

Minutes of June 18, 2008

Meeting of the Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant

Present Commissioners: Richard Ahlin, Kevin Lashua

Stan Herriott Manager

Absent George Ainsleigh

The meeting was called to order at 4:43 p.m.

Secretary Ahlin called for approval of the agenda. The motion was made by Commissioner Lashua and seconded by Commissioner Ahlin. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Ahlin called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 21, 2008 meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Ahlin and seconded by Commissioner Lashua. The vote was unanimous. Secretary Ahlin signed the Minutes of the May 21, 2008 meeting.

Manager Herriott reviewed the budget through May. Receipts are tracking about 1% over projections while expenses are running about 2% over projections. The Manager stated the reasons for the expense over runs. The first issue is National Grid true-up bill which was almost 4 times the normal monthly bill, the second being increased power supply costs, and third being this is one of the months where we have 3 pay periods in a month.

Employee benefits; The Commissioners voted the following in 2008-2009 a 4% general increase in wages and in 2009-2010 a 3.5% raise with the expectation that if the town votes to provide post retirement healthcare the 3.5% in 2009-2010 will be reduced to 2.5%.

The Commissioners also agreed to increase the standby by \$100.00 per week and to provide additional FR rated sweatshirts to the lineworkers as part of their overall uniform allowance.

The Manager mentioned that he was looking at rates and although he thought it would not be necessary to increase rates this year, he is rethinking it. He mentioned that we had a lot of inquiries yesterday due to the Governor's announcement that electric rates would be going up 40%. The Commissioners and the Manager discussed several ways to consider raising rates. The Manager said that he was looking at increasing about 2.5% to 5%. We are running about \$25,000.00 in the red so far this year. The Manager said that he would be looking at one more power bill prior to making any decisions on increasing the rates. The Manager said the increase required would probably be added to the PPAC adjustment because we are under collecting for fuel as of last month.

The Manager had no expenses during this month.

The Manager reported that we had received notice that the town is preparing documents to present to the Selectmen with regard to providing post retirement healthcare to employees.

The Manager advised the Commissioners that we would be getting a flush of funds of about \$35,000.00. This amount continues to decrease year by year as the project debt decreases. This is expected to be transferred from MMWEC to Ashburnham in August.

Manager Herriott reported that he needed to revise the policy for sabotage reporting to include a form for making the report. He is asking the Commissioners to vote to adopt Revision 1 of the Ashburnham Policy 3.0002 Revision 1 dated 6-18-08. A motion was made by Commissioner Lashua and seconded by Commissioner Ahlin to approve the policy as amended.

The Manager gave the Commissioners a copy of the UMASS Wind Lab wind report in Ashburnham. He reported that things seemed to be coming together as far as setting up a wind MET tower for measuring the wind. He had spoken with Mr. Vanhoof and the State Forester with regard to cutting the necessary parcel of land for erecting the tower. Manager Herriott said that he hoped that if everything went as planned we would probably have the tower up by the end of the summer.

Manager Herriott reported that the Downtown Day planning seemed to be going well. We were working with the Bresnahan Scouting and Community Center for providing food, the Lions Club for the chicken barbeque and we would be giving gift bags out as part of the 100th Anniversary Celebration.

Manager Herriott reported that the downtown lights were ordered and that he expected them to come in within the next few weeks. He had been talking with Don Ouellette about when to start the digging, he was trying not to do it in the summer months because the downtown merchants make a great deal of their income between Memorial Day and Labor Day and he did not want to interfere with that. He also mentioned that the phone company asked us to put the duct bank in for them and we could go in the same trench with our 2 inch pipe for the lighting. They are willing to support 2/3 of the cost that will result in a savings to the department.

Manager Herriott gave the Commissioners information on the FTR markets, the power project that MMWEC was reviewing for its members and the Stonybrook III May update. The discussion focused on the cost over run of the Stonybrook III Project which is expected to go over the budgeted \$5,000,000.00 dollars by about \$1,000,000.00. The Commissioners expressed concern about going over the budget by such a large amount. The Manager said that at some point if the budget was going to exceed the voted amount, it would have to come back to each participant to be re-voted on. The Manager said that if it was necessary he would ask someone from MMWEC to attend the meeting if we were going to be required to revote on the budget.

The Commissioners agreed to suspend the July and August meetings, unless some special issue came up that would require a meeting, of which notice would be given. The Manager asked the Commissioners if they would like to attend the Gardner Chamber Outing this summer, they were not interested.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Ahlin and seconded by Commissioner Lashua to adjourn. The vote was unanimous.
The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Ahlin

Secretary