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**MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC POWER ADVISORY BOARD**  
**August 19, 2021**  
**HMLD Community Room, 1 Holden Street, Holden, MA**  
**6:00 pm**

**Members present: Scott Carlson, Steve Sendrowski, Pete Liddy II, Peter Elkas, and Richard Farrell**

**Staff present: Jane Parenteau, General Manager – HMLD, Barry Tupper, Assistant General Manager – HMLD**

Determination of quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. and determined there was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

**April 15, 2021**

*Motion by P Elkas seconded by R Farrell to approve the minutes for April 15, 2021.  
Approved by 5-0 vote*

J Parenteau updated the board on the draft June 2021 financials.

Income statement

Operating expenses are 6.9 million YTD vs 6.6 million last year.  
Power Production, Customer Account and Admin expenses are higher.  
Distribution expenses were lower due to capital projects because the labor is accounted on the capital side.

Employee benefits are slightly higher and labor negotiations have cost a little more because of attorney costs.

YTD for 2021 net income was \$242,601.24 vs 2020 \$316,712.75

Income to budget - There was a positive variance of \$340,136.19 for Net Income over budget for June. Power production costs and distribution costs were over budgeted amounts.

Arrears Update

J Parenteau updated that the letters sent in May informing past due customers of potential shut off has had a positive impact. R Gorton, customer service rep is doing a great job contacting customers and working with them to clear up past due amounts. The highest amount of arrears at \$111k is now down to \$49K.

S Sendrowski asked if interest is charged. J Parenteau answered there is no penalty for late payment the only difference is they are not able to take advantage of the prompt pay discount.

#### Update on 2015A Project

M Ide from MMWEC had come in April to discuss the Peabody Peaking Plant. Minimum 30 day pause to take into consideration public input and other options. MMWEC has worked with Peabody municipal light department to agree to retire an older unit which will be replaced. www.2015a.org website has a lot of information about this project and MMWEC has met with legislators and administrators as well as project developer. Based on site constrictions it wouldn't be possible to replace with battery storage due to acreage and cost. 200,000 gallon oil storage tank will not be added. One of the discussions at the meeting was to explore using hydrogen at the plant to lower CO2 emissions. As of July 29, 2021 they have ended their pause. As cited in the Commonwealth's 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap, as the state progresses toward a reduced carbon future with increased electrification, resources like Project 2015A will be needed to "balance" the increase in intermittent renewables such as solar and wind. July 29, 2021 (MMWEC) has filed its initial brief with the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) in the proceeding addressing MMWEC's request for authority to issue revenue bonds to finance MMWEC's proposed capacity resource in Peabody, known as Project 2015A. On August 12, the DPU authorized MMWEC to issue long term tax-exempt revenue bonds to finance the project. The requested approval is reasonably necessary to fund the ownership, construction, operation and maintenance of a capacity resource that will provide required capacity and rate stability to the municipal light departments participating in the project.

The DPU ruled that MMWEC's request is reasonably necessary to assist municipal light department Members to:

- 1) meet future capacity obligations as required by ISO New England
- 2) provide cost-effective rate stability by reducing each municipal light department's exposure to capacity market price volatility
- 3) ensure reliability of capacity resources and electric service to their customers.

Jane Dye and Dennis Mahoney have submitted comments to the Board. These letters are included in the minutes of this meeting as Attachment 1.

Ruling may be finalized Sept 1, 2021 if no appeals are submitted or actions taken by other parties.

#### Operation/Capital Update

B Tupper provided updates.

#### Operations Update

- Focus has been on Capital Projects
- Dig safes have increased (6-7 per day) they are looking into options for that to clear up time.
- Transformer replacements due to storms coming through and increased loads.
- 8-10 new PV systems applications have come through and are being worked on.
- Forestry is working on high growth areas and focusing on main roads.

### Capital Update

- Replacement of the poles on Shrewsbury has been moving along.
- Greenwood estates – 1800 ft of underground primary cable has been installed and is ready for them when they need it.
- 2 sets of underground cables on Bullard St are completed and will help with ensuring full capacity and flexibility in load.
- Chaffin Sub Replacement is on schedule and budget. Slated for November and expected delivery dates for equipment have been set.
- AMI Meter Procurement – Interviewed top 3 candidates and evaluation is ongoing.
- New bucket truck 25 all parts and pieces have arrived and it is being constructed.
- HMLD Boiler replacement is out to bid and should be awarded soon.

### Personnel

- Quinn Curtin gave his resignation – 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lineman
- The open bookkeeper position has been filled with a temp.
- Accounting Manager job description is being written and the opening for this position will be posted soon.
- Mediation for Union negotiations is nearing an end and an agreement is hopefully coming.

B Tupper shared photos of projects going on.

### Public Comment

Scott Wahlstrom, 1718 Wachusett St, asked about meters and time based incentives. Asked if there are any options for a battery system that feeds back into the system at peak times.

J Parenteau explained the connected homes program through MMWEC is a program that could have this.

### Other business

#### Resignation

J Parenteau expressed her gratitude to the Board for their support of HMLD and emphasized the need to continue to look forward as the industry changes rapidly. She will be in her role through the end of September.

*Motion by R Farrell, seconded by S Carlson. The August 19, 2021 MEPAB Meeting was adjourned at 6:44pm.*

Approved: September 16, 2021

Attachment #1

Date: June 17, 2021

To: Municipal Electric Power Advisory Board, General Manager Jane Parenteau

Subject: Public Comment on Project 2015a Peabody Peaker Plant

From: Denis Mahoney, 56 Fox Hill Drive Holden

I am speaking in opposition to Holden's participation in the Peabody Peaker Power plant which would burn natural gas and oil to produce electricity.

My concerns are threefold:

- The negative health effects of the plant on the citizens of Peabody living near the proposed site.
- Holden's share of the cost of the plant which is \$6.8 million.
- The impact burning gas and oil has on our climate.

Peabody citizens whose health will be hurt by this plant were just made aware of this project in the past few months. There are already plants at the Peabody site that burn gas and oil.

When gas and oil are burned to produce electricity, they release:

- Chemicals including benzene, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and others
- Very small particulates

All of these hurt the health of people living near the site. These chemicals and particulates have been linked to worsening asthma, heart attacks, strokes, early death, etc.

There are neighborhoods within one half mile of the site that have been already been identified by the state of Mass as deserving protection from environmental pollution. There is an elementary school within 1 mile of the proposed site. Children in that school and a nearby high school will be hurt by the chemicals and particulates released. I wouldn't support building this plant in Holden. We should not build it in the town of Peabody.

The total cost for Holden's share of the plant is \$6.8 million over 30 years. The state of Mass recently passed a new law which requires significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, which burning gas and oil produce, in the next 10 to 30 years. There is a strong possibility that due to the requirements of this law that the Peabody plant will not be able to run for the 30 years. Holden's share will still have to be paid even if the plant is shut down. That money would be wasted.

The production and burning of gas and oil releases carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere – greenhouse gases. These greenhouse gases are among the main contributors to climate change. If we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and to reach the net zero greenhouse gas targets of the new Mass climate law, we can't build a new 30 year plant that produces greenhouse gases.

This project was first initiated in 2015. Holden entered into this project in January 2017.

Over the past six years alternative clean methods of creating power – wind and solar, and storing it - batteries, have been improved. This will continue. If batteries don't fill all of our needs today, they will shortly. We have already waited six years for construction of this plant to start. We should not make a 30 year commitment when better solutions are being improved constantly.

For the three reasons I outlined, public health in Peabody, cost, and climate change, I urge HMLD to take every measure to withdraw from this project.

To: Municipal Electric Power Advisory  
General Manager Jane Parenteau  
Re: Public Comment prepared for 6/17/21 meeting  
From: Jane Dye, 39 Lovell Rd., Holden

I would like to bring to the board's attention a new law that affects not only the 2015A project but will play an important part in decision making going forward.

As you know the Mass Legislature recently passed, and the governor signed into law, An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (aka The Climate Act). This new law requires that effective June 25 (next week) the Department of Public Utilities has a new mission. The DPU is directed to give equal weight to six factors as it decides rates, reviews contracts, and makes energy policy. System reliability and affordability, the DPU's two longstanding priorities, remain crucial, but as of the 25th they are on a par with four new criteria -- safety, system security, equity, and, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. [See section 15 of the Climate Act.]

This change is an important one and has everything to do with our mission here. For 110 years HMLD has done the job for Holden pursuing the two longstanding priorities of ensuring system reliability and affordability. Now, a century later, there are challenges that were not even imagined when HMLD was established. We must rewrite Holden's mission statement accordingly. There are 4 additional priorities that are ON A PAR with reliability and affordability. These are safety which includes public health, security from both physical sabotage and cyberattack, equity which applies not only to our town's residents but to communities that may be geographically remote from us but are none-the-less impacted by our decisions, and, lastly, reductions in green-house gas emissions necessary to slow climate change.

And so, when it comes to consideration of MMWEC's peaker project, we need to realize that in

2015 when the Peabody plant was conceived these new priorities were not part of the decision-making process. They are now.

Thus, the conversation is continuing – maybe not so much here as it is on the North Shore. MMWEC has filed an update with the DPU requesting a further “pause” until July 15 when they will submit another update. Questions of safety and public health, of equity and of the climate impacts of the project are being given further consideration and technologies other than burning fossil fuels are being evaluated as they should be.

As HMLD and the town of Holden go forward, decisions relating to projects and commitments like the Peabody peaker plant must be tested against these 6 equally weighted priorities and that means that the process must involve not just HMLD staff and the advisory board but also open public discussion with the Light Commissioners/Select Board and the citizen/ratepayers who own Holden Municipal Light Department.