

**Mansfield Municipal Electric Department
Minutes of Light Commissioners Meeting
November 20, 2023**

Present: Chair Michael Trowbridge, Vice Chair Neil Rhein, Clerk Maureen Doherty, Commissioner Diana Bren, and Light Department Manager Joseph Sollecito. Commissioner Brendan Roche arrived at 5:38pm.

1) Open Meeting – Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was held at the Mansfield Town Hall Room 3AB and called to order at 5:30 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A complete copy of the Board packet containing all documents that are referenced in the minutes is on file at the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department office.

2) Review and consideration to approve Board Minutes of September 18, 2023

Motion to approve Board Minutes of September 18, 2023. (Doherty/Bren) Passes 4/0.

3) General Manager's Report

a) Review and consideration to approve MMED's FY2023 Audit results (M. Nelligan - Powers and Sullivan)
Mike Nelligan reported that he observed the inventory and it is accurate. He stated that all information was made available to him and that the books are in good shape. MMED's revenue is up by about \$7.6 million, and the operating expenses have also increased by about \$8.7 million. Overall, there was a net loss of \$991,000 in 2023 compared to \$434,000 in 2022. The PILOT of \$781,000 was made both years. OPEB liability is \$579,000 as compared to \$924,000 in 2022. This varies so he cannot speak to what the trend is. He found no inconsistencies and is confident the books are being handled in a reasonable and consistent manner.

Chairman Trowbridge inquired if the audit committee had approved the report, and they have. Clerk Doherty confirmed that the audit committee was satisfied with the report.

Vice Chair Rhein asked about the large increase in operating expenses. Mr. Nelligan stated that was mostly because of the increase in purchased power costs.

Motion to accept the audit report as presented. (Doherty/Roche) Passes 5/0.

b) Review project scope for Office Renovations Project FY24-9 and FY24-14 (J. Humphreys - TBA Architects)
Justin Humphries explained the scope of the project would include updating bathrooms, which are all required, wall demo in the break room, replacing cabinets and mounting a microwave in the kitchen. One large office will be split into two, and another office will be added in the large open office area. Flooring will be replaced in the small kitchen as well. Additionally, the ceiling will be replaced in all the areas where work is being done rather than piece together old and new systems. The construction bid estimate is \$177,560, and with contingencies the total budget is \$219,600.

Clerk Doherty inquired about installing a shower for women. Mr. Humphries stated that there is a space that could be updated later if necessary. Clerk Doherty said it would be cheaper to do it now than later. She also identified space 103B as a shower, and Manager Sollecito clarified that was the one next to his office that was available for anyone to use.

Commissioner Bren inquired about whether there was the possibility of finding issues, such as with the plumbing, once work begins. The belief is that there will not be any issues, but she asked to have that considered. There was additional discussion regarding a women's shower. Location was discussed, as well as the possibility of a unisex shower room. The commissioners agreed that it would make more sense to add it now rather than try to do it at a later date. Chair Trowbridge suggested upping the budget to \$240,000 to accommodate building a second shower. After considering contingencies, that number was increased to \$250,000.

Motion to approve the design plans with the addition of a women's shower with a budget not to exceed \$250,000. (Doherty/Roche) Passes 5/0.

c) Review and consideration to approve L. Anderson recommendation regarding 2024 rebate program
Manager Sollecito explained that the DOER requires a minimum RCS investment from municipal light plants. He also explained that for the weatherization rebate MMED will match 50%, up to \$1000. He explained that administration costs were related to internal time spent on the program as well as MMWEC's time.

Motion to approve the 2024 Rebate Incentive Program with no changes except to SEER and HSPF ratings. (Doherty/Bren) Passes 5/0

d) Review and consideration to approve H. Jaffari recommendation to award transformer solicitations
Manager Sollecito reviewed a memo from Engineer Hamid Jaffari regarding recommendations for transformer bid awards. Due to the pandemic, prices have increased as have delivery times. Taking this into account, not all lowest bidders were recommended to be accepted. For the three-phase pad mount transformer, it was recommended that the bid be awarded to Power Sales Inc due to their estimated delivery time being half the time the low bidders offered. All other transformers were recommended to be awarded to the lowest bidders.

e) Review FY2025 Payment in lieu of Taxes (PILOT) memo from Barry LaCasse, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director and consideration to approve recommendation

The Town's commercial tax rate has dropped over the past several years. Because of this, the PILOT MMED would owe to the Town has decreased by \$100,887 from last year. Such a shortage would have a detrimental impact to the Town's operating budget. Therefore, the Town requests that the Light Commissioners approve a PILOT for 2025 that is equal to the previous year, namely \$780,960.

Chairman Trowbridge explained that the board had agreed that although there could be fluctuation in the amounts of the PILOT, they would not go below what the previous year's payment was because of the difficulty that causes in financial planning.

Motion: That the Light Commissioners approve the PILOT in the amount of \$780,960 for FY 25. (Doherty/Bren) Passes 5/0

f) Project updates: Gilbert Street storage shed and gate and garage door project

Manager Sollecito stated that the Gilbert Street storage shed had been bid out for a second time and still did not have any qualified bidders. Eleven entities took out paperwork, two were returned but were not correct. MMED has received approval from the District Attorney's office to break out the project into sections to be able to bid out the different parts of the work.

Additionally, the gate and garage door project had a walk-through and question and answer session. The bid is expected to go out shortly with the results to be presented to the board in December.

g) Discussion of Electric Vehicle (EV) charger infrastructure

The train station parking lot was identified as a location to place an EV charging station. However, since that lot is only available for Town residents, it means the charger would not be truly open to the public, and therefore not able to use grant money for it. Manager Sollecito asked for suggestions for other locations.

4) Citizens Questions & Comments - None

5) Comments from the Commissioners

Vice Chair Rhein asked Manager Sollecito to discuss the latest rate comparisons. He then explained that MMED had to hedge and raise the rates over the last few years. However, they still never reached the

halfway mark. The rates are now down as low as he is comfortable with, and have stabilized. The industrial rates are second or third lowest as well.

6) Any items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting – None

7) Vote to enter into Executive Session for the following reasons and to NOT return to open session

- a) Review and consideration to approve minutes of September 18, 2023 Executive Session where Exemption 10 was declared
- b) Pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 164, Section 47D and M.G.L. C. 30, Section 21, Exemption 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (IBEW 104) if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares
- c) Adjourn

Motion: To enter into executive session and not return to open session:

(Doherty/Bren) Roll call vote: Roche – Yes, Doherty – Yes, Bren – Yes, Rhein – Yes, Trowbridge - Yes Passes 5/0.

Respectfully submitted: Katherine Duggan


Signature of Clerk


Date of Approval