
- Mr. Booth and Mr. Austin cleaned out sand in the corner of the Wind Turbine. They went up with a pull line so they could pull a new cable in. Will run both Verizon and Spectrum

Review Rick White Draft Job Description:

Commissioner Chase went over a few minor changes he suggested on the job description. Mr. Gott asked if Commissioner Chase had any objections to changing the word "carbon" to "greenhouse gas emissions". Commissioner Chase had no problem with changing the wording. A copy of changes will be placed on file.

Review Rick White Draft Management Contract:

Commissioner Rys discussed the draft for the Management Contract, which is a standard contract, mentioning Legal Council will need to look over, the Board and General Manager will need to approve and sign. Both Commissioners Chase and Conway will need to look over the contract. Commissioner Rys asked Mr. Harrington about his previous contracts. He said he never had one, there was always a verbal agreement. Mr. Harrington said there is nothing wrong with having a contract since the contract will protect the Light Department, General Manager and Town. A copy will be placed on file.

Review Outage Management and Communications-PMLD Website/Nextdoor/Phone:

Commissioner Rys asked about the recent power outage in Princeton on August 4th & 5th. The outage started around 6pm and lasted until 4am. This outage was on the National Grid side causing a town wide outage. While the town was without power, the PMLD Linemen were out removing trees and branches from the wires. PMLD received one phone call after the power was restored.

Mr. Harrington asked the Commissioners if we really need to use Nextdoor. It seems the PMLD website, Office Staff and Code Red (when needed) should be all we need. Ms. Reddy mentioned when she found out about the outage, she flipped the phones from her house stating there was a town wide outage and no estimated restoration time. Once in the office, Ms. Reddy responded to all phone calls received and emails. On Wednesday, Ms. Reddy found out we can change our pop-up on our website to alert residents of an outage. Our contract with the Web-Developer includes after hour alerts on our website. We will now be using this as needed. Mr. Harrington added the ladies in the office answered every phone call, email, and inquiries during the outage.

Commissioner Rys mentioned the CodeRed System. This is a separate system to alert residents if power will be out longer than two hours. Commissioner Chase suggested contacting the Town Administrator or the Fire Chief on the CodeRed system and how to use it.

Commissioner Chase asked what happens when Spectrum UPS battery goes out, will the internet go away. Mr. Harrington said it happened that night around midnight. The battery has about a 6-hour charge. Ms. Reddy spoke to Mr. Allen and Ms. Trudeau who mentioned they spoke to someone about placing a generator at the UPS hut to keep power going.

Mr. Booth conveyed to the Board how several residents, Brian at the Fire Department, Michael Knapp, Mr. & Mrs. Peura at Deer Run Farm, Scott Goodnow, Deb Lugbauer and Claire Golding thanked us with written notes or verbally, for getting the power back on, quick response, letting the staff know how dangerous the job is and appreciated our hard work. We all know our jobs even though we had one guy out and Gary is still learning the process he is doing an awesome job.

Smart Metering:

Commissioner Chase spoke about Smart Metering and the information he learned. Itron makes the version we have with a short distance 900 mega-hertz; also makes a Wi-Fi, cellular version and a receiving antenna which can transmit them to either a hardwire or over powerline to a centralized meter. These meters broadcast every 2 or 3 minutes depending on configuration. This would save on monthly drive around time and real time smart information at a lower cost than replacing meters with a Smart Meter or a Wi-Fi type. Commissioner Rys did not think this should be a high priority right now. Mr. Booth mentioned there is an advantage for the office staff when houses are sold, they could get reads instantaneously. This upgrade would be expensive approximately \$100,000.

Energy Audit Update:

Mr. Harrington told the Board the auditing would start tomorrow-August 13th, at PMLD. Mr. Phil Connors will go around to all the buildings. The process should be done tomorrow or Friday. Mr. Gott was very happy the process was beginning and thought it would not begin for a couple of months.

Public Meeting:

Commissioner Chase spoke how the State Legislature have updated the Climate Bill. One of the things in the bill is that the Muni's are now subjected to the requirements as the same Investor Owned Utilities meaning Global Warming Solutions, Clean Power- nuclear & renewables, subject to the same standards. The bill will need to pass in both houses, there will be a conference sometime between now and October to hash out the differences and then back to the Chamber to vote.

Ms. Nash asked about the turbines switching from DSL Verizon to Charter Fiber if Spectrums hut backup power runs out of power, we lose communications on the turbines and will shut down. Mr. Booth communicated to the Board if it shuts down it just means PMLD or MMWEC cannot see them, but the meter is still running. If the screen freezes up, Mr. Courville can reboot them at the wind site and restore communication, sometimes MWEC will let us know when they lose communication, but the meters are still running. Mr. Harrington let the Board know all safeguards are in place. Mr. Booth mentioned we have a lot of batteries; some batteries are there for safely shut down the machine.

Mr. Strong asked if the historical rate information was available. He is curious if we were not paying for the transmission & demand charges it would be easy to calculate how much debt we still owed and have been paying the last 10 years. Commissioner Chase mentioned we do not have the detail information from the last 10 years.

Commissioner Rys mentioned to the Board he recently attended a panel session on wind sites. The average age of a wind site is 20 years. Ours will be paid off when our turbines are 19 years old. Hopefully down the road we could find someone who could replace the turbines and operate them. The best option would be to continue operating them and get the most revenue as we can and hope maintenance cost stay at a minimum.

Commissioner Rys spoke with Mr. Rick White who told him he currently has approximately 9 applicants for the position of General Manager. The committee will need to be sworn in by the Town Clerk. He may activate the committee in a couple of weeks.

Commissioner Rys made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Chase second it.at 5:17 pm. (2-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

***Karen Mammone
Recording Secretary***