

VILLAGE OF LUDLOW ELECTRIC LIGHT DEPARTMENT
COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024
4:30 P.M. LUDLOW TOWN HALL, HOWARD BARTON, JR. CONFERENCE ROOM

PRESENT COMMISSIONERS:

Chairman: Shannon Barton Stark
Vice Chair: Gary Pollender
Clerk: Robert Brandt

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

Department Manager: Thomas Petraska
Director of Operations: Brian Benoit
Accountant: Michael Gadway
Legal Attorney: Matthew Bloomer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jean Strong
Jay Jurkoic
Brendan McNamara

CALL TO ORDER:

Manager Tom Petraska called the meeting to order at 4:30 P.M.

CONSIDERATION OF ANY ADDITIONS, DELETIONS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

1. Tom Petraska stated that the agenda was typed wrong and we're approving, actually, the January minutes, not the December minutes.
2. Tom Petraska also, we left in "vote in the safety manual" which we did that in January, so that comes off the agenda for today.

APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 2024, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MONTHLY MEETING:

1. Tom Petraska stated that we need to wait until we do the election of the officers.
2. Robert Brandt stated that we need to have officers, right.
3. Matt Bloomer stated that you might be able to do it beforehand, but if you prefer to have the officers, these are the minutes you said.
4. Tom Petraska stated for January, yes.
5. Matt Bloomer stated I think you can do it now if you want to, but it's six in one hand, half a dozen in the other.
6. **MOTION made by Tom Petraska and seconded by Robert Brandt to accept the minutes of January 21, 2024. Motion passed unanimously.**

7. Tom Petraska asked the new members to sign their names and stated you'll probably have to write your name in because Nick is in there. Just write your name and put a line there and sign it.
8. Tom Petraska stated that now we need a motion to elect a chairperson.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Election of Chairperson:

MOTION made by Gary Pollender and seconded by Robert Brandt to elect Shannon Barton Stark as Chairperson. Motion passed unanimously with a 3-0 vote.

Election of Vice Chair:

MOTION made by Shannon Barton Stark and seconded by Robert Brandt to elect Gary Pollender as Vice Chair. Motion passed unanimously with a 3-0 vote.

Election of Clerk of the Board:

MOTION made by Shannon Barton Stark and seconded by Gary Pollender to elect Robert Brandt as Clerk of the Board. Motion passed unanimously with a 3-0 vote.

Appoint Recording Secretary:

MOTION made by Shannon Barton Stark and seconded by Gary Pollender to appoint Tina Jarvis as Recording Secretary. Motion passed unanimously with a 3-0 vote.

Designate Newspaper of General Circulation:

MOTION made by Shannon Barton Stark and seconded by Robert Brandt to make The Vermont Journal and Shopper the Newspaper of General Circulation. Motion passed unanimously with a 3-0 vote.

Set Day and Time of Regular Meetings:

MOTION made by Shannon Barton Stark and seconded by Gary Pollender to set the 4th Thursday of the month at 4:30 p.m. as the regular meeting day and time. Motion passed unanimously with a 3-0 vote.

2024 ANNUAL BUDGET:

1. Tom Petraska stated that in your book under "materials" you should have a copy of the budget.
2. Shannon Barton Stark said that as far as the annual budget because we've just gotten elected this morning, this has been two days. I would really like to see the budget over the last 3 years so I can compare and understand the budget. I'd like to table this until the next meeting.
3. Michael Gadway asked how many years budget did you want.
4. Shannon Barton Stark stated three.
5. Michael Gadway stated I don't think we have three years' budgets.
6. Tom Petraska stated we'll get three financial statements in comparison for this.
7. Michael Gadway stated he can give actual financial statements.

8. Shannon Barton Stark agreed and stated that she would like to look through and do a comparison to understand it a little bit better.
9. Michael Gadway stated he could do an actual financial statement that would look just like this document.
10. Shannon Barton Stark asked if that will be tabled until the next meeting.
11. Robert Brandt asked if we're still working on some stuff on the budget this year anyway.
12. Tom Petraska stated that just today, at 3 o'clock, we got the final figures from the auditors, so yes, we still got some room for changes on this one. Minor, but still, we need to change it and we still do not know, union-wise, where we're going to end up.
13. Gary Pollender asked so you're going to email that to us in the next couple of day or whatever, so we got time to look at it.
14. Tom Petraska stated yes.
15. Michael Gadway stated, as he said, we don't have the union numbers in there.
16. Tom Petraska stated so this one here could change.
17. Gary Pollender stated he understands.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS' REPORT

The Director of Operation's report was given by Brian Benoit. He updated the Commissioners which included, but was not limited to:

MARCH 2024

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Street Light Maintenance: | We did one street light maintenance this month. |
| Meter Reading: | We just finished meter reading today. We just need to do re-reads. |
| Substation Maintenance: | Standard substation checks and some snow removal. |
| Underground Locates: | We had three underground locates this month. |
| Services: | We did multiple service upgrades. |
| Line Construction: | Proctorsville recloser is programmed and operating. We will start wrecking out the riverside line, as weather permits. |
| Safety Meeting: | We did an underground distribution review. We did a safety meeting on the APPA Safety Manual and OSH fundamentals for safety. We did flagger training, and we also did our rubber testing. |

Vehicle Maintenance:

We had state inspections and the one thing we had to fix was an A arm on the F150.

Board Comments on Foreman's Report

1. Robert Brandt asked what is tested.
2. Brian Benoit stated that rubber testing is blankets, hoses, protective arms and all that stuff that we use daily.
3. Gary Pollender asked boots also, correct.
4. Brian Benoit stated no.
5. Shannon Barton Stark asked as far as testing, that's something you send out to be tested.
6. Brian Benoit stated they come once a year and bring a trailer and they test it right there.
7. Tom Petraska stated except the gloves.
8. Brian Benoit stated that the gloves are sent out to Irby in Massachusetts.

DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager's report was given by Tom Petraska. He updated the Commissioners which included, but was not limited to:

MARCH 2024

Year End Audit:

We just got the figures back today from the auditors (KBS) and we should be able to draft financial statements within a few weeks. We are showing, tentatively, a \$364,000 loss for the year.

FEMA Applications:

The Ludlow Light Department has three applications in progress and if they all are approved the department could see \$372 thousand dollars. If they get accepted, as we applied for.

Purchase of New Cat 416 Backhoe:

The backhoe is in, the 416 Cat backhoe, and it is up at Milton, VT and we just secured financing today through LEAF Commercial Capital which is a division of M & T Bank. The loan is going to be 100 % financing for five years at 8%.

Stone House Solar Project:

The purchase power agreement has been finalized and is with the VPPSA legal team for their final review, so that should be finalized soon.

Update on GIS (Geographic Information System) and Material Inventory System through NISC:

Our staff continues to participate in NISC training sessions for both platforms. We plan to go live dates for both platforms this year: the end of March for material inventory and the end of August for the GIS.

Update on the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Union:

The union has given the Ludlow Light Department their proposed contract. The department has reviewed the contract and presented a counter proposal back to the union and the next negotiation meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2nd, so that will be going on for quite a few sessions.

Board Comments on Manager's Report:

1. Shannon Barton Stark asked who has been involved in the union negotiations.
2. Tom Petraska stated, Brian, myself, Michael and our legal counsel.
3. Shannon Barton Stark said they're scheduled for April 2nd, how many negotiations have you been in so far with them.
4. Tom Petraska stated just two officially, we got their proposal, we gave them a counter proposal and now we're going to do another session.
5. Shannon Barton Stark asked what time will that be.
6. Tom Petraska stated 12:30.
7. Shannon Barton Stark asked if that was at the light department.
8. Tom Petraska stated it was at the shop.

Comments From Rate Payers:

1. Jean Strong said she was looking at the budget to see if she had questions. But it was more than she can read right now.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Gary Pollender stated that I know they put a plaque up at the building for Howard, but when do we plan on doing a public dedication to him on that building. I know he's passed, but I still think we should do a public dedication. After some discussion it was agreed that Tom Petraska would reach out to Mrs. Barton to see what a good time was to have the dedication.
2. Robert Brandt asked how the 103 project was coming.
3. Brian Benoit stated it was pretty much complete. We're finishing numbering a few boxes and few poles and it's powered right now in Proctorsville.
4. Robert Brandt said he thought he saw you guys down there.
5. Brian Benoit stated the old recloser has been opened up, so now we have to dead-end it at the K9 camp, or the old Shaper building.
6. Robert Brandt asked which was is that getting disconnected, north, or south.
7. Brian Benoit answered it will get disconnected behind the new recloser now and it'll get disconnected somewhere around the vicinity of the K9 camp and then we can wreck those lines out, take the old recloser down and we'll put up the capacitor bank that's a little further down in the field. That'll go where the old recloser is and then just start taking our lines down.
8. Tom Petraska said there's a little bit of a snag in that we have to comply with our FEMA application, so we have to take the poles down. It's not the last one that's left on the poles takes them down, so we have to get the telephone, the TV and everybody else to get their stuff out there before we can do it. We can't do it until the water is low; August or something like that, so it's down the road.

9. Robert Brandt stated he was just curious and wondered how it would go to Cavendish each way.
10. Brian Benoit stated that basically, where the railroad trestle is at Proctorsville, it's back-feeding in that direction.
11. Robert Brandt asked so a couple of those poles still need to get fixed or they're okay.
12. Brian Benoit stated they're okay.
13. Tom Petraska stated on the other side of the stream, yes.
14. Robert Brandt stated that is a big project. I'm always curious about how that's coming.

EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS NEGOTIATION OF LOCAL 300 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT:

1. Tom Petraska stated that he put that on there just if we need it. Matt, maybe you can elaborate a little bit more on that.
2. Matt Bloomer said if the commissioners would like to kind of have an update on what's been proposed by both sides in the negotiations, I have a summary and we can discuss more about it. At least two of you are new, so Robert has a little bit of background of having had some conversations with him about how the process goes and how it impacts other parts of the department, so if you wanted to have that discussion, that's mostly the reason I came down and it can be as short or as long as you'd like, but I would recommend that it be an executive session just because we'll probably be talking about some of the strategy, what's been proposed by both sides. We also have an agreement with them to keep negotiations confidential within the negotiating groups and of course we can share with the commissioners, but we're not supposed to share publicly until we get to an impasse. Hopefully, we won't get to an impasse, but that's kind of a handshake agreement we have about keeping this confidential until that point. If you want to go into executive session, I have a couple of recommended motions. It's a two-part motion, under Vermont law, to go in for this purpose. I can give you that to move if you want to go into executive session or if you want to go to dinner too, that's understandable.
3. Shannon Barton Stark stated I think, again, I would like more information before going into executive session.
4. Tom Petraska said we're not making any decisions, we only put that on the agenda just so if you wanted to discuss it, we could. We don't have to. It would be just a summary of kind of what's gone on so far. It's up to you folks if you'd like to do that or not. We just thought we'd make it available if somebody wanted to.
5. Shannon Barton Stark said I think it makes sense if it's just a discussion of what's going on, to get the information.
6. Jay Jurkoic made a point of order and stated that he saw on the agenda that it says, "executive session," if you do that in the future, you should write "possible executive session." That's just a little technicality, because you're not supposed to actually list that as an item on the agenda; it comes up during a meeting. Just like what you just said, it comes up during the meeting and then you elect to go into executive session under personnel.
7. Matthew Bloomer explained you're going to make a motion and because it's under personnel, it's the only thing you can discuss at executive session. You can't discuss other business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

MOTION made by Shannon Barton Stark and seconded by Gary Pollender to enter into Executive Session to discuss negotiation of Local 300 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

1. The board entered into Executive Session at 4:50 p.m.

2. The board exited Executive Session at 5:14 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

1. **MOTION by Shannon Barton Stark and seconded by Robert Brandt to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
2. The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina M. Jarvis
Recording Secretary

Shannon Barton Stark, Chairperson _____

Gary Pollender, Vice Chair _____

Robert Brandt, Clerk _____

DRAFT