

**SOUTH HADLEY ELECTRIC LIGHT DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING
DECEMBER 23, 2024 AT 12:00 P.M.**

Present for Board: Chair John Hine, Vice Chair Paul Dobosh, Ron Coutu, Tom Terry
Absent: Kurt Schenker

Present for SHELLED: General Manager Sean Fitzgerald

The open session meeting was called to order by Chair John Hine at 12:00 P.M. following an open session motion to move into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations for the General Manager pursuant to M.G.L. c164 & 47D, by a roll call vote (see open session minutes for vote).

Mr. Hine stated that the sole purpose of the meeting was to continue to discuss the salary increase and bonus for the General Manager, Mr. Fitzgerald. Mr. Hine stated that proposals from Mr. Fitzgerald and the Light Board, were exchanged and that the negotiation committee had not yet reached a final agreement with Mr. Fitzgerald.

Mr. Hine summarized the final proposal positions. The Board's proposal was a 4% base salary increase, and a \$7,000 bonus. Mr. Fitzgerald requested a 4.5% base salary increase, a \$15,000 bonus, and a 1-year contract extension.

Commissioner Coutu explained the board's proposal as it stands is very generous given the size of our utility and the substantial increase provided last year. Mr. Hine stated that last year's increase was related to unique circumstances and this proposal is based on the significant accomplishments of this year. Mr. Dobosh stated that he liked the idea of a structure for bonus compensation, however, that he didn't agree with all the reductions proposed. Mr. Terry stated that he traditionally is not in favor of bonus compensation, however he does understand the justifications due to the evolution and performance of the fiber business.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the proposal he provided is based on MEAM salary survey comparisons for GMs with Internet Service Provider (ISP) business, who also manage Municipal Light Plants (MLPs). Mr. Fitzgerald stated that Fiberspring has had successful South Hadley growth and MLP expansion territory which has resulted in SHELLED becoming a premier regional ISP/MLP service provider, which is positively impacting our customers and SHELLED.

Mr. Hine made a counter proposal to offer a 4% base salary increase with a \$15,000 bonus, Mr. Terry agreed to a 4% base increase but suggested a \$12,500 bonus. Mr. Coutu and Mr. Dobosh agreed this was an acceptable final proposal. Mr. Hine agreed with the final counter proposal as discussed. Mr. Fitzgerald thanked the Board for their consideration and stated that he agreed to the proposal as discussed. Mr. Hine asked if there were any final discussions. Since there were none, he stated this concluded the executive session discussions.

Adjourn

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

VOTED: To adjourn the executive session and return to open session by a roll call vote;
Mr. Dobosh-aye, Mr. Coutu-aye, Mr. Terry-aye, Mr. Hine-aye.

The Executive Session ended at 12:48 PM.

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Ronald Coutu, Light Board Clerk

Approved: January 30, 2025