

**STERLING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT  
MEETING MINUTES  
REGULAR SESSION**

**DATE:** Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
**LOCATION** SMLD Conference Room, 50 Main Street,  
Sterling, MA

**BOARD MEMBERS:** Matthew Stelmach (Stelmach), Chairman  
Michael Rivers (Rivers), Vice-Chairman  
George Pape (Pape), Clerk

**SMLD STAFF:** Sean Hamilton (Hamilton) – Manager

**MINUTES:** Naglaa Elshamy (Elshamy)

5:10pm Meeting brought to order. Stelmach opens the meeting with a Roll Call Attendance Vote, Rivers aye, Pape aye, and Stelmach aye.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Stelmach opens first item, which is approval of the agenda. 5:11pm Pape moved to approve the agenda as published. Motion seconded by Rivers. Roll call vote: Rivers aye, Stelmach aye, and Pape aye. Unanimously approved by the Board.

**REVIEW OF WARRANTS**

Stelmach had a question with regards to storm related expenses. He pointed out to the food expenses and noted that in the past it used to be clearly marked in case of reimbursed. Hamilton replied that everything was added up and well accounted for. Hamilton stated that FEMA was supposed to do a drive around to assess damage and noted that in order to get FEMA qualified it had to reach the mark of \$20million in damage to public property. Hamilton said that he was just waiting for a bill from Favreau, and noted that his rate was higher than expected.

**OLD BUSINESS**

2012 Draft Budget

Hamilton noted that they are now working with version 7. He took out the rotary tractor and was looking into State pricing. Also he added the Blue Book trade-in value to the vehicles in the budget.

The other item was health care, which he left at 8% because one employee was getting married and if his wife comes on the plan then we would raise our cost. Hamilton also added two linemen's school cost of \$2400/year each that they would start in February. Pape asked if that is something they had to sponsor. Hamilton replied affirmatively and explained that it is a State mandate and they are in apprentice school through a NEPPA. Hamilton added that SMLD has tuition reimbursement in the personnel policy. Rivers asked if after paying those tuitions SMLD would have any commitment from them or anything like that. Hamilton commented that this is something that he and other Managers were addressing and it is still in discussion. Stelmach

added that it would be good to address it in the personnel policy. Hamilton also noted that he made a mistake in one of the employee's courses' fees. They are \$1,065 each course without any labs or books' fees. Hamilton pondered how the policy is reimbursing linemen for \$2400 each while only reimbursing a salaried engineer \$1065. Stelmach suggested discussing this issue in the personnel Executive Session.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **December Discount**

Hamilton said that this discount was usually taken from the depreciation account. He showed the Board rate comparison between giving the discount at the end of the year versus having lower rates throughout the year and noted that he would be giving more discount by using the current lower rates. Board members observed the benefit from giving lower rates through the whole year and not just the end of the year discount. Pape commented that he does not support the SMLD giving the end of year December discount. 5:25pm Hamilton concurred. Pape moved to not to extend a December discount going forward. Rivers commented that he just realized that the discount was taken out of the depreciation account. He added that there needs to be a unified answer to customers who call. Stelmach reiterated that they should tell customers that they are cancelling the discount because they are lowering the rates. Motion seconded by Rivers. Roll call vote: Rivers aye, Stelmach aye, and Pape aye. Unanimously approved by the Board. Hamilton noted that he will send a letter to customers explaining all of this.

### **Holiday Lighting Contest**

Hamilton said that from the time this was discussed, he got the impression that the Board does not want to mess with tradition. Rivers said that maybe they could do a competition with energy efficient lighting. Stelmach commented that it will be more expensive lighting. Rivers stated that maybe they could do a small-scale competition. Stelmach and Hamilton noted that it is still going to send the wrong message. 5:35pm Pape moved to not support the Holiday Lighting contest. Motion seconded by Rivers. Roll call vote: Rivers aye, Stelmach aye, and Pape aye. Unanimously approved by the Board.

### **Digger/Derrick bid-vote**

Pape asked about what Hamilton sees as a good recommendation. Hamilton explained both offers and their specifications. Pape asked if SMLD would be bound to choosing the cheapest bid. Hamilton replied negatively and noted that they can choose what is best with the needed specifications. The choice was between Altec Model DM47BC and Kiley Model Terex C4047. Hamilton noted that Kiley is a local manufacturer and the price includes mounting. 5:45pm Rivers made a motion to accept Kiley's bid Model Terex C4047 for an amount of \$132,177. Motion seconded by Pape. Roll call vote: Rivers aye, Stelmach aye, and Pape aye. Unanimously approved by the Board.

## **CUSTOMER COMMENTS**

Stelmach said that he got a call from a customer with regards to hardship. Stelmach added that he knows that the Board has discussed that before and it was noted that the Board would like to help out but the logistics of the issue would be controversial to handle. Also, it was discussed that maybe it would be done through a third party. Stelmach suggested that the Board discuss that issue again in a future agenda. Rivers said that they could have a sheet/list of organizations that help in cases of hardship and pass it out to customer who ask for it.

Rivers also talked about emergency notifications and how customers could be informed during storm times or other emergencies. Pape asked about how people get notified in emergencies. River answered that it could be through the Internet, reverse 911 or cell phones.

**NEXT BOARD MEETING**

Next Regular Meeting will be on November 29th, 2011 at 7:00pm.

Rivers asked if the Board could be voting on signing the PPA and would be releasing it afterwards. Hamilton noted that it might not be a good idea to do that since there are still negotiations going on. Rivers said that it could negotiate in executive sessions but they have to release the contract a week after it is signed. Stelmach suggested discussing this in the coming executive session.

5:57pm Rivers moved to go into 2 consecutive Executive Sessions the first session is Energy Portfolio-In accordance with MGL Chapter 164: Section 47D as is “necessary for protecting trade secrets, confidential, competitively sensitive or other proprietary information” to discuss our perspective on Renewable Energy Portfolio, and the second in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A: Section 21, “to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel” to discuss the perspective changes to Personnel Policy only to resume Regular Session to adjourn. Motion seconded by Pape. Roll call vote: Rivers aye, Pape aye, and Stelmach aye. Unanimously approved by the Board.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

7:30 Pape moved to adjourn Regular session meeting. Motion seconded by Rivers. Rivers aye, Stelmach aye, Pape aye. Unanimously approved by the Board. Meeting Adjourned.

ATTEST:



George Pape, Clerk

DATE:

12/11/11

**List of Referenced Documents:**

- ❖ 2012 Draft Budget (D10)
- ❖ Rate Comparison-Old Rates to Current Rates
- ❖ Digger Derrick Bid Comparison