

***Paxton Municipal Light Department  
578 Pleasant Street  
Paxton, MA 01612-1300  
Light Commission Meeting  
October 12, 2021***

- I. Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Wheeler at 5:30 p.m. Members present: Emerson Wheeler, Yvette Orell, Mike Benoit, and Tara Rondeau, Manager. Public Attending: Matt Ides from MMWEC, in person, and Steve Smith from MMWEC via Zoom.
- II. Approval of Agenda: Benoit motioned to approve the agenda with a change in the order moving IV before III; Orell seconded. Motion passed 3-0.
- III. Approval of Minutes: Benoit motioned to approve the September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, regular session minutes; Orell seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

Benoit motioned to approve the September 14<sup>th</sup> Executive Session minutes, Orell seconded the motion.

Roll call to accept the Executive Session minutes:

Orell: "aye"

Benoit: "aye"

Wheeler: "aye"

Motion passed 3-0.

- IV. Presentation by MMWEC on PMLD's Roadmap to 2050: This is the first time in the history of municipal light departments that the government will set regulations and standards on the percentage of clean energy in each municipal's power portfolio. The MMWEC roadmap is a tool the manager and board can use in determining:

1. Where PMLD currently stands?
2. A policy for achieving the state benchmarks in 2030, 2040 and 2050. The policy can address how fast the board wants to get to each benchmark and how that will be achieved.
3. The board should consider whether they want to own an asset or sign a PPA, the costs associated with both options, and recognize that this will be an ongoing process.

Benoit stated that government did not take into consideration the cost to consumers to achieve these goals. Benoit believes that costs will skyrocket due to these regulations. Matt and Steve agreed with Benoit and stated the states main agenda was climate goals and not costs.

PMLD's Current Resource end dates (projected and set):

- ❖ Berkshire Wind: through at least 2050.
- ❖ Hancock Wind: PPA has an end of life of 2042. Could possibly be extended.
- ❖ Eagle Creek: goes to 2034. Extension unknown.
- ❖ NYPA: goes to 2032. Could be extended to 2050.
- ❖ Millstone: licensed through 2045. Could possibly be extended.
- ❖ Seabrook: licensed through 2050.

Steve explained that in 2020 56% of PMLD's electrical sales were from non-carbon emitting sources: Millstone, NYPA and Seabrook. Since PMLD does not retire it's Berkshire Wind RECs (Renewable Energy Certificates), electrical sales from this source are considered carbon producing.

Benoit asked who decided to sell the RECs from Berkshire Wind? Steve stated that in the past,

traditionally GM's have sold the RECs to lower the project costs. Each year MMWEC polls the managers to see if any want to retire their RECs. MMWEC has always recommended that PMLD retain their RECs.

It should be noted that the Roadmap reflects all electrical sales as flat. If electrical sales increase, which is very possible with the push for electrification in MA, PMLD's % of non-carbon emitting resources will decrease. This is something the board should keep in mind when making decisions on a GGH policy.

The state is pushing heavily on promoting offshore wind as the biggest resource in upcoming technology. Steve wanted the board to remember that proposals for offshore wind have long lead times so these options would need to be considered long before they are needed within one's portfolio.

Benoit asked what MMWEC suggests; ownership of an asset or a PPA? Matt stated that MMWEC feels it would be wise to utilize numerous forms to fulfill the state regulations.

Wheeler stated that the new technology such as wind power will never bring in a return on sales due to the costs associated with building the facilities. Matt agreed. He stated that MMWEC is looking into numerous venues to try and satisfy the regulations and keep the costs down. Steve pointed out that in the last 10 years, solar installation costs have come down and the size of wind turbines have drastically increased to capture more energy making it more cost effective.

Benoit asked if there has been any appetite for new nuclear facilities? Matt stated that there is some interest in smaller plants with new technology and improved efficiencies and safety measures. But, building them in MA. would be very costly. The best place would be in areas such as deserts away from populations.

MMWEC's final take away: PMLD is currently in a good spot, there is no urgency in changing the current diversification of its power portfolio, but there is an urgency from a governance perspective to set the future direction for PMLD.

The Manager asked how the CEPP (Clean Electricity Performance Program) would impact the Roadmap if passed by the Federal Government. Matt stated that the CEPP would not be mandatory. If a municipal chooses to participate to take advantage of the grants, it will escalate the % of clean energy by 4% each year until a municipal reached a power portfolio that is 80% non-carbon emitting.

V. Public Comment: None

VI. Managers' Report:

A. Operations and Electrical Systems Updates:

1. The linemen have continued trimming and chipping on West Street.
2. They:
  - a. Added a new streetlight on Laurel Street per the BOS.
  - b. Set a new pole on Grove St due to a MVA.
  - c. Reconnected a secondary service on Grove St that was taken down by a tree.
  - d. Cleaned up trees on the wires on Pleasant St.
  - e. Replaced an insulator and primary wire on Marshall St.

- f. Dug up old URD wire and replaced with new on Pleasant St from last year's MVA.
  - g. Replaced failing meters on Forestdale Rd. and Grove St.
  - h. Completed a temporary fix on Marshall St for a house service that was ripped off by a construction truck.
  - i. Fixed one of the spotlights at the Little League field.
  - j. Worked in Spencer doing routine streetlight maintenance.
3. The linemen attended a safety meeting in Holden, and they also attended the NEPPA lineman's rodeo.
4. Dave Renzetti's last day was Sept 24<sup>th</sup>. Tim White has been promoted to General Foreman. PMLD is currently advertising on Indeed, the NEPPA website and the town website for a lineman of any class or an apprentice to fill the open position. To date, we have received 125 applications. Of those, 9 were interviewed by the Manager and Tim. 5 were asked to come back for 2<sup>nd</sup> interviews.
5. Outages: October 1<sup>st</sup>: Brigham Road. Pole #4 squirrel blew fuse. Affected 3 customers.

B. Office and Operations

1. Most recent round of shut off notices went out to 24 customers. Only 1 customer was disconnected due to nonpayment.
2. PMLD's accounts receivable 90 days past due balance is \$14, 823. Last year at this same time, it was \$55, 791.
3. Landis & Gyr have set up a tentative date(s) for the week before Thanksgiving and the week after to come and set up the gateways. They will spend 3 days working with the linemen to get the 2 gateways operating, establish connectivity with the routers and do some meter installations.

C. Financials June 2021:

June revenue decreased from May by \$20,000. Operating cash decreased by \$174,841. This was due to the Worcester County Retirement payment. Depreciation cash decreased by \$34, 159 which was for the cost of the new pickup truck. Purchased power costs increased by \$23,000 which was for the generator rental at the substation. Overall net income decreased by \$38,423 from May.

- D. MMWEC Project Updates: The manager did not prepare a report on the projects this month due to the MMWEC presentation. There was nothing of note to report.
- E. Fiber-Internet: The surveys went out in the mail and an online version was also offered. To date, we have received roughly 600 responses. The office staff is working to compile all the answers which will be presented at the next meeting.

Benoit noted that the survey was brought up by the Board at Selectmen at their most recent meeting. Julia encouraged people to answer the survey.

VII. Other Business:

- a. The Manager needed the board to sign off on the closing of the former GF's credit card.

- b. Discuss Manager's Contract: The board discussed their options going forward regarding the length of the contract and how to handle wages, as a set % each year or negotiable. The board asked the manager for the most recent MEAM wage survey results and decided to table the discussion until the following month so they can look over the MEAM survey.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

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

Approved Minutes Submitted on behalf of the Paxton Light Commission

by Tara Rondeau on 11/9/21 Tara Rondeau

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