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John M. Driscoll, *General Manager*

### **Light Commissioners' Meeting January 13, 2016**

Members present were: Dana Blais, Gregg Edwards, Chris Stewart

Employees present were: John Driscoll, Tom Berry

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Dana.

The agenda was approved on a motion by Chris, seconded by Gregg, 3-0 in favor.

#### **Old Business:**

Some discussion was had between the Board and the Manager on the proposed 2016 Light Budget, mostly on budget overruns from the 2015 Light Budget. The Manager offered explanations as to these overruns in various distribution (#500 accounts) expenses and customer account (#900 accounts) expenses totaling roughly \$88,000 and also provided assurances to the Board that such overruns were not likely in 2016 and stated the reasons for this.

The Board took note of the \$12,200 overrun on the light department audit for 2014. The Manager was not certain on the reasons for the \$24,200 in invoices that the light department had received in 2015 for its 2014 audit, but he stated to the Board that he would look into it. He added that the reason for switching from Braver to Goulet was to have the audit completed faster and this has not happened in the two years that Goulet had performed the light department's financial audit. The Manager also added that for the last two years the light department has had to file extensions with the MA DPU to extend the March 31 deadline for report filing; so this was not being done on time either. The Manager would get in touch with Goulet and report back to the Board. At this time a vote was taken as follows:

*"On a motion by Chris, seconded by Gregg, 3-0 in favor the Board voted to accept the Manager's proposed 2016 Light Budget as presented on this night."*

On the matter of the light department electric rates for 2016 the Manager stated that this had been added erroneously and that there was no planned change up or down with retail electric rates for 2016. He said that the PPCA should be able to remain \$0 per KWH for the year barring any unplanned power plant shutdowns from Millstone or from Seabrook. There was no discussion on 2016 Light Rates.

Just to review, the new Truck #22, a 2016 Ford Explorer had been finally received from MHQ in December 2015, as reported by the Manager to the Board. Also, the old Truck #22, a 2010 Ford

Explorer had been given to the Town's Cemetery & Parks Department. Once the license plates had been successfully transferred the Manager would cancel the insurance on the older vehicle.

The Board was given a document by the Manager outlining the light department's savings from its wholesale generation purchases from the Farnsworth Road Solar Facility. Templeton Light had purchased 4,922 MWH of solar generation in 2015 at a savings of \$191,000 against the market. The Manager reminded the Board that this figure only represented the light department's savings on energy and NOT on capacity and transmission (roughly another \$125,000 on top of the \$191,000).

### **New Business:**

The Board had a discussion on commissioners' salaries which had increased from \$500 to \$1,500 in 2001 following the light department's joining with the Water department 15 years earlier. Dana had proposed that the commissioners should get increases in their annual salaries not just because of the fact that it had been 15 years since an increase but also because they all work, and their time is worth money and they should all be compensated accordingly for it. Dana added that he did not think it was right that all of the other town department's elected officials (except for the sewer department) had received no compensation for their time spent on boards and committees after having to put in many hours at meetings and such. He (Dana) felt that all of the town officials down the line from the selectmen on down should be compensated something for their time of service as elected officials.

Gregg and Chris agreed with Dana's point on the other town officials deserving salaries as they got at the light and water departments but appeared to be split on the matter of whether or not the light and water commissioners should receive an increase. The Manager asked how much of an increase was the Board considering at this time from the \$1,500 level. Dana responded that he thought an increase of \$1,000 per year was fair; there were no objections raised. A vote was taken as follows:

*"On a motion by Dana, seconded by Gregg, 2-1 in favor the Board voted to increase their annual commissioners' salaries from \$1,500 to \$2,500 per commissioner per year effective in January 2016."*

The Manager asked what the distribution should be for the additional \$1,000 in commissioners' salaries; if it should be simply 50/50% from both the light and water departments. The Board agreed that this would be the best way to accomplish the increase.

The Manager told the Board about a meeting he had had with the Town Administrator (TA). He (TA) had asked for this meeting to discuss at a preliminary level the light department's potential contribution to the Town for FY 2017. The Manager did state that he thought it early to have this discussion since the light department had just begun its financial audit for 2015, but Bob wanted to exchange some ideas. Both the Manager and the TA agreed that whatever contribution the light department made it would have to be a specific task or project so that when electric ratepayers asked the Manager or the Board what had been done. They both agreed to come up with some ideas on a road project or something along those lines for FY 2017; the TA did not anticipate any issues with the Town paying their electric and streetlight bills for the upcoming fiscal budget year.

There were four (4) hand-outs that the Manager had prepared for the Board that did not particularly require any specific discussion:

- November, December 2015 KWH Sales/Revenues
- October 2015, November 2015 Power Supply
- November 2015, December 2015 Wind Generation
- December 2015, January 2016 Residential Electric Rate Comparisons

At this time a roll call vote was taken as follows (8:30 p.m.):

*"A motion was made by Dana, seconded by Chris, 3-0 in favor for the Board to enter into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union personnel. The Light Commission believed that if it were to conduct such strategy sessions in Open Session it would have a detrimental effect on the Light Plant's collective bargaining position."*

*Dana – Aye*

*Gregg – Aye*

*Chris – Aye*

There being no other Open Session business to discuss, on a motion by Gregg, seconded by Chris, 3-0 in favor the Light Commissioners' Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John M. Driscoll



General Manager