

***Paxton Municipal Light Department
578 Pleasant Street
Paxton, MA 01612-1300
Light Commission Meeting
September 27, 2022***

- I. Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Benoit at 5:30 p.m. Members present: Michael Benoit, Emerson Wheeler, Yvette Orell, and Tara Rondeau, Manager. Public Attending: Bob Clark, Mr. and Mrs. Kodra.
- II. Approval of Agenda: Orell motioned to approve the agenda; Wheeler seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.
- III. Approval of Minutes: Wheeler motioned to approve the August 23, 2022, minutes; Orell seconded. Motion passed 3-0.
- IV. Public Comment: Bob Clark wanted to talk with the Board about a letter he received from the Manager regarding the streetlights on Olivia Knoll. He did not understand why the lights needed to be changed and claimed that the prior foreman had told him "to do what he wanted" regarding the lights. The Manager explained that originally, she had voiced her concerns to the Planning Board about the Town's acceptance of the streetlights, since the installed number of lights did not match the submitted plans. She was also concerned about maintenance costs since PMLD does not stock that brand and style of light. The Planning Board asked the Light Dept. to address the issues with Mr. Clark. The Planning Board had also recently provided the Manager with a drawing from the By-Laws that depicts acceptable heights and distancing of streetlights. Before the meeting, the Manager had sent that drawing to Mr. Clark explaining that the installed lights exceeded the maximum allowable height of 16'. Mr. Clark feels that his lights are superior to PMLD's and can not understand the need to change them. Benoit reiterated the Manager's concerns about maintenance and upkeep, the number of lights installed versus the number on the original blueprints and whether the Town would adopt all the lights.

The Kodras wanted to voice their concerns about safety should any lights be removed and request that a fourth light be installed. They provided the Manager with a letter from the Nygen family voicing similar concerns. Benoit explained to the Kodras that requests for additional streetlights must be made to the Board of Selectmen.

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Clark had been provided with a quote to remove the existing lights, purchase new lights, and replace them with ones like PMLD's. Benoit suggested Clark purchase the materials and PMLD would provide the labor for free. Mr. Clark stated that he felt that the Planning Board was passing the buck to the Light Department because of all the problems that he has had over the years with the Town. Benoit reminded Clark that he was there to discuss Light Department issues only.

Mr. Clark became upset and said that although he felt Benoit's offer was fair, he refused to spend one more dime in Paxton, he would get his lawyer involved. At that point, Mr. Clark and the Kodras exited the meeting.

- V. Managers' Report:
 - A. Operations and Electrical Systems Updates:
 1. The linemen:
 - a. Performed streetlight maintenance on two lights on Pleasant St., one light on N. Pleasant St., one on Suomi St., one on West St. and one on Baxter Dr.

- b. Continued trimming on Indian Hill Rd., Suomi St., and West St.
 - c. Removed branches on the lines on South St., West St., Richards Ave., Brigham Rd., Grove St., and Spring St.
 - d. Relocated a house service for new siding on Grove St.
 - e. Removed a pole butt on Pleasant St. that had been damaged in a MVA.
 - f. Responded to a call from the Fire Dept. to pull a meter due to a house fire on Holbrook St.
 - g. Installed meters at 190 West St. and 74 Richards Ave. for new solar arrays. The towns solar limit has now been capped.
 - h. Repaired a URD streetlight on Pleasant St.
 - i. Pumped out the manhole at the substation.
 - j. Ran new wire and reenergized the house service on Holbrook St.
 - k. Inspected poles town wide for rot.
 - l. Installed PVC pipe for a new construction home on Suomi St.
 - m. Responded to a half power call on Marshall St. A tree had been struck by lightning causing their breaker to trip.
2. They worked with UPG to complete substation maintenance. It passed all safety checks. UPG stated that everything looked good, and in their opinion, the transformer is 40+ years old and should be updated.
 3. Outages:
 - August 23rd: Substation breaker tripped during storm. Caused numerous blips in the system but no real outage.
 - August 30th: South St. Tree came down, took down the wire and pole. Affected 164 customers for 2 hours.
 - August 30th: Burtenmar Circle. Connection to a transformer failed. Affected 9 customers, lasting 1 hour.
 - August 31st: Pleasant St. MVA. Affected 1 customer for 4 hours.
 - September 17th: Grove St. and Pond St. Squirrel blew two fuses. Affected 38 customers lasting 70 minutes.

B. Office and Operations

1. PMLD's accounts receivable 90 days past due balance is \$6,479. Last year at this same time, it was \$8,650.
2. Fifth round of shutoff notices went out. There were thirteen 18-day notices and forty 3-day notices. All were paid and there were no shutoffs.
3. Cherie has returned from her medical leave.
4. The Manager and Billing Clerk have been working with the water department to track down some billing discrepancies with commercial customers.
5. The Manager went to the APPA Conference in Savannah, GA. from Sept. 18th-21st attending workshops on trends within the industry, rate structure and federal grants. The Manager also attended the PURMA insurance conference in Salem MA. on Sept. 22nd. They discussed HR topics and had legal counsel available for questioning.
6. Steve Doucette received a judgement in PMLD's favor against a man who took down one of our utility poles last year. Insurance would not cover the costs, since they claimed

the car was stolen and subsequently sold it.

7. PMLD has a new mission statement, vision, and goals. This was a collaborative effort between the Manager and office staff.
 8. Travis provided us with a quote, \$7000, for changing out the existing guardrails on Suomi St. across from the substation.
- C. June Financials: Operating revenue decreased over May by \$68,000. This was largely in part due to a 200,000 kwh decrease in residential sales and 80,000 kwh decrease in sales from AMC. Power costs decreased by \$38,600. Overall net income decreased from May by \$83,000. The \$217,000 payment to Worcester County Regional Retirement was paid this month. Non-operating income decreased by \$40,850. This is due to investment losses. At the end of June there was \$99,000 left in PPA liability.
- D. MMWEC Updates-There has been no more information provided about the Mayflower Wind project. MMWEC is looking into other Offshore wind projects as well as some small nuclear projects. All are too soon to provide any information.
- Regarding the prior battery proposals, MMWEC settled on the company Delorean. It would be a 20-year agreement, splitting capacity and transmission savings 56/44. MMWEC projects that PMLD would save over the 20 years \$8.3 million in transmission and capacity costs. Of which, \$4.3 million would be paid to Delorean. Benoit asked about PMLD purchasing a battery outright, so the savings do not have to be split. MMWEC did not provide those estimates. The Manager will get them for the next meeting.
- For the last two months, the ISO bills have had additional charges for Mystic. ISO received a waiver to keep Mystic units 8 and 9 open after 2022. They fear that if they shut down both units, the LNG terminal, which contributes 435 million cubic feet of gas per day to New England pipelines and gas utilities would cause the facility to close triggering an economic death spiral. The recovery charge costs to ensure "fuel security" are being passed on to utilities. ISO has not provided MMWEC with any breakdown of their charges, which MMWEC is fighting to receive.
- E. AMI Updates: To date, 765 meters have been installed.
- F. Fiber Updates: The Manager hired with The Matrix Group for the fiber feasibility study.

VI. Other Business:

1. National Grid reported that they will be increasing their rates by 64% and Eversource by 46%.
2. On September 23rd, we held the joint Employee Appreciation Day with neighboring light departments. Since it was well received, the managers agreed it would be nice to do annually.
3. The Manager has been elected to be on the NEPPA By-Law committee.

VII. Adjourn: Orell motioned to adjourn; Wheeler seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

The Next Meeting is October 26th, 2022, at 5:30 pm.

Approved Minutes Submitted on behalf of the Paxton Light Commission

by Tara Rondeau on 10/26/22 Tara Rondeau

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