Village of Ludlow Electric Light Department

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Date 6/25/2026

4:30 pm Ludlow Town Hall. Haward Barton Jr. Conference Room

Members Present:

Shannon Stark | Jean Strong | Logan Nicoll

Staff Present:

Chris Recchia | Lisa Griswold

Others Present:

Rebekah Fontaine

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Shannon Stark called meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

II. CONSIDERATIONS OF ANY CHANGES, ADDITIONS, OR REMOVAL TO THE AGENDA

A. None

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES- May 28, 2026 Meeting

A. <u>MOTION by Logan Nicoll, seconded by Jean Strong to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.</u>

V. DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Chris Recchia stated that the 7.2% rate increase has been implemented as of June 1st, 2026. The Department of Public Service (DPS) has opened an investigation into the rate case, which was expected. The schedule for this was released and goes through November of this year. Once that concludes the DPS will submit their recommendation to the PUC (Public Utility Commission). We will likely not hear from the PUC with their decision until January of 2027. If the increase is not approved, the department will issue refunds for the difference.

B. Recchia shared that cash flow has been a challenge as of lately. We borrowed $100,000 from Line of Credit earlier this year, which has been paid back. We just borrowed another $100,000, which leaves us $300,000 available to borrow for the remainder of the year.

C. Currently, the PUC wants public utilities to maintain 30 to 120 days of cash on hand, but rate cases are not designed to allow utilities to build reserves. This may change. Two utilities have filed rate cases that include the ability to build reserves. If those cases are approved, the department may wish to file a second rate case before the end of the year.

D. The PUC completed their review of municipal utilities in response to what happened in Hyde Park. The review was mostly favorable for the municipals.

E. Nothing has happened with the rate re-design this month.

F. Recchia stated that he has a draft of the annual report for 2025. Asked the board to review and give guidance if they want something added, removed, or changed.
G. Recchia also shared that the EV Charger is going forward with the town. GMP (Green Mountain Power) send a proposed grant agreement on June 24, 2026. Once the agreement is signed the department will order the equipment.
H. Recchia stated that the office has been without A/C for the past four weeks. The department received three bids to replace the unit at the office, and to install heat pumps at the shop. Recchia gave his recommendations on what bids to go with. The board agreed to move forward with the recommendations.
I. Recchia stated that he and Michael Gadway met with TDS. He was able to reduce phone lines from 30+ lines to 10-12 lines. Fiber has also been dropped at the office and the shop to update the communication systems.
J. Recchia said that he has applied through the state for a loan at 2% interest rate to purchase a hydraulic excavator for vegetative management. The state deferred the application last week due to concerns of being able to re-pay loan. Cat is offering a seven to ten year loan at a higher interest rate. This could be paid back early if the state loan comes through.
    a. Recchia stated that cash flow is low enough currently that he would like to put this off until next year.
    b. Shannon Stark asked if we don't get the equipment if we would have to hire out to get work done.
    c. Recchia stated that it is ground work, and can be completed without, although we do need to contract out for aerial tree work to replace our retiring contractor. Also, ground vegetation is low enough that if it doesn't get done this year there shouldn't be issues because of the missing equipment.
    d. Stark asked if we are currently seeing issues.
    e. Recchia answered yes, but not many. He would like to wait for the grant that he applied for that will cover $70,000, and the loan at 2% interest to cover the remainer of the equipment.
K. Recchia stated that the department finished documenting the project of removing the poles along the river on Rt 103 for FEMA. They will pay us $35,000 now that it is completed. There is one more project with The Mill that, once completed, the department will receive another $39,000 in administrative costs for all the FEMA work.
L. Recchia stated that he attended the All-Boards Meeting last week. Jean Strong and he represented the department. He mentioned that the town spoke about needing to update all dams, which got him thinking about hydro power. Also, about what priorities for the department should be. Currently he thinks that the priorities are the rate case, rate design, then strategic planning.
M. Recchia also stated that he attended the panning meeting for VPPSA where he questioned the budget for them. VPPSA agreed to perform something similar to a

"cost-of-service" review to make things more transparent. Also, they agreed to share what the admin fees they charge us, and where we pay them.

N. Recchia stated that Brett Sanderson was not able to be at the meeting due to a call-out. The only thing that he could share on his behalf is that all AMI meters except for Okemo and Margis and the customers who have opted out have been installed. Solar customers were changed to AMI earlier this week.

O. Stark asked how the compressor project with Okemo was going.

   a. Recchia stated that it is moving forward and should be operational this year for the start of snowmaking.

P. Stark also asked if there was an update on the battery project,

   a. Recchia stated that is moving forward as well. Lightshift has the signed agreement with Okemo. Lightshift is looking into if they need anything for zoning.

Q. Jean Strong asked about how the AMI meters were going to affect staffing levels or if it was too early to tell.

   a. Recchia stated that it is not to early, but he is planning on talking about that during executive session.

R. Strong asked about how the ARCE program was going.

   a. Recchia shared that there are currently four(4) customers approved, two(2) pending, and two(2) others just applied.

S. Logan Nicoll asked about the Ash tree in the parking lot of the office. Recchia stated that he had someone look at it this spring and they didn't think that it had been exposed to the Emarald Ash Bore, but he did have it treat a couple weeks ago. During the treatment the person stated now that the leaves were out, it does show some signs of the Ash Borer at the top of the tree, which is where it starts. The treatment that was performed will kill any EAB that is infecting the tree, as well as protect it for three years.

   a. Recchia also stated that the town has budgeted $30,000 to help with ash tree removal and treatment within the town. He is hoping they will agree to reimburse the department for the treatment after July 1st when the funds become available.

VI. OUTSIDE OPERATIONS MANAGER REPORT

A. Recchia stated the Outside Operations manager was unable to attend meeting due to outage in the area.

VII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON VELCO/TRANSCO STOCK OFFERING

A. Recchia stated that the department has the option to buy more TRANSCO stock for a 9.3% return. To pay for this the department borrows from VPPSA and pays them a small percentage in interest and admin fees. Recchia recommends going forward with the purchase as it is a good source of steady income for us.

B. <u>MOTION by Logan Nicoll, seconded by Jean Strong to authorize Chris Recchia to opt-in to the VELCO offering. Motion passed unanimously.</u>

VIII. DISCUSSION OF TOWN MASTER PLANNING PROCESS AND LED PRIORITIES

A. Recchia stated that he dealt with this during his manager report. Included in the Board packet were the notes he submitted to the planning director. He said that he would like to be ahead of strategic planning compared to the town. He would like the board to start working on this plan mid-fall. Asked the board to look at his list, and let him know if there is anything they would like to change or add.

IX. DISCUSSION AND ACTION OF ANNUAL REPORT

A. Recchia stated that he sent the board a draft of the annual report earlier in the day. He asked if the board could review it and give him guidance on anything they want to see in it that is missing, or if there is anything they would like to see removed.

X. STATE ASSESSMENT REVIEW

A. Recchia stated that the assessment that was performed on public utilities has been completed and was very favorable for the utility. Recchia also shared the DPS slides with the board from VPPSA's report.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. MOTION by Logan Nicoll, seconded by Jean strong to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters under the provisions of Title 1, section 313(a)(3) of the Vermont Statutes. Joining Executive session were staff Chris Recchia and Lisa Griswold. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Board entered Executive Session at 6:03 pm.

C. MOTION by Jean Strong, seconded by Logan Nicoll to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Board exited Executive Session at 6:41pm.

XII. ANY ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. None

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. None

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

A. MOTION by Logan Nicoll, seconded by Jean strong to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Shannon Stark adjourned the meeting at 6:41 pm.

Submitted by Lisa Griswold

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Shannon Stark, Chair

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Logan Nicoll, Secretary

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Jean Strong, Vice Chair