

Village of Ludlow Electric Light Department  
Meeting Notice

Board of Commissioners

Date 02/27/2025

4:30 Ludlow Town Hall, Howard Barton Jr. Conference Room

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Shannon Stark, Chair

Logan Nicoll

Jean Strong

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Chris Recchia

Brett Sanderson

**OTHERS PRESET:**

Brendan McNamara, Town Mgr.

**Agenda**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

A. Shannon Stark called the meeting to order at 4:32. All members present.

**II. CONSIDERATION OF ANY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR REMOVALS TO THE AGENDA**

A. Chris Recchia said that the presentation for the Okemo Battery Back-up has been postponed and should be removed from tonight's agenda.

B. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Jean Strong to remove Agenda Item #5 – Okemo Battery Back-up Presentation from the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.**

C. All other items will follow successively.

**III. COMMENTS FROM RATEPAYERS**

A. There were none.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Chris Recchia advised that the minutes to be approved are from the meetings of 1/30/2025.

B. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Shannon Stark to approve the minutes for the meetings listed above as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

**V. OKEMO BATTERY BACK-UP PRESENTATION - REMOVED**

VI. **APPROVAL OF SICK TIME PAYOUT**

- A. Chris Recchia said that sick time payout is the result of changing from Sick/Vacation time to the PTO structure. We needed to do this. It will not impact our financials. It eliminates long term liability and clears it off the books. The amount is about \$265,000.00 and overs pay from 2024, 2025 and 2026. It was on the books as a liability.
- B. Jean Strong asked if there would no longer be a Sick/Vacation line in the budget to bring us in-line with the union contract.
- C. Chris Recchia said it will be Paid Time Off.
- D. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Jean Strong to approve the sick time payout as discussed. Motion passed unanimously.**

VII. **MANAGER'S REPORT – Copy attached at end of minutes**

- A. Chris Recchia said he submitted his report yesterday. He said that they have been working of the budget, audit, Personnel Manual and looking at how to integrate better communication systems between the office personnel and outside staff. He hopes to have the Personnel Manual, Organization Chart and Job descriptions for next month's meeting. He said there were also some financial issues with the Stone House Project and the cost of power was 31% higher than expected. We will look at the hydro plant.
- B. Shannon Stark asked if the increase was due to the tariffs.
- C. Chris Recchia said not yet. Only Hydro-Quebec will be affected. Niagara is on the US side. He said that Hydro-Quebec doesn't think it will impact us.
- D. Jean Strong asked why this increased.
- E. Chris Recchia said colder months, pressure on the natural gas costs. It is variable, but not controllable.
- F. Jean Strong asked if it was the same for everyone in the state.
- G. Shannon Stark asked if it is partially the weather
- H. Chris Recchia said yes to weather and natural gas prices. He said oil is only used in extreme circumstances. He said hydro was lower in the summer than expected.
- I. Brett Sanderson asked if they are looking at the hydro-dam on Lake Pauline
- J. Chris Recchia said we are only beginning to. We might be able to use it. We need DEC approval. It would be a 5 to 6 year project.
- K. Logan Nicoll asked if the Stone House project was negotiated by VPPSA
- L. Chris Recchia said he thinks we were involved (before he came to work here.)
- M. Logan Nicoll asked if we have ever refused VPPSA.
- N. Chris Recchia said he doesn't know.
- O. Logan Nicoll asked if we can negotiate with others. He would like VPPSA to be more aggressive
- P. Chris Recchia said we pay 11.5¢ per kWh. We can do it ourselves, but it would require more work, time and staff.
- Q. Logan Nicoll asked if there are other private entities we could work with.
- R. Chris Recchia said there are, but he doesn't know
- S. Jean Strong asked if we are tied into VPPSA and how.
- T. Chris Recchia said we agreed to buy at a certain rate with a 25 year contract that started last year. It has increased some this year. It is a good project and the power goes to Ludlow as a priority. We can sell back the power to VPPSA, but we retain the renewable energy credit.

**VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Copy attached at end of minutes**

- A. Brett Sanderson said that the meter readings have been done.
- B. Outages
  - i. Presidents' Day storm issue that took out parts of Proctorsville.
  - ii. Broken Pole at Scott's Terrace
  - iii. Tree down at Buttermilk Falls – had to use crane
  - iv. Ives Road tree took out line and transformer
- C. Line Trimming – Tree Removals
  - i. Ellison Lake Road
  - ii. Fishing Access Road
- D. Vehicle Maintenance
  - i. Truck testing was completed and all passed
- E. Shop & Office Maintenance
  - i. Snow Removal and shoveling at Commonwealth Sub-Root
  - ii. Stick and Cover testing tomorrow

**IX. AMENDMENT TO CAPITAL BUDGET – EMERGENCY EXPENDITURES**

- A. Brett Sanderson said there is no leeway in the budget for Emergency expenses. The re-closeure on Okemo Access Road has hit its life. We bought 2 in 2008, but never installed them – they have a 15-year life expectancy. The engineer recommended we put in one of the unused one and decommission the one that's there. We need to order one for Trailside and one for Okemo Base area (it failed.) The lead time is a couple of years and the cost per unit (item, installation and programming) is about \$50,000.
- B. Chris Recchia said that Brett Sanderson has to predict what will happen 2 years out.
- C. Brett Sanderson said the vendor will come in and install and program the unused one we have.
- D. Chris Recchia said this was an emergency and we didn't have it in the budget.
- E. Logan Nicoll asked if the GIS can handle it.
- F. Chris Recchia said yes.
- G. Brett Sanderson said we have one scheduled for the substation and 2 for Commonwealth (from 1989.) Their life expectancy is 30 to 40 years.
- H. Logan Nicoll said that will be within the next 10 years.
- I. Chris Recchia said the data is not installed in the GIS, but it can accommodate the data management and invoicing issues. He said that we did not anticipate this in the Capital Budget and need authorization for \$50,000 to deal with capital items with retroactive approval.
- J. Brett Sanderson said the board will still approve the expense in emergency situations.
- K. Chris Recchia said if they need something right away.
- L. Jean Strong said the board could meet for an emergency meeting
- M. Chris Recchia said if a truck is out of service, it would be quick, but expensive
- N. Jean Strong said going forward, prior to this year, things have been purchased that should not have been.
- O. Chris Recchia said things would be purchased because we need them without board approval or if fiscally responsible.
- P. Jean Strong said there are new people, in new positions. She would hate to see a purchase order issued then maybe we should have done otherwise.
- Q. Brett Sanderson said they are discussing the submersible transformer.

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- R. Shannon Stark said the manager and superintendent would have to both approve the purchase, and then come to the board.
- S. Brett Sanderson said they could call an emergency meeting
- T. Chris Recchia said he would hate to have to rely on an emergency meeting as the structure. A purchase could be approved that would have a contingency authorization retroactive. These units have a 2 year lead time, then installation and programming.
- U. Shannon Stark said Brett Sanderson has to purchase the substation transformer
- V. Chris Recchia said the submersibles were purchase required a PO before we were told the specifications. We had to sign the contract and when received, they didn't fit. We had to switch out one pole. We had to pay a penalty. They were outrageous and we no longer deal with that company. Brett Sanderson was not involved. They need to be involved. Inside staff needs to talk to Brett Sanderson.
- W. Shannon Stark said approval by inside manager and outside superintendent, then board.
- X. Chris Recchia said everyone needs to work together. We need better communication and coordination between inside and outside personnel. We could hold special meetings. We could set a contingency amount in the capital budget. We need to set an authorization amount. He said he would prefer to set an authorization expense under or up to \$50,000.00 to be reported back to the board.
- Y. Jean Strong said if we are going to spend \$50,000, why not get board approval.
- Z. Shannon Stark said if this happens at 3:00 AM, do we want to hold a special meeting if this is an emergency.
- AA. Chris Recchia said the recent GMP expense was due to the substation going down. They went and installed the piece of equipment that was needed and we have to pay them. Brett Sanderson should be able to approve and pay GMP. GMP gave us a piece of equipment in an emergency.
- BB. Shannon Stark said we need a definition of an emergency situation – flood, power outage.
- CC. Brett Sanderson said we have a good relationship with GMP.
- DD. Chris Recchia said they responded in an emergency and brought the piece of equipment and installed it. We have to commit to pay.
- EE. Jean Strong asked who signs off on this. I want to know who approves it.
- FF. Chris Recchia said if you authorize it, the Outside Superintendent makes the decision and brings the information to the Manager and he will bring it to you. The decision is by the professional in the field.
- GG. Jean Strong said she is good with that.
- HH. Shannon Stark said we need definition and reason.
- II. Chris Recchia said if it is in the month between meetings and was not in the capital budget.
- JJ. Logan Nicoll said he agrees with mutual aid and the GMP situation, we need to help each other.
- KK. Chris Recchia added if we sell to GMP.
- LL. Logan Nicoll said that would be another policy to consider
- MM. Jean Strong said she just doesn't want to see an expenditure that large without department heads' approvals.
- NN. Chris Recchia said Brett Sanderson to Chris Recchia to finance to allow an emergency budget expense
- OO. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Jean Strong to move to create an Emergency Expenditure Fund up to \$50,000.00 for emergency events that happen between meetings as long as approved by the Superintendent and Manager. Motion passed unanimously.**
- X. **REVISION TO STONEHOUSE SOLAR PROJECT RATES**

- A. Chris Recchia said a couple of years ago, we approved the rate at 11¢ per kWh and there was a delay from 2023 to 2024 to 2025 in signing it. He said that he and Shannon Stark signed it, but MHG Control wanted to include 5%. It's still a good deal. Sarah Buxton will create the amendment. Chris Recchia said he recommends we approve it.
- B. Jean Strong asked what caused the delay.
- C. Chris Recchia said it was combined issues: the transition between Tom Petraska and himself, attorneys fighting back and forth, amendment between VPPSA and other attorneys. Even if we sell power back to VPPSA, we still keep the credits. He said he spoke to Ken Nolan – VPPSA attorney and he had health issues.
- D. Logan Nicoll said he would like to do some research on outside vendors. He said that VPPSA only has one person who coordinates all utilities and calculates viable projects.
- E. Chris Recchia said when VPPSA negotiates on behalf of the municipalities, and we are allocated a portion, it may be right to contract outside of VPPSA on smaller project.
- F. Logan Nicoll said we can use the Stone House contract as a model.
- G. Shannon Stark asked if that would affect our contract with VPPSA.
- H. Chris Recchia said no. Sarah Buxton will do the contract amendment with the Board Chair and Chris Recchia to execute the amendment.
- I. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Jean Strong to execute the amendment to the Stonehouse Solar Project contract revision. Motion passed unanimously.**

**XI. PERSONNEL MANUAL DISCUSSION (PENDING DRAFT TO REVIEW)**

- A. Chris Recchia said at the next board meeting, he will have the Personnel Manual, Organization Chart and Job Descriptions ready for board review. He is looking at the existing Personnel manual, Union Contract and Stowe manual as models.
- B. Shannon Stark said that VPPSA also has templates. She said that reviewing all 3 together may work out better
- C. Jean Strong said she will touch base with Chris Recchia regarding the Personnel Manual.
- D. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Shannon Stark to appoint Jean Strong as board liaison with Chris Recchia to work on the Personnel Manual. Motion passed unanimously.**

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - PERSONNEL**

- A. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Jean Strong to enter into Executive Session for Personnel Matter of which premature general public knowledge of discussion would clearly place the public body at a substantial disadvantage. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Board entered into Executive Session at 5:10 p.m.
- C. Brett Sanderson and Chris Recchia exited Executive Session at 5:20 p.m.
- D. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Jean Strong to exit Executive Session at 6:20 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.**

**XIII. ACTIONS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. There were none

**XIV. OTHER BUSINESS**

- A. There was none

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

- A. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Jean Strong to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Lisha Klaiber

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Shannon Stark, Chair

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Jean Strong

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Logan Nicoll

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Memo to: Ludlow Electric Light Department Board of Commissioners  
From: Christopher Recchia, Interim Department Manager  
Date: 2/26/2025  
RE: Manager's Report

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This month we have worked on implementing the approved budget and completing the filings needed for the annual audit. We believe all requests from the auditors have been fulfilled. We discovered a glitch in the capital budget which we will address at the Commissioner's meeting on Thursday.

Unfortunately, I do not have a draft Personnel Manual for you this month, and that is going to be delayed a month. Perhaps we can have all three components for you in March – The Manual, the Organization Chart and the Job Descriptions. In the meantime, the personnel manual is on the agenda for discussion.

The Safety Audit we received from GML of Groveland, MA has been reviewed with staff, and the recommendations are being implemented. All staff have been trained now in CPR, First Aid, and use of the AED. The Shop staff receive ongoing training monthly.

As a result of the change from sick and vacation leave to Paid Time Off (PTO) there is a reconciliation and payout that has been completed. We can discuss this too at the Board meeting.

We worked on both the Stonehouse Solar Project and the Okemo Battery project this month. The Chair and I signed the Stonehouse Solar Agreement, but an amendment is required for which I'd like to get Board approval. Because of the delay this past year, the price went up a bit, but is still a very good deal for Ludlow Electric.

The Financial Systems and Controls Audit (different than our annual audit) is scheduled for the week of March 10<sup>th</sup>. The CFO of Swanton – which I understand has excellent financial controls – will independently interview our staff, review and analyze our systems, and report back to us with any recommendations.

My schedule may need to change a bit, which I will discuss with you all in Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Recchia

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## Superintendents Report

February 26, 2025

- **Street Light Maintenance**
    - 2 light
  - **Meter Reading**
    - In progress
  - **Substation Maintenance**
    - Monthly checks
    - Need to schedule to install Regs at Howard Barton Jr sub Summer of 2025
    - Install Recloser at Smithville sub Summer of 2025
    - Snow removal and shoveling
  - **URD Locates**
    - 0 Dig Safe locates
  - **Line Maintenance**
  - **Monthly outages**
    - Feb 17
    - Recloser activated taking Proc. Out
    - Broken pole Scott's terrace
    - Tree Buttermilk falls Rd
    - Ives Rd tree took out line and transformer
  - **Services**
    -
  - **Line Trimming – Tree removals**
    - Ellison Lake Rd
    - Fishing access Rd
  - **Vehicle Maintenance**
    - Truck testing Completed and all passed
    -
  - **Safety Meeting Topic**
    - Cancelled
  - **Shop & Office Maintenance**
    - Snow removal and shoveling Commonwealth Sub roof
    - Stick and cover testing scheduled February 28
  
    - **Miscellaneous**
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