



**SOUTH HADLEY ELECTRIC LIGHT DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' VIRTUAL MEETING
JANUARY 30, 2025, AT 5:00 P.M.**

Present for the Board: Chair John Hine, Vice Chair Paul Dobosh, Ron Coutu, Tom Terry, Kurt Schenker (arrived 5:14)

Present for SHELD: General Manager Sean Fitzgerald, Financial Manager Michael Conchieri, Director of Operations Adam St. Martin, Administrative Services Specialist Kim Mendoza, IT & Business Systems Generalist, David Sullivan

Guests:

Friends of BATTERY BROOK: Kim Prough, Andy Rogers, Bill Simard

Sustainability & Energy Commission: John Howard, Robert Salthouse, Mary Jane Else, Kathleen Ahamed-Broadhurst

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 PM by Chair John Hine who stated the Board would move to Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c.164, § 47D, to consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property AND for the purposes of discussing trade secrets, confidential, competitively sensitive, or other propriety information pertaining to fiber projects, and to return to open session at approximately 6:00PM.

On a motion by Mr. Coutu and seconded by Mr. Terry, it was unanimously VOTED: To move to executive session for the reasons stated by the Chair and return to open session at approximately 6:00 PM, by roll call vote: Mr. Terry-aye, Mr. Dobosh-aye, Mr. Coutu-aye, Mr. Hine-aye.

The Board returned to open session at 6:00 PM.

Minutes Approval:

12/12/2024 Open Session:

On a motion by Mr. Dobosh and seconded by Mr. Coutu, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve open session minutes of December 12, 2024, by roll call vote: Mr. Coutu-aye, Mr. Terry-aye, Mr. Dobosh-aye, Mr. Schenker-aye, Mr. Hine-aye.

12/12/2024 Executive Session:

On a motion by Mr. Dobosh and seconded by Mr. Coutu, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve but not release the executive session minutes of December 12, 2024 executive session, by roll call vote: Mr. Dobosh-aye, Mr. Terry-aye, Mr. Schenker-aye, Mr. Coutu-aye, Mr. Hine-aye.

12/23/2024 Open Session:

On a motion by Mr. Terry and seconded by Mr. Dobosh, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the open session minutes of December 23, 2024, by roll call vote: Mr. Coutu-aye, Mr. Dobosh-aye, Mr. Terry-aye, Mr. Schenker-aye, Mr. Hine-aye.

12/23/2024 Executive Session:

On a motion by Mr. Dobosh and seconded by Mr. Coutu, it was unanimously VOTED: To approve and release the executive session minutes of December 23, 2024, by roll call vote: Mr. Terry-aye, Mr. Schenker-aye, Mr. Dobosh-aye, Mr. Coutu-aye, Mr. Hine-aye.

Public Comment:

There were none.

Friends of Buttery Brook:

Mr. Hine introduced the Friends of Buttery Brook Park attending to discuss the park expansion project. Andy Rogers thanked the Board for previous support of lighting at the pickleball courts. He displayed a map of Buttery Brook Park and outlined the additions and upgrades planned over the coming years with the \$1.2 million in funds received from grants and fund-raising efforts. The “Friends” were requesting that SHELd supply parts and labor to make upgrades and additional lighting to the pickleball court areas.

Kim Prough thanked SHELd for the work on the previous lighting project and sponsorship listing all the groups and events that have taken advantage of the lighted courts over the last three years. She also listed all the types of future events they are hoping to host once the park expansion is completed.

Mr. Fitzgerald reviewed SHELd’s estimate of \$30,000, for the electrical work which will cover materials, labor, and equipment. SHELd will be looking to The Friends for reimbursement of \$11,000 for materials that SHELd does not stock and would need to be ordered. Telecom figures for fiber need to be further evaluated once the scope of the work is decided on by the Town.

Mr. Hine asked Andy Rogers what the town was looking for from Fiberspring. Mr. Rogers said they would like to have Wi-Fi throughout the park to support various future activities. They would also like cameras for security and to be able to live-stream events. Mr. Hine stated the Board would not be making a decision on fiber until further details were made available on the scope of the fiber work for the project.

Mr. Hine also suggested a \$5000 sponsorship from SHELd/Fiberspring towards two new signs. Other board members agreed, and Mr. Hine suggested a motion to approve the funds.

On a motion by Mr. Coutu and seconded by Mr. Schenker, it was unanimously VOTED: To approve SHELd’s contribution to the project as outlined in the Buttery Brook Park estimate that Mr. Fitzgerald provided and the \$5000 sponsorship, by roll call vote: Mr. Schenker-aye, Mr. Terry-aye, Mr. Dobosh-aye, Mr. Coutu-aye, Mr. Hine-aye.

Sustainability & Energy Commission:

Mr. Fitzgerald compiled answers to a list of questions submitted to the Board by the Sustainability & Energy Commission. Mr. Salthouse thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for the thorough answers he sent them and for SHELd being one of the lowest carbon producers in the state while

keeping energy costs low.

Several other topics were discussed, such as the new Smart meter app and information the app provides, battery storage, time of use rates, and solar. Kathleen Ahamed-Broadhurst asked about obtaining town-wide usage data that would help them design future initiatives. Mr. Fitzgerald said he would see what information he has that he can share publicly.

Rebate incentives were discussed. Mr. Howard spoke to the owner of Rocky's who said they could post information on rebates on the equipment Rocky's sells. Mr. Salthouse asked if SHELD had a poster showing the information. Mr. Fitzgerald said he would have the marketing department help develop a poster. The Commission posted a link to SHELD rebates on the Town website for customers to access. Mr. Salthouse said they would help SHELD promote the incentives and thanked SHELD for the information they needed to get South Hadley classified as a Green Community.

Mr. Fitzgerald thanked Mr. Howard for the rebate suggestions he has made to SHELD. He also stated that SHELD customer surveys showed that while most customers support renewables, they do not want to pay more to have more renewable energy in Town.

Manager's Report:

Outages: We had one outage on 12/23 for one hour on Lamb Street due to a transformer overload.

AMI/MDM App Update: Dave Sullivan presented information and statistics on the Smart App for the new AMI meters, which allows ratepayers to see on their usage from their phones. To date, over 400 customers have downloaded the app. Customers have also begun making payments via the app. There will be additional updates with improvements and enhancements to the app, and the portal, to give ratepayers more access to their usage and energy consumption. Customers can pay both electric and fiber bills through the app too.

Fiberspring Update:

We have recently started engineering and design walkouts for fiber in Longmeadow. Fiberspring currently has 2725 South Hadley customers with a 50% take rate.

Also, we are looking at other MDUs for construction. Hadley Village has overhead utility poles which makes it easier to construct. We will be bringing information to the Board on that project soon.

October 2024 Financials:

Mr. Conchieri referenced PowerPoint slides as he gave a brief overview of the financials for the month ending October 31, 2024.

Kilowatt hour sales of 92,721,000 for 2024 were up by 1.15% from 2023 or 1,058,000 kilowatt hours. Year-to-date operating revenues of \$14,398,000 were up from 2023 by 4% or about

\$550,000, consisting of an increase of \$160,000 in volume and an increase of \$390,000 in selling price.

The 2024-kilowatt hour purchases of 94,082,000 were up by 2.8% from 2023, or 2,565,000. The 2024 cost of power sold of \$8,826,000 was up by about 6.3% from 2023, or \$523,000, consisting of an increase of \$232,000 in kilowatt hour purchase volume, and an increase of \$291,000 in purchase price.

The increase in revenue was more than the cost of power; therefore, the net revenue of \$8,903,000 was up from 2023 by 4.84% or \$411,000. The actual net revenue was down from the budgeted amount by \$8,000.

All other 2024 operating expenses of \$8,571,000 on a combined basis, were up from 2023 by about \$1,276,000 and up from the budgeted amount by \$823,000.

October 2024 ended with a net YTD gain of about \$870,000, compared to the 2023 net gain of \$1,209,000 and did not reach the budgeted amount of a \$1,325,000 gain.

Manager's Goals:

Mr. Fitzgerald had sent the Board a list of the Department's 2025 Goals. Mr. Coutu commented that he would like to see more detail as a way of measuring the goals. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that many of the goals are annual goals and part of the strategic plan. Mr. Coutu would like to see the goals stated in a way to be able to measure whether the goal has been met or exceeded, and some goals should have completion dates to use to measure them. Mr. Fitzgerald said he will rework the list to be more specific and add dates, as a way for the Board to better evaluate the goals, before next month's meeting.

Old Business:

Mr. Hine reminded everyone that the February and March meetings will be virtual. Mr. Coutu asked about another new building forum. Mr. Hine stated they would wait until a purchase & sale is signed on a property.

New Business:

Adjourn:

On a motion by Mr. Schenker, seconded by Mr. Dobosh, it was unanimously VOTED: To adjourn the meeting, by roll call vote: Mr. Schenker-aye, Mr. Dobosh-aye, Mr. Coutu-aye, Mr. Terry-aye, Mr. Hine-aye.

The open session ended at 7:14 P.M.

DocuSigned by:

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Ronald Coutu, Light Board Clerk

Approved: February 27, 2025

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents reviewed on January 30, 2025 at the Municipal Light Board Meeting

1. Draft Open Session Minutes December 12, 2024
2. Draft Executive Session Minutes December 12, 2024
3. Draft Open Session Minutes December 23, 2024
4. Draft Executive Session Minutes December 23, 2024
5. October 31, 2024 Financial Management Report
6. 2025 Department Manager's Goals