

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

**DATE:** Tuesday, September 6<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)

7:00pm 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. Pape moved to approve the agenda as written. Motion seconded by Rivers. Roll call vote: Rivers aye, Stelmach aye, and Pape aye. Unanimously approved by the Board.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Board members reviewed minutes from previous meeting Regular Session of Tuesday July 26<sup>th</sup>. Pape mentioned some misspelling and editing notes. Rivers and Stelmach also mentioned some quick editing notes. 7:10pm Pape moved to approve minutes from July 26<sup>th</sup> as corrected. Motion seconded by Rivers. Roll call vote: Rivers aye, Stelmach aye, and Pape aye. Unanimously approved by the Board. Stelmach noted that any minutes from Executive Sessions would be discussed in the later Executive Sessions.

**REVIEW OF WARRANTS**

Stelmach said he did not have time to review warrants but asked if any other board member has comments. Rivers asked Hamilton about the outages during the hurricane storm. He mentioned that Nancy was present at the office answering the phone calls and all went smooth. Hamilton said that he had two questions about City State on the warrant. He explained that they charge SMLD \$150/hour as they extract information for them to hand over to SEDC. They commented that any work they do for the SMLD is discounted from \$250/hr- \$150/hr. Pape asked when all of this work will be finished. Hamilton replied that it should take about 5 months to extract all the information and then they will change to the newer system, but they will work in parallel for a while until all is finalized. Hamilton also had a question about the bill for the car accident, as well as question about SEDC \$100 fees to join them which was expected under the agreement.

Stelmach had a question about putting power underground for the Sterling Fair. Hamilton replied that he did not realize that when the State inspector came last year, the DPW used to just put mulch on it and it was not handicapped accessible and that was something the State Inspector

noted. That is why this year they are going to put them underground and have two boxes for them. The two boxes will just remain there to be used the next year. Pape asked what will happen if the Airport was sold. Hamilton noted that they would just remove the boxes.

### **MANAGER'S REPORT**

Hamilton wanted to update the Board on several items. First item that Hamilton mentioned was an update of the hurricane. He noted that electricity started to go out a little before 9am that Sunday morning. Trees fell from both ends of Newell Hill Road, and they also had some trees down in several other roads. SMLD got some help from Princeton and it was nice to reciprocate. It is a program for mutual aid between towns. Pape asked if we bill and get billed for time. Hamilton replied affirmatively. Hamilton also talked about installing microphones in the meeting room and trying to get reimbursed for it. Stelmach recommended that the venue was to go through the Selectmen and have them reimburse the Board for it.

Hamilton said the new vehicles should arrive by the end of September, the pick up and the digger derrick. The Digger Derrick truck's bid should go out by end of the week but they are finalizing the specs. There is an outage on Albright road due to a truck taking out the cables there. However, those trucks are from out of town and the insurance companies will bill them. Cable replacements on Wyatt and Pratt's are nearly complete. The company hired to do the work rescheduled due to the hurricane expectation but the work should take about a day. Hamilton also stated that he wanted to speak to FEMA about the settlement of what was received and the outstanding balance, and the insurance claim that was made the same time. Unfortunately they are really busy at the time due to the tornadoes, the hurricane and the floods. He will inform the Board when he reaches an update.

As for the new Billing system update, Hamilton noted that 100% of files got transferred but they all need to be converted to the new system and it should take about 2 months. The company wanted to go live with this by December but Hamilton said that they couldn't do that at the end of the year. He recommended that this be pushed to next year and go live in February.

Hamilton also noted that all computers (maybe except Pape's) are upgraded and changed. The other ones are ready to go and will be ready to be put on government deals.

Hamilton also updated about Monty Tech. They came and visited, and Hamilton agreed with them to work on the new doors. He will be providing them with lunch.

Rivers asked about the program to use prisoners in town projects. Hamilton will explore that option.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Rate Study/Rate Changes:**

Hamilton reviewed with the Board the first draft of the study. He explained that they will probably have a single commercial rate but will have a special discount for farms. Stelmach asked if they could expect an actual presentation about the study during the next meeting. Hamilton replied affirmatively. Stelmach added that he would like to receive any related documents before the meeting so the Board has time to review them and discuss them at the meeting. Hamilton added that he did a quick analogy for the rate: he noted that now they are about 16% less cost already from January due to lower energy purchase costs. He thought that the discounts at the end of the year and the discounts available during the year really made it really well for customers. However, with the rate study and by including all the costs, then the SMLD will have a better

picture of the situation and how they can best benefit the customers, while at the same time adhere to budgets.

#### Billing System

Stelmach noted that Hamilton already updated on that.

#### Smart Meters

Hamilton said that they are bringing them in slowly. Stelmach asked Hamilton about when all of the new upgrades (the new billing system, the new meters, and the new rates) will be finalized and up and running. Hamilton replied that by April 2012 all of this should be finalized and working. He also added that there would be a demo at the Sterling Fair.

#### Berkshire Wind

Hamilton stated that ISO New England had to close down Berkshire Wind due to excess power generation when there was not enough demand. Hamilton will ask them a question in the next meeting why they close down clean power.

#### URD Replacement Project

Hamilton discussed these projects with Courville. However some of the roads need quick repairs such as Tangelwood, and Pikes Hill. The worst however is FoxFire and Fox Run group. He is looking at those repairs as capital expenditure for next year's budget.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### Digger Derrick Body Bids

Hamilton said that he mentioned that already and they are completing the specs for it and getting it out to bid. Pape asked how much that body would cost. Hamilton thought it would be around \$125,000 just for the body. Hamilton noted that he would put up 10-year depreciation for it.

#### Sterling Fair

Hamilton spoke with the employees and it was decided that they would not put up the big tent this year. They will put up a smaller blow up. Employees will be scheduling time to be there and interact with people. Stelmach asked if Hamilton would like to schedule the Board to attend at certain times, just to show up whenever they could, or email Hamilton with their available time. Hamilton replied that they could just email him with their available time.

#### Sterling Cares Fund

Hamilton said that he has heard about these funds, which seem to be a round up fund from bills. It is a way to help residents whenever they get in a situation in which they are having hardship in paying their electric bill. Pape argued that he does not think that they need to get into that. Stelmach noted that it is easy to round up the bill, and it is good to dedicate it to people who cannot pay their electric bill. Rivers said that there should be a third party involved. Stelmach noted that the concern is to know how this program is being implemented and that is why he suggested to Hamilton to explore it further by checking other towns. Pape voiced his concern that this is not a good path since they will run into issue of finding who really deserves the money and the criteria for the search. Pape noted some organizations, which do similar programs. Hamilton will do some further research.

### **CUSTOMER COMMENTS**

Rivers said that he had some customers approach him commending on the performance of the SMLD during the storm.

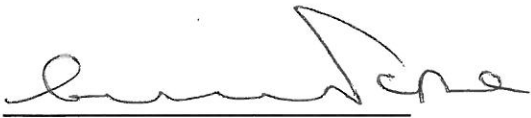
**NEXT BOARD MEETING**

Next Regular Meeting will be on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 4:00pm tentatively.

8:10pm Rivers moved to go into 2 consecutive Executive Sessions the first 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**

9:51pm Rivers moved to adjourn Regular session meeting. Motion seconded by Pape. 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:**

- ❖ Fox Run Road
- ❖ Berkshire Wind Power Co-op Update (08/29/11)
- ❖ SMLD: comparison of KWH sales 2011-2010, Comparison KWH Sales 2006-2011, Net \$ Comparison 2006-2011, Operating Cash, Depreciation, Rate Stabilization, 2010 Rate Stabilization, Meter Deposit, And Working Capital Comparison Table