

**Mansfield Municipal Electric Department  
Minutes of Light Commissioners Meeting  
September 11, 2017**

**Present:** Chairman Jess Aptowitz, Vice Chairman Frank Delvecchio, Commissioner Michael Trowbridge, Director Joseph Sollecito and Financial Assistant Jacqueline Lee

The meeting was held at the Mansfield Town Hall Room 3AB and called to order at 7:00 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Aptowitz stated that this meeting is being televised and taped for future broadcast and asked if anyone in the audience was intending to record the meeting to please state their intentions. No one did so.

A complete copy of the Board packet containing all documents that are referenced in the minutes is on file at the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department office.

**Citizens Comments:** none

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of the June 5, 2017 Light Commissioners meeting (Trowbridge/Delvecchio) Passes 3/0

**Financial Statements for June 2017-**Director Sollecito told the Board that the net operating income year-to-date through June is \$836,591 while non-operating income is \$238,409. The total net income through June 2017 is \$1,075,000 while in June 2016 it was \$1,233,407. Director Sollecito reported that MMED's operating cash position through June 2017 is \$11,936,402. He also reported that energy sales were down 2% and attributes that to temperatures being cooler than normal.

**Update on Distributive Generator Project-**Director Sollecito said that since the Distributive Generator project was approved MMED's Chris Cox and Jeff Hayes along with Kevin Soden from PLM have been working very hard. He said that although the project is on time there have been some unplanned, additional costs. There is now a \$43,836 charge for a Columbia Gas line installation due to an error on the part of a Columbia Gas engineer. Director Sollecito said he would rather have this taken care of and spend this now up front.

There is also a revised engineering estimate bringing the original \$40,900 figure closer to \$70,000 primarily due to redesign of gas delivery and accommodation of a potential second unit. Director Sollecito said that PLM will provide more detailed information in a future memorandum as to why the engineering costs are more. Both Commissioner Trowbridge and Vice Chairman Delvecchio said they had concerns about this increase in engineering costs.

The third cost involves the site work still to be bid in the fall and will be better known in October after the results of the site work bid. Director Sollecito said that since there is a contingency built into the original estimate, he does not see a need to ask for an increase in the budget at this time but will continue to update the Board on the progress of this project.

**Project request: 50 West Church Street Garage-**Director Sollecito told the Board that back in June, TBA Architects Inc. informed MMED that the garage at 50 West Church Street should not have any vehicles parked in it. The floor is deflecting and spalling underneath and

vehicles driving over it make it dangerous. Structural Engineer Russ Feldman from TBA Architects Inc. said that the floor wasn't meant to have trucks driving over it and the weight is meant to be stationary. Director Sollecito stressed the importance of getting the equipment and vehicles back in to the building. Leaving them outside in the elements is not good. Knocking down the structure and rebuilding was considered but the staff decided against this option. The building was constructed on a solid foundation and has an eight year old roof so the building itself is sound. He noted that the cost of rebuilding would be a lot higher.

Director Sollecito reviewed the two options for the floor that were presented by TBA Architects Inc. Option 1 is a structural slab with an estimated cost of \$394,000 and Option 2 is a flowable fill at an estimated cost of \$478,000. After meeting with staff and evaluating these two options and talking to Russ Feldman, he is recommending Option 1.

Commissioner Trowbridge questioned sinking \$394,000 into an old building and asked the cost of a new building. Director Sollecito was unsure but said probably greater than a million dollars. He was also unsure if MMED could even rebuild there until a complete evaluation was done. Commissioner Trowbridge asked if at the next meeting Director Sollecito could come back with the cost of building a new one.

Vice Chairman Delvecchio commented that they are all thinking along the same lines. He wondered if MMED can fit everything they need into the current building. Director Sollecito answered yes, with this building MMED has enough space.

Chairman Aptowitz agreed with the other two commissioners. He thinks it sounds like a lot of money for a floor.

Commissioner Trowbridge offered to review the building in question with Director Sollecito. Director Sollecito will also speak to Russ Feldman about that option.

**Net Metering Interconnection and Purchase Power Agreements-**At the June 5, 2017 Light Commissioners meeting the Board approved a new "Net Metering" rate tariff. To protect the MMED ratepayers, Director Sollecito is now asking the Board to approve two agreements that are needed for the Commercial/Industrial solar customers.

**Motion: To approve an "Interconnection Agreement" for behind the meter solar generation of those MMED Commercial Industrial customers who are eligible; a "Purchase Power Agreement" for any entity that desires to sell the power output directly to MMED as a power generation supply and To authorize the MMED Director to negotiate and adjust certain terms and conditions to effectively execute a final agreement**

**(Delvecchio/Trowbridge) Passes 3/0**

**Update on the new rate implementation-**MMED implemented a new rate structure on July 1, 2017. Director Sollecito wanted to acknowledge MMED's Kathy Codella as she had the responsibility of writing new transaction codes, rate tables and service profiles for the new rate structure. Director Sollecito said that the staff had warned him about relying on their billing company NDS and Kathy also had the task of dealing with NDS to correct the many

issues she encountered along the way. There are still things to be fixed but it is operational at this point.

Director Sollecito had previously told the Board there would be some Commercial/Industrial customers who saw an increase in their bill with the implementation of the new rate structure. He explained that he had the staff create a spreadsheet for each of these customers showing their historical usage. These were followed up with meetings or phone conversations with the customers in an effort to help them reduce their energy costs.

MMED hosted a breakfast for the top 50 Commercial/Industrial customers and eight companies responded to the invitation. The purpose was to help them understand the key drivers of energy costs. Those eight that did attend appreciated MMED reaching out to them. Vice Chairman Delvecchio commented that although Director Sollecito seemed disappointed by the low turnout at the breakfast for the Commercial/Industrial customers, he did not think it was a failure. He thought it was a positive step forward and suggested having another one and coordinating it with the new Town Manager.

Director Sollecito said he plans to have Mayhew Seavey come back in the fall and review to ensure that everything is working correctly with the new rate implementation.

**Credit and Collections Statistics**-Director Sollecito provided the Board with a chart showing the amount of MMED collections greater than thirty days. He said most of what is owed is residential and most of that is made up of those with protected status. He said it is what it is and it's like that in every utility.

Chairman Aptowitz questioned the possibility of placing a 'lien' for these customers who own the property. Director Sollecito said yes, he brought this to the Board last year and would again this fall. He said that in the past MMED was under the misconception that they couldn't put any amounts from protected accounts on a tax title but you actually can. He also said this could be in the best interest of the Town as well. Director Sollecito explained the process of giving the amount owed to the Treasurer's Office to collect after it has been written off at the Light Department.

On a related note, Director Sollecito said that while MMED cannot terminate service to a customer with a medical protection letter MMED can, if they so choose, collect the money owed through tax title process. He said he brought this up last year and the Board voted against it. He was not looking for a vote tonight but would bring it up again at the next meeting.

Commissioner Trowbridge commented that the chart looks like MMED collections is better off now by a long shot. Chairman Aptowitz said it is because there are more policies in place now.

**Credit Card Processing Fees**-Director Sollecito stated that MMED has worked very hard to get their credit card processing rates down. The previous high bills they were seeing were only for a minimal amount of customers. Since the fees have been renegotiated with the vendor as well as having instituted a 3.5% fee for credit card transactions for Commercial/Industrial customers, MMED has saved just under \$48,000 for the past year.

**Approval of correspondence with North Attleboro Electric-**The North Attleboro Electric Department (NAED) is seeking some assistance from MMED near the border of Mansfield and North Attleboro on Plain Street to Oakridge Avenue. They would like to have an emergency connection on one of MMED's poles as a back-up service only. Director Sollecito told the Board that the MMED circuit in question already has a good sized load and if NAED was allowed to add to it there could be potential problems with switching during restoration activities.

After Director Sollecito and his staff had discussion, it was decided that MMED would not be interested in providing this. Also brought up by MMED staff was the fact that Bungy Road is very windy and narrow which poses the problem of even getting a truck down it.

A response letter to NAED was drafted offering three different options. The first is to designate those customers on Oakridge Avenue in North Attleboro to be served by MMED. The second option is for NAED to build a new pole line extension from North Attleboro to Mansfield which would require NAED to petition the Town of Mansfield to install NAED poles in Mansfield. The third option is for MMED to provide a 'primary metering' service to NAED at Plain / Oakridge Ave. While MMED would provide and invoice NAED for electrical service, the NAED would still be responsible for billing those individual customers.

**Motion: To approve the draft letter in response to North Attleboro Electric Department's request to establish an emergency connection on a MMED pole and allow Chairman Aptowitz to send the letter to NAED (Trowbridge/Delvecchio) Passes 3/0**

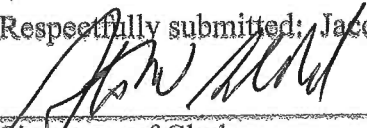
**Commissioners Comments-**Commissioner Trowbridge told Director Sollecito not to spend \$20,000 on a study but would like follow-up on the garage flooring issue. He is in agreement with the need to protect the equipment.

Chairman Aptowitz inquired about the MMED audit. Director Sollecito said it has already been completed, just not written up as of yet.

Chairman Aptowitz said in regards to the garage issue that the Board is all about safety but that it does seem like a lot of money for a floor.

**Motion: To adjourn at 7:55 (Delvecchio/Trowbridge) Passes 3/0**

Respectfully submitted: Jacqueline Lee

  
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Signature of Clerk

  
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Date of Approval