

Open Session Minutes of December 18 , 2013

Meeting of the Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant Board

Present Commissioners: Kevin Lashua, Mark Carlisle & Stan Herriott, Manager

Absent Richard Ahlin

Chairman Carlisle called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Customer or Citizen Comments: None

Secretary Carlisle pointed out that since Chairman Ahlin was not in attendance and Commissioner Lashua was not present for the last meeting there would not be a quorum for voting of the November Meeting Minutes. The Minutes from the November 20, 2013 would have to be held again for voting at the January meeting which is scheduled for January 15 , 2014.

Secretary Carlisle opened a discussion on the 2014 Operating Budget and Capital Budget. Manager Herriott presented a chart representing the major budget expenditures expected for the upcoming year. The overall budget is expected to be 5.3 million dollars. The budget is expected to remain static for the upcoming year. The top three expenses being the purchase of power cost, expected to be in the area of 3 million dollars, payroll expense of 640 thousand dollars followed by contributions to the depreciation fund of 275 thousand dollars.

The capital budget was also discussed and as presented is expected to be 593 thousand dollars. The top four expenses for this is a new digger derrick truck with an estimated cost of 240 thousand dollars, the pole replacement program for 130 thousand dollars, replacing the some of our current meters at a cost of 120 thousand dollars, lastly the replacing of the Manger's vehicle at a cost of \$25 thousand dollars.

Manager Herriott explained that he had spoken with Chairman Ahlin earlier in the day. Chairman Ahlin indicated he was fine with voting on the proposed budget for 2014 even though he would not likely be able to attend the meeting. Secretary Carlisle called for a vote to approve the 2014 operating and the capital budget as presented. The motion was made by Commissioner Lashua and seconded by Commissioner Carlisle. The vote was unanimous.

Manager Herriott went over the proposed changes to the Terms and Conditions. The review was initiated by the Insurance Trust which we are members of. The Trust Manager suggested that we review our Terms and Conditions to ensure they would meet any legal challenges that may occur. The proposed changes were mostly housekeeping issues. Manager Herriott stated they did not need to vote tonight. It could wait until the January meeting when the full Board is in attendance. The Commissioners agreed to hold the vote until then.

Receipts through November \$ 4,681,191.00

Expenses through November \$ 4,457,794.00

Manager Herriott stated the budget remains on tract.

Managers Expenses: \$242.07 with was the cost for dinner for 9 employees.

Manager Herriott reported that the pole replacement program was going well. All the poles have been set and we are working on completing the transfers. Manager Herriott stated that many of the transfers had been completed. However, pole removal would likely have to wait until spring when the ground thaws. It is too hard on the equipment to remove the poles now.

The Solar Project was energized Tuesday December 10, 2013. It will be turned on and off over the next few days to allow for additional equipment to be installed. The solar field has been energized for a couple of days now. Gro Solar is completing testing and snow removal. It is expected that the system will begin limited production due to the snow cover on the panels over the next couple of weeks.

Manager Herriott is still working with Attorney Scobbo on the pole attachment rates for Comcast. Peabody Light has agreed to join the process which will help with legal costs. Comcast has made an offer to pay the full amount billed this year. Then reducing the payment to 70% of the full amount next year and then moving to the BECO settlement that stems from a DPU case in 1998. It is the opinion of the group and our attorney that the BECO agreement does not necessary apply and that we should push the issue just a little further. We have one thing on our side that the DPU agrees that the BECO settlement does not necessary cover everyone. I believe that Comcast does not really want this to become a sleeping giant, most of the other municipals have just agreed to the BECO method. As for Ashburnham changing to the BECO method means losing about 50% of our annual pole attachment fee from Comcast which would result in the loss of about 23 thousand dollars annually. Attorney Scobbo is drafting a response to the Comcast proposal. The discussions will be on going.

Manager Herriott went briefly over the following;

- Write off of some old bad debt which totaled \$240.53 this debt is contributed to customers walking way. We do keep a record of bad debt so should these customers they try to return to Ashburnham and get service in their name they will have to settle this account first.
- DPU requesting that we extend the shut off moratorium until April 1, 2014, we will comply.
- New Helps program overview and forms for 2014
- MEAM Meeting schedule for 2014
- Manager Herriott mentioned that we will be having a small get together at the Light Department on January 31, 2014 in the afternoon for Don Bisbee's retirement if they would like to attend.

There was no Executive Session.

The meeting is scheduled for January 15 , 2014 at 7:00 P.M.

A motion was made by Commissioner Carlisle to adjourn and was seconded by Commissioner Lashua. The vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Carlisle

Secretary