

Village of Ludlow Electric Light Department

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Date 7/23/2026

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Shannon Stark

Jean Strong

Logan Nicoll

STAFF PRESENT:

Chris Recchia

Brett Sanderson

Lisa Griswold

OTHERS PRESENT:

Willem Bargfrede

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

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

- a. None

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES- June 25, 2026 Regular Meeting

- a. MOTION by Logan Nicoll, seconded by Jean Strong to approve minutes from June 25th meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

V. DEPARTMENT MAANAGER'S REPORT

- a. Chris Recchia stated that the 7.2% rate increase started June 1st. The public hearing is scheduled for 7:00 pm after the board meeting. There has been some chatter on Facebook about the 7.2%. He said that he anticipates some public to be at the hearing with the PUC.
- b. Cash flow is being managed. Revenue is low and power costs are still high. Balance on the Line of Credit is \$100,000, representing a total borrowed this year of \$200,000, with \$300,000 still available if needed.
- c. DPS has shared their findings of their review of municipal utilities around the state. The main thing is that they are supporting public utilities to be able to build a cash reserve over a course of four to five years in order to make them healthier. They are also recommending the ability to do power cost adjustments a few times

a year in response to the fluctuating power costs. Will discuss more during item eight.

- d. Budget vs Actual through May 2026 shows that the department is down \$400,984.33. This is mainly due to lower revenue than budgeted, higher power and labor costs.
 - i. Jean Strong asked why labor is over budget. Recchia answered that it is mostly due to callouts which are all overtime and not budgeted for. Recchia noted this is one of several areas where we can improve budgeting to make it more accurate.
 - ii. Strong stated that AMI is higher than budgeted and asked if that is going to correct itself. Recchia answered that the department has not received any of the grant for AMI yet, so yes some of it will be corrected.
- e. Recchia stated that with regards to the rate redesign, they have ended up where they started. Lowering the rate for customers that use 9-15KW and raise the rate after 15KW. On average, it will lower the bills for customers between 9-15KW by \$27/month. It will increase the bills for the remaining 68 customers that use more than 15KW.
 - i. Logan Nicoll asked if there is a level of service to help customers with high KW usage? Recchia answered that the department does not have a way of doing that at the moment. They can look at that while continuing the redesigning of the rate.
 - ii. Recchia also shared that the department has changed the bills, so they will now show the customers what they use for KW every month starting on the bills going out for July at the beginning of August.
 - iii. Nicoll stated that he fears with AMI that more customers are going to be triggering demand rate. Recchia stated that they have seen an increase in the number of people triggering demand. He said that the department is talking with the customers trying to help them understand what causes the high use of KW to try to help with keeping it low.
 - iv. Nicoll stated that as a long-term goal he would like the KW changed to above 20 before customers trigger the demand rate,

- f. Recchia shared that the EV Charger being installed at the office has been shipped.
- g. He also shared that the heat pumps for the shop are being installed starting August 3rd.
- h. Recchia stated that the RFP has been completed for the SCADA project and sent to eight potential vendors. Target schedule is to have completed for the end of 2026, beginning of 2027.
 - i. Recchia also stated that he talked to Magris and gave them a heads-up that the department may be looking for a contribution towards the project.
Okemo paid for the last one completely.
- i. Stone House Solar is on its way. They are waiting for one just the i(3)(9) ISO permit, but planning to start construction this spring, Recchia told the board that he would like to set up a field trip so that they can see where it is going.
- j. Recchia stated that he has been talking with another company about a battery project to connect with the Solar project. Getting a 5MW battery to help with peak and getting more generation is the best way to help control costs. With the battery, we could charge it when costs are low and use during peaks or when costs are high.
- k. Recchia stated that he and Michael Gadway met with VPPSA to talk about the CDA and why the department is paying so much when they keep buying in to low-cost projects.
- l. Recchia stated that the loan application through the state was postponed until the fall for the mini excavator that the purchase is going to be put off until next year. After talking to Brett Sanderson and with cash flow being where it is currently, the outside crew can manage with putting this off for now.
- m. The last thing added by Recchia is that their DPS is doing a trustee meeting to talk about the findings of their investigation into municipality utilities on September 23rd, 2026, from 5-9 PM.

VI. OUTSIDE OPERATIONS MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. Street Light Maintenance- 1
- b. Meter Reading- Completed for month. Still have about 30 meters that are being read by hand.

- c. Substation Maintenance- Monthly checks, starting the install of the reclosure at Smithville substation this summer.
- d. Completed 25 dig safe locates this month.
- e. There have been two outages this month. One at the Mill, and the other was a transmission failure that affected the whole service area for a couple minutes.
- f. Crew has completed three service upgrades this month.
- g. Miscellaneous tree trimming currently going on.
- h. Safety Meeting topic for month was Testing and Grounding.
- i. Brett Sanderson also shared that they have been working on the Okemo compressor project. They also have four people scheduled tonight to change the transformer for Dunkin. As well as doing the pole change on Pond Street that affects power to the Post Office, as well as other businesses.
 - i. Jean Strong asked if the businesses that are going to be affected have been notified. Sanderson stated that they all have.
- j. Sanderson stated that in August they will be starting the reclosure at Howard Barton Jr Substation. They will also be working with the Mill to get the transformers out of the basement and onto a pole.
- k. Sanderson also stated that they will be installing the EV Chargers at the office. He told the board that they will be going in the first two parking spots as you pull in. It is a straight shot from the pole, and the best place for snow removal.

VII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

- a. Recchia stated that he has sent the final version of the Annual Report to the board. He has received feedback from the board, and from the employees. He made changes based on the feedback. Historically the department had printed 400 copies, and put them at the Post Office, Library, and Town Hall, as well as having some at the office for people to pick up or requested to be mailed. To have 400 printed is about \$1000. If the department prints enough to mail to customers, it will be around \$3000, plus the cost of postage to mail the booklets. Recchia asked the board which option would be best. It was decided that having them at the above locations and mailing them on request would be best.

- b. MOTION by Jean Strong, seconded by Logan Nicoll to move forward with the Annual Report as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON “CASH RESERVE AND LIQUIDITY POLICY”

- a. Recchia stated that as part of the Rate Case, DPS asked if the department had a Cash Reserve and Liquidity Policy. This is something that has been discussed many times, but one has never been adopted. He stated that he wrote a draft policy and sent it to the Commissioners for review. The policy states that the department should have 90-120 days of cash on hand. To do this the department will need to build a reserve over the course of four to five years, putting in \$200,000-\$500,000 per year.
- b. MOTION by Jean Strong, seconded by Logan Nicoll to adopt the Cash Reserve and Liquidity Policy as drafted. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. **PERSONNEL**
- b. **CONTRATUAL MATTERS**
- c. MOTION by Jean Strong, seconded by Logan Nicoll to go into Executive Session to discuss personal and contractual matters under the provisions of Title 1, Sections 313(a)(3) of the Vermont Statutes. Being joined in Executive Session by Chris Recchia, Brett Sanderson, and Lisa Griswold. Motion passed unanimously.
- d. Board entered into Executive Session at 5:21 PM.
- e. MOTION by Jean Strong, seconded by Logan Nicoll to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.
- f. Board exited Executive Session at 5:47 pm.

X. ANY ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. None

XI. OTHER BUISNESS

- a. None

X11. ADJOURNMENT

- a. MOTION by Logan Nicoll, seconded by Jean Strong to adjourn meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Shannon Stark adjourned the meeting at 5:47 pm.

Submitted by Lisa Griswold

DRAFT