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## **MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC POWER ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Minutes**

**September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**HMLD Community Room, 1 Holden Street, Holden, MA**

**6:00 pm**

**Members present: Peter Elkas, Steve Sendrowski, Scott Carlson, Ryan McCarthy, Richard Farrell and Dan Golden**

**Member not present: Pete Liddy**

**Staff present: Barry Tupper, General Manager – HMLD; Callie Knower, AM – Mike Viano, Sr Working Foreman**

**Public Present: Dennis Mahoney, 56 Fox Hill Dr thanked Barry for continuing to work on the battery storage project.**

#### **Determination of quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by S Sendrowski and determined there was a quorum.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

*Motion by R. Farrell, seconded by D Golden to approve the July 27, 2023 minutes. Unanimously approved.*

#### **Financials**

C Knower shared the financials.

- Operating revenues are \$1million higher than we budgeted, and power production expense are \$1.5 million under budget.
- The only other major variances from budget to actual is that miscellaneous distribution expense is underbudget \$46,000.00. Maintenance of Overhead/Underground lines is over budget \$46,000.00. This is due to the winter storms we had and the need for mutual aid which total approximately \$150,00.00. Other General Expenses which includes transportation expense is over budget \$104,000; mainly due to truck expenses. The depreciation expense is showing underbudget by \$160,000. This is because we have moved to quarterly transfers instead of monthly, this was an agreement we made with the Treasurer's Office mid-year.
- The HMLD's total metered load for the month of August was 9,603,586 kWh, which is a 19% decrease from the 2022 figures.
- HMLD hit a demand of 19,400 on August 21st at 7:00pm.
- The total transmission costs were \$326,245.68.
- MMWEC's NextZero program completed 6 residential home energy audits during the month. The total rebates for the month were \$10,627.00 (Cool homes \$8,300, WiFi thermostats \$227.00, Appliances \$1,100 and HEI rebates \$1,000)
- As of August, arrears totaled \$50,280.77. \$7,071.92 of that is a past due receivable for pole damages, not electric use. Our electric past due balance is \$43,208.85 of that amount, \$23,284.97 is from 60+ day protected accounts due to financial hardship, age or medical.

- Barry and I have been monitoring the power costs, resettlements and future power cost projections. At this time, we feel confident that as of 10/1/23 we can lower the PCA charge by \$.04 per kWh. This will bring our residential PCA cost to \$.1035 cents per kWh. The blended PCA charge rate for all classes will be \$.0912. As of 10/1 this will bring the total blended rate to \$.1401 per kWh. This \$.04 decrease will bring the average 750kWh users bill down about \$30 per month or 22%. Along with the rate change, we will be able to transfer \$1million from operating to rate stabilization before year end to recover the amount we transferred out last year when we needed to fund the working capital balance.
- Discussed the solar billing issues and that next month HMLD would be sending a letter with the statements to explain how the solar bills are read.

### **Manager's Miscellaneous**

B Tupper shared updates:

- Introduced new member Ryan McCarthy one of our new members. Steve, Peter Elkas, Peter Liddy and Rich Farrell – extended their appointment another three years. HMLD Staff thanks all of the Board members for their service.
- Mike Viano – Sr Working Foreman is here to do the operations update.
- RP3 Application – checks and balance for all parts of the utility, safety and training and policies and procedures. Callie took the reigns and got all the documents submitted today. We hope to hear early next year the results.
- Battery Storage – extremely close but there has been a lot of meetings and conversation over the contracts. One last tweak made, waiting on the final approval and we will hopefully sign the final agreement tomorrow. We did make one change, the battery is now going to be a 5 MW battery, the numbers worked better. This unit is more robust and can handle more. Life of the battery should be 70% after 20 years. Our meters will be able to be on there to monitor and ensure the efficiency is what it should be.
- Director of Operations and Engineering position created and posted. The AGM position will not be filled. We hope to do interviews next week. Peter Elkas asked what the pool looks like, we are confident if someone is stronger in operations or engineering we can fill the void.
- Bucket Truck for \$250,000 in the 2023 budget, finally signed agreement which is \$191k over budget. The truck is on order, we won't see it anytime soon.
- Working on a new bylaw for tree removal. James is working with the town to create a bylaw that will need to be voted by the Town. This will hopefully help with the forestry issues in town.
- Wood Chip, Pole and Wood waiver this is so that if someone in town wants one of these items it allows us to give it to them. The waiver takes away liability from us.
- Liens for failure to pay went out this week. We can lien the property if the payment is not made.
- Supervisory training starting next week with Police, Fire and DPW. These departments are taking midlevel supervisors to this training.
- Christmas wreaths are being worked on, the lights and bows were weathered. 150 wreaths are put up and all lights need to be pulled off and replaced as well as the bows. Joe is working on the most efficient way to do it. Very labor intensive.
- Public Power Luncheon at the Senior center – Wednesday October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Greg our custodian is doing the cooking again.

### **Operations Update**

M Viano shared updates:

- Outages in August (8 instances with a total of 144 outages), nothing major. (14 of which were scheduled)
- Transformer Repairs – Working with T&R with failed transformers for re-build or repaired TSI has been terminated with this process.

- The Forestry division – In the process of finishing Reservoir St, also trimming on Princeton St. 40 spans complete.
- We are getting ahead of the curve making great progress using the NJUNS system and the removal of the double poles throughout the town.
- Jefferson Mill project “cut-over” is completed. Meter have been installed.
- GML has completed the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of pole testing which consists of (278) poles. Out of the 278 poles that were tested 23 poles were failures. Line crews are replacing poles daily
- (On going) equipment upgrades, changing porcelain cutouts to polymer. Pump stations have been completed except one.
- Multiple developments, projects, new services and service upgrades are in the works and completed. Some of which are as follows: Reservoir St open wire (copper) replacement to tree wire & pole replacements, 619 South Rd, Elmwood Ave (on going). Fisher Rd EXT. (in process) Sunshine Ridge (proposed estimate has been sent) Paquette line rebuild (in process) Worcester water primary metering replacement, Jackson Woods (on-going), Tea Party (on-going), 570 Wachusett St (completed)

#### 2022-2023 Capital Budget Updates

- The Bullard street circuit expansion update:
  - The cut over on Bullard Street is 99% complete (one pole left to transfer)
  - Bi-annually testing has been completed with UPG (no major issues)
  - Wifi extender has been installed
- Chaffins substation update:
  - G. Greene is finishing up the landscaping
  - Wifi extenders have been installed
- AMI update
  - Testing has begun with First Article Test Meters and Infrastructure components.
  - October 1<sup>st</sup> we will receive cellular access points which are key components to move forward with the testing and installation process
  - We are changing to all 10 cellular access points versus 5 cellular and 5 fiber/ethernet.
  - The Network (tunnel) between Itron and the town servers are integrated and functional.
  - We have increased the meter count order as we are adding from the original amount ordered years ago when the project started.
- Personnel
  - Spencer Pollier has been promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lineman
- Building improvements
  - Wifi/internet has been installed
- Mutual Aid – Concord, MA
  - On September 8<sup>th</sup> there was a bad rainstorm in Concord, MA. Ben Allen and Stephen Gustafson went down on Saturday through early morning Sunday.

*Motion by P Elkas, seconded by S Carlson to adjourn the September 28, 2023 meeting at 7:30pm. Unanimously approved.*