

Light Commissioners' Meeting
May 29, 2024

Members present were: Dana Blais, Chairman
Clerk/Secretary Chris Stewart

Employees present were: General Manager (GM) John Driscoll
Light Superintendent (LS) Thomas Berry
Business Manager (BM) Jennifer Belliveau

The meeting was called to order at 9:52 a.m. by Dana.

The agenda was approved on a motion from Chris, seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor.

The minutes from April 24, 2024, were approved, on a motion by Chris seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor.

Old Business:

The GM had a handout for the Commissioners on the Light Plant's credit rating from S&P Global. We are reviewed every two years at no charge and in 2022 we had our rating increased to "A". They used 2023 as their sample year for this time around and were pleased to see that with our increased operating costs came increased base electric rates and increased purchased power adjustments. The Light Plant was able to maintain our "A" credit rating for another two years after S&P Global's review this year.

The GM provided the Board with copies of agreements with Northern Data Systems (NDS) who will be providing us a new accounting/billing/general ledger/inventory software system. The Light and Water Plants have utilized the same software package since the 1990s and its functionality based on today's accounting and utility billing needs is limited. NDS is based in

Maine and has several of the MA MLPs already as clients, whom the BM reached out to for the purpose of gathering feedback on the NDS system. The GM is familiar with NDS and has been for twenty plus years and know that they are well regarded by many of his peers in the industry. The other company we reached out to, NISC, formerly SEDC, had an impressive system but for whatever reason could not manage billing quarterly rather than monthly for water bills as opposed to light bills. The NDS system will cost us \$48,640 to install and get going between July 2024 and January 2025, and the cost will be split between light and water. A total maintenance agreement with NDS will be executed immediately at a cost of \$18,492 per year, or \$1,541 per month.

New Business:

The GM went over the power supply expenses for April 2024 and May 2024 and revenues as well. We purchased 5,700 MWh in April for \$481,201 and 5,300 MWh in May for \$448,012. What we sold for the same two months was 5,300 MWh in April for \$863,504 and then 5,000 MWh in May for \$805,755. Because of the \$5M we are required to build up in reserves by December 2028 the PPCA has increased from 2.000¢ per kWh to 3.055¢ per kWh for the rest of 2024. The monthly reserve trust deposits are now \$55,556, up from \$20,000, and the deposits for working capital trust are now \$27,778, up from \$10,000.

The GM presented the board with the next proposal from IBEW Local 104 Union representing the linemen and some office staff here. The Union is proposing market increases this time around, as opposed to all union members getting the same increases, which has been the practice for probably twenty plus years. They said to the GM that a primary reason for this was to put some separation between the wages for foreman versus lead lineman and also between lead lineman and 1st class lineman. The Union would also like to see more paid for weekly standby duty than the current thirteen-and-a-half hours they receive. Their research was done this time around by contacting other linemen at other MA MLPs to see what wages and standby look like for this year (2024) and next year (2025). The GM's figures for this negotiation come from last year (2023) from the MEAM survey completed in November 2023, which the Union didn't get access to in preparation for this next negotiation. The GM only wanted to get the proposal to the Board for their review, he didn't plan on any discussions at this meeting this morning.

The GM told the Board about the change of Trustee for the Massachusetts Municipal Utility Self-Insurance Trust (MMUSIT) , an insurance group that Templeton belongs to that handles their general liability coverage rather than Public Utility Risk Management Association (PURMA). Jon Fitch, the GM for West Boylston MLP, had been the Trustee for at least ten years' time. Panos Tokadjian, the Operations Manager from Hull MLP, has taken over as the new trustee. The

Board was curious what the cap on insurance was for the Trust, as opposed to the \$25M cap with PURMA; the GM will find out.

The GM shared with the Board a legal document drawn up by Attorney Nick Scobbo for the Hull Municipal Lighting Plant regarding a MA DPU investigation that Hull was requesting to be started on National Grid. The Town of Hull is on a peninsula, and its entire 14 MW load is served by two 13.8 KV circuits (Hull 1 and Hull 2) owned and operated by National Grid, which consist of bare conductors on crossarms in heavily treed areas. The amount of power outages experienced by Hull in the past several years was astonishing, as was National Grid's lack of communication with Hull while the outages were ongoing. The MA DPU was supposed to be a state entity charged with advocating for electric ratepayers in MA and this would have been a great opportunity to defend the residents of Hull. But in this case National Grid was found to be correct that their management of those distribution circuits is governed by FERC in the spirit of promoting competition in the electric industry, which is a joke. The Town of Hull cannot decide that they're fed up with National Grid and switch to another distribution/sub-transmission provider, they are effectively stuck with National Grid forever. The GM thought he would share this information with the Board to demonstrate how in a similar situation for us, that we will be on our own, essentially.

Other Business

The Cable TV Committee coordinator in Templeton, Steve Castle, attended this morning's meeting. He began by thanking the Light Plant for our letting them use space at 11 ¾ Elm St for the Town's Cable TV equipment. He brought the matter of the PILOT that the Light Plant used to make to the Town, formerly in the form of a lump sum of cash or, more recently, several services and/or items that the Town needed but couldn't fund. He was suggesting that for the upcoming fiscal year, 2025, the Light Plant could contribute funds to keep the cable committee going. The Town's Cable TV Committee is responsible for providing all of the live TV broadcasts of meetings of the Select Board and other boards/committees in town. His budget is partially funded by portions of the Town's cable tv customer bills paid to Comcast. The amount of Comcast's customers in town had declined over the last few years, and as a result Comcast had informed Steve that the funds that he received would be decreasing by \$50K. So, this is what he said he would need to keep the Cable TV Commission operating in FY2025. Steve was also interested in getting a digital sign to be put in front of Town Hall for \$30K. He said that if the Light Plant did this they could get some sponsor recognition for it by residents in town. Steve would like the opportunity to put on a presentation of sorts at our next board meeting and the Board was amenable to this.

At 10:22 a.m. a vote took place as follows:

On a motion made by Chris, seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor the Board voted to enter Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel.”

Dana - Aye

Chris – Aye

There being no other Open Session business to discuss, on a motion by Chris, seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor the Light Board Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John M. Driscoll
General Manager