

*Paxton Municipal Light Department*  
*578 Pleasant Street*  
*Paxton, MA 01612-1300*  
*Light Commission Meeting*  
February 9, 2021  
Via Zoom

- I. Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Orell at 6:07 p.m. Members present via Zoom: Yvette Orell, Mike Benoit, and Tara Rondeau, Manager. Emerson Wheeler was having connection issues and joined the meeting at 6:20 pm. Public Attending Via Zoom: None.
- II. Approval of Agenda: Benoit motioned to approve the agenda; Orell seconded. Motion passed 2-0.
- III. Approval of Minutes: Benoit motioned to approve the January 12, 2021 minutes; Orell seconded the motion. Motion passed 2-0.
- IV. Public Comment: None
- V. Managers' Report:
  - A. Operations and Electrical Systems Updates:
    1. The linemen started trimming and chipping on South Street.
    2. They:
      - a. Upgraded a transformer on Suomi Street.
      - b. Installed primary wire and the neutral for a new service on Suomi Street.
      - c. Dug, set and transferred a pole on Blackhill Road and another on Pleasant St.
      - d. Tested, connected and energized a residential solar array on Iron Forge.
      - e. Tested, connected and energized a residential solar array on Howard Street.
      - f. Installed a transformer pad on West St.
      - g. Replaced a failing meter on West St.
      - h. Repaired streetlights on: Marshall St, Lancelot Dr, Camelot and at the entrance to Alrene Dr.
    3. The linemen began dressing poles on Grove Street for the upgrading of the primary wire and to rework the poles
    4. The foreman met with the electrician at AMC to coordinate the installation of the EV Charger.
    5. The foreman completed the ChargePoint EV Charger University.
    6. Outages:
      - a. Pleasant Street, no power to one customer due to a broken primary tap. The commercial customer was without power all day, PMLD was not informed of the outage until the end of the day.
      - b. Grove Street- no power to one customer due to a blown fuse.
  - B. Office and Operations:
    1. Office staff is still rotating days in the office and working remotely on the off days.

2. The office will remain closed to the public until the staff have been vaccinated.
  3. PMLD's accounts receivable 90 days past due balance is \$27, 981.10. Last year at this same time it was \$29, 505.98.
  4. Landis & Gyr is in production of PMLD's meters. Estimated lead time is 8 weeks. Before we get the meters, we need to get the networking components in place which should be in within the next 4 weeks. Landis and Gyr will be on site for the installation of the routers and connectors.
  5. PMLD is working with AMC's electrician on the installation of the EV charger. It should be installed by the end of February and operable the beginning of March.
  6. PMLD will be renting a generator through a program MMWEC implemented last summer to help munis shave their peak. After all rental costs, MMWEC estimates that PMLD will save \$100,000. The program will run from June to Sept. Last year they ran the generators a total of seven (7) times. The generators only run on the peak times for roughly 3-4 hours. The generator will be housed at the substation.
- C. Fiber Optic Update/911 System: The fiber lines have all been run for Phase I. Phoenix will be splicing this week in Paxton and installing the mount rack for the hub in the PMLD garage. There have been no announcements concerning Phase II.
- D. Financials-December 2020: December revenue decreased from November by \$15,021. The financials show that power costs decreased, this number is not accurate since all power billings have not been processed and recorded for December. Assets and liabilities increased by \$207,612. This is due to an adjustment the auditors made for PMLD's portion of the pensions based on the actuary report from the WCRR, which was a 6.2% increase in pensions from the prior year. All rate classes experienced a slight decrease in sales from November.
- E. Solar: 2 new residential solar arrays have been energized, bringing PMLD's total solar in town to 118.31kw.
- F. Rates and Lease lights:

**Rates:** The manager provided the board with the proposed rate changes as discussed at the last meeting. Capacity and energy charges will be reduced while the transmission and distribution charges will be increased. The overall impact would decrease customer charges by \$.01 kw. All rate classes would have their monthly customer charge increased by \$2.50. Demand charges would increase by \$1.25 per kW. The monthly customer charge for solar customers would increase to \$25.

The new rates will take effect May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and be reflected in the June bills. The manager will send out a newsletter to all customers informing them of the rate changes. A note will also be added to the April and May bills and a press release will be sent to The Landmark.

**Leaselights:** Proposed increases to the current monthly lease light charge:

50 & 70 watt:	\$1.00
100 watt:	\$3.00
175 & 250 watt:	\$5.00
1/22 Shared:	\$.23

Benoit made a motion to accept the rate changes, Wheeler seconded the motion. Vote taken to accept the new rates:

Roll call:

Benoit: "aye"

Wheeler: "aye"

Orell: "aye"

Motion passed 3-0.

VI. Job Review-Manager

Each of the commissioners provided the Manager with a completed job review. Everyone gave the manager "meeting expectations" or "exceeding expectations". Benoit asked the manager if she had any questions or comments. The manager stated that she appreciated the feedback and noted that Yvette had written in a comment about providing the Board with more information regarding PMLD's power projects and their status. The manager noted that she had not provided that information for this meeting but will do so going forward.

Benoit asked the manager how much of her work from her prior position had been delegated to others. He was asking only to note that her time should be spent in the management role and freed up for her to attend the meetings for the boards she has recently been elected to: MMWEC auditing committee, NYPA, and MEAM executive committees. The manager stated that she has delegated the bulk of her prior responsibilities to others but with covid and remote assignments it has made it much harder to train others on the accounting. The manager would add this to the job review as one of her goals. Benoit stated that the manager has a contract, and her salary is not controlled by the interview process. Orell reminded everyone that the contract would be expiring at the end of 2021.

Benoit motioned to accept the job review as satisfactory for Tara's performance. Wheeler seconded the motion.

Roll call:

Benoit: "aye"

Wheeler: "aye"

Orell: "aye"

Motion passed 3-0.

VII. Other Business:

A. The manager posted an ad for a first-class linemen. The interviews will begin next week.

B. The manager asked the board about the increasing monthly customer charges for e-checks and credit cards. Did PMLD want to follow what many other companies do in charging the fee back to the customer? The Board discussed the pros and cons and decided to keep things as they stand.

C. Benoit asked about the MMWEC newsletters which he used to receive in the mail and no longer does. The Board would like to have MMWEC newsletters forwarded to them.

D. Benoit asked whose term was up this year. Yvette stated that she was. The caucus will be held the same night as our next board meeting. Benoit suggested that the board meeting be moved up a half hour to allow them to also attend the Town Meeting.

VIII. Adjourn-Benoit motioned to adjourn, Orell seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

The Next Meeting is March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Approved Minutes Submitted on behalf of the Paxton Light Commission

by Tara Rondeau on 3/9/21 Tara Rondeau

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