

Paxton Municipal Light Department
578 Pleasant Street
Paxton, MA 01612-1300
Light Commission Meeting
November 9, 2021

- I. Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Wheeler at 5:31 p.m. Members present: Emerson Wheeler, Yvette Orell, Mike Benoit, and Tara Rondeau, Manager. Public Attending: None.
- II. Approval of Agenda: Benoit motioned to approve the agenda; Orell seconded. Motion passed 3-0.
- III. Approval of Minutes: Benoit motioned to approve the October 12th, 2021, minutes; Orell seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.
- IV. Public Comment: None
- V. Managers' Report:
 - A. Operations and Electrical Systems Updates:
 - 1. The linemen have continued trimming and chipping on West Street.
 - 2. They:
 - a. Performed lease light maintenance on Stereo Lane.
 - b. Performed streetlight maintenance on Elizabeth Lane and Village Rd.
 - c. Replaced a house knob on Marshall St.
 - d. Changed out nonreading meters on Old Lantern Circle and Grove St.
 - e. Removed a pole on Marshall St. that was replaced in 2016. Verizon just transferred.
 - f. Pulled in wire on Marshall St for a new home.
 - g. Worked in Spencer doing routine streetlight maintenance.
 - h. Performed street patrols after recent storms.
 - 3. The foreman attended a GF roundtable meeting in Holden to discuss the direction of the NEPPA Apprentice Line School. They were looking for new ideas and discussing how to deal with upcoming retirements and trainer shortages.
 - 4. The lineman replaced all the garage lights with motion sensed LED lights.
 - 5. We are down 2 trucks. One of the line trucks was sent in for brake issues and the foreman's pickup truck went in for a recall and to fix the 4x4.
 - 6. Outages:
 - a. October 26th: Marshall St. Tree came down on house service. Affected 1 customer. Power was restored within an hour.
 - b. October 27th: Crystal St. Falling branches took out secondary service on a home, affecting 1 customer. The customer needed an electrician to reconnect their meter socket. The customer came in to let the manager know how happy he was with the service that he received from the linemen and how quickly his power was restored.

- c. October 27th: Brooks St. Primary was pulled off insulator pin causing the cutout door to open. 1 customer was affected.

B. Office and Operations

1. Sent out lien warning letters to 61 customers. Currently, only 26 of the 61 are still on the lien list.
2. PMLD received a check from Worcester Community Action Council for \$25,300. That helped a lot of the customers who had pending liens.

Benoit asked how we chose to apply the payment to the customer accounts. The manager informed the board that WCAC supplied a list of customers who were to receive the benefits along with the amount for each.

3. PMLD's accounts receivable 90 days past due balance is \$14, 850. Last year at this same time, it was \$58, 619.50.
4. Completed 2nd round of interviews for the open lineman's position. Ben Smith of Holden Forestry division was chosen. He starts on Monday, November 8th.
5. Landis & Gyr is scheduled to be at PMLD Dec 7-9th to install the network gateways and start with the meters.

C. Financials July 2021:

July revenue increased from June by \$75,642. Significant increase in residential and commercial sales in July. Purchased power costs increased by \$18,934 which was for the generator rental at the substation. Overall net income increased by \$51,000 from June. These financials do not reflect any changes to our investments held with the treasurer. The Manager was not able to balance the July investments with what was provided from the investment firm. There will be a meeting with the firm and the treasurer to get a better understanding of their reporting versus our record keeping.

D. MMWEC Project Updates:

Seabrook: In September, Seabrook operated at 100% power until the last week when it began to coast down its operation by 1% each day in anticipation of the planned fueling outage on October 2nd. The next refueling will be in the spring of 2023. The NRC has ruled the ASR monitoring mitigation plans set to be put in place by 2026 are sufficient and will remain in place until 2050. They also deemed the structure operable.

Millstone: For the month of September, 100% availability factor and 99.46% capacity factor. It operated at 100% until September 24th when it was reduced to 95% power for turbine valve testing. It returned to 100% power that same day. In April 2022, a MUR (Measurement Uncertainty Recovery) power up rate will be performed along with major maintenance to the generator and exciter during its next scheduled refueling outage. The MUR is expected to increase Millstone 3's output by 20 MW.

Stony Brook: In September, the peaking units availability factor was 77.27% and capacity factor was .17%. The intermediate unit availability factor was 80.05% and the capacity factor was .04%. Stony Brooks fuel oil inventory is down to 37.8% of its total usable storage capacity. An annual outage was performed on September 25th at which time they replaced 20 transmission poles, repaired a gas turbine tamper and ducted work, and installed carbon dioxide fire suppression for all 5 gas turbines. The peaking unit ran 6 times in Sept. and the intermediate unit ran twice.

Berkshire Wind: In September, availability factor was 94.17% and capacity factor was 28.4%. Total production in September was 3067 MWh higher than the historical average monthly production of 2869 MWh. MMWEC attributes that to preventative maintenance performed in August.

Eagle Creek: Produced 2729 MWh at 32.8% capacity factor which is much higher than the same month last year.

Hancock Wind: Produced 8032 MWh at 21.9% capacity factor which is much less than the same time last year. Considered normal for this time of year.

ISO/NEPOOL Activities: More resources are expected to enter the capacity market in the next year or two. ISO wants to do away with the MOPR (Minimum Offer Price Rule) to allow these newer resources to compete in the market. Currently the MOPR prevent these resources from clearing the capacity market. MMWEC predicts this will create a disorderly exit of current available resources that are needed to run the system reliably. NEPOOL commissioned an External Market Monitor to evaluate the risk to merchants' generators if the MOPR is removed. Their analysis showed that it would increase market risk, which in turn increased the return on equity and the cost of debt. It is still too early for MMWEC to make projections about clearing prices.

FERC Order 2222: This order requires that distributed energy resource aggregations be able to participate in wholesale markets on equal footing with other resources. This is voluntary for utilities with less than 4 million MWhs in annual sales, so it would be voluntary for Paxton.

MMWEC Recap of Summer Generator Rental: MMWEC is currently performing a thorough cost analysis of the savings (cost avoidance) for PMLD from the summer generator rental program. Their preliminary numbers, provided for the sake of this meeting, suggest PMLD will avoid \$101,000 in transmission and capacity costs after expenses next year. Milton Cat refunded us for July's rental costs as well as compensation for the linemen's overtime.

- E. **Fiber-Internet:** We have received 751 mail in surveys and 80 online. The survey results will be provided at the next meeting. For an idea of where things stand, question #1 asked, "If new or alternate high-speed internet were available would you be interested?" 654 said yes, 35 said no, 124 said possibly and 18 did not answer the question.

Benoit stated that he was impressed with the number of surveys returned and looked forward to seeing the end results.

VI. Other Business:

- A. **Managers Contract and MEAM Survey:** Prior to this meeting the manager provided the board with the most recent MEAM salary survey as well as a spreadsheet showing PMLD employees current salaries. Benoit made a motion to renew the managers contract for 3 years. Orell seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

Benoit proposed a \$1.50 per hour increase plus 3% for the first year. 3% increase the second year and 3% the third year. Benoit explained the dollar amount is merit based and the % is the COLA. The board discussed establishing the possibility for merit increases going forward that would be based on the Managers personal and professional development and annual review, which the board agreed to complete every April. The merit increase would be agreed upon by the board at their November meeting. The Board asked the Manager if there was anything in her contract that she would like to discuss or change. The Manager did not. Orell brought up that upon hiring the original agreement stated that the

Manager would go to lineman school. The Manager stated that if the Board wanted her to, she would attend NEPPA. She felt that it was a waste of the rate payer's money. Benoit suggested the Manager look into more training through APPA and spend a few hours every week out in the field with the linemen. The Manager agreed.

Benoit motioned the board accept the new conditions and terms of the Managers contract as outlined above. Orell seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

- B. December 4th Tree Lighting Ceremony: PMLD has agreed to participate.
- C. Customer Late Fees: The Manager asked the board if they wanted to reinstate late fees. The Board agreed to reinstate them starting January 1, 2022.
- D. The foreman enquired about putting a storage facility at the substation on the property to the right-hand side. Benoit asked what would be stored in it. The Manager informed the board that they would keep transformers, so that they are out of the elements, and reels of wire etc. Benoit stated that he would be concerned about theft and vandalism.
- E. The Manager provided the board with a survey that had been circulated between the light depts in MA about the day after Thanksgiving. The Manager stated that in the past the board had suggested the manager follow what the Town Hall was doing. The Town hall is currently closed on Fridays. Wheeler suggested PMLD follow past practices allowing employees to use personal time or a vacation day. If all office staff choose to use their time, the office will be closed for the day.
- F. The Manager informed the Board of a recent issue with a contractor. Upset with the Planning Board, the contractor called the foreman and asked him to disconnect power to the 3 streetlights on Olivia Knoll. The Manger concerned about safety and liability denied the request. The Board suggested the Manager ask the Building Dept. about his bond.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.

The Next Meeting is December 9th, 2021, at 5:30 pm.

Approved Minutes Submitted on behalf of the Paxton Light Commission

by Tara Rondeau on 12/16/21 Tara Rondeau

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