

***Chicopee Municipal Lighting Board
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday, February 27, 2024***

Chairman Mashia called a regular meeting of the Chicopee Municipal Lighting Board to order at 4:03 PM on Tuesday, February 27, 2024

Present for this meeting were Chairman Daniel J. Mashia, Commissioner Joseph F. Pasternak, III, Commissioner Carl E. Sittard, and General Manager and Clerk of the Board Daniel R. Faille. Also present for a portion of this meeting were Chicopee City Council President Frank Laflamme and Vice President Robert Zygarowski.

Chicopee City Council President Frank Laflamme and Vice President Robert Zygarowski addressed the Chicopee Municipal Lighting Board about installing signage on utility poles. The General Manager indicated that signage represents a hazard to linemen working on the poles and that all CEL linemen are still required to climb utility poles. During a major restoration effort, CEL may call in linemen from other areas of the country to assist, and those workers may arrive without a bucket truck and need to climb. Additionally, as this represents a hazard to linemen, the IBEW local union will need to be consulted as this will change the working conditions linemen are expected to perform under. There was also discussion about what to do when utility poles are relocated, who would be responsible for installation of the signage, and who would be responsible for the replacement of signage following the replacement of a pole due to damage, age, or destruction. Mr. Laflamme indicated that this was a public safety issue and that the City Council is being asked to look into this in order to better serve city businesses who request signage at the roadway. CEL allows for some signage to be placed on utility poles, but it is limited to certain types and always subject to prior approval from CEL engineering. Mr. Laflamme and Mr. Zygarowski encouraged CEL to participate in a meeting with the City's engineering department to develop a procedure.

Commissioner Pasternak made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 24, 2024 meeting, as presented. Commissioner Sittard seconded the motion. Discussion: None; Motion was passed 3 to 0.

Commissioner Pasternak made a motion to concur with the payment of Warrant #E020224 dated 1/29/2024 in the amount of \$1,445,172.21; Warrant #E020924 dated 2/1/2024 in the amount of \$287,586.41; Warrant #E020924 dated 2/5/2024 in the amount of \$42,866.56.; Warrant #E021624 dated 2/8/2024 in the amount of \$337,112.16; Warrant #E021624 dated 2/12/2024 in the amount of \$150,476.23; Warrant #E022324 dated 2/20/2024 in the amount of \$4,238,088.11 and Warrant #E022324 dated 2/15/2024 in the amount of \$106,948.28; Commissioner Sittard seconded the motion. Discussion: None; Motion was passed 3 to 0.

Bid(s) Approval

The General Manager presented the Commissioners with CEL Bid #24-0510 for a New/Unused Ford Transit 350 for Crossroads Fiber. This is to be an installer van with a

bucket for the purpose of installing and servicing fiber customers. The purchase of this equipment will continue to prepare Crossroads Fiber to perform installations in-house. Two bidders responded. One bidder (Altec) proposed a larger cutaway truck with a very long lead time (24-36 months) that did not meet the bid specification for delivery, and the equipment specified was largely in excess of what was requested. The second bidder (CUES) proposed an alternate brand, Dodge in lieu of Ford, but otherwise met all requested specifications. This vendor provided a reasonable lead time (10-30 days) that met the bid specification at a price of \$131,668. Vehicle maintenance staff have recommended awarding this bid to CUES, Inc. Commissioner Pasternak made a motion to award the bid consistent with staff's recommendation. Commissioner Sittard seconded the motion. Discussion: None; Motion was passed 3 to 0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Chicopee Hydro Update

The General Manager informed the Board of several developments following the last meeting of the municipal light board. First, the engineering company that's working on the project (DuBois & King or D&K) addressed Commissioner Sittard's and Commissioner Pasternak's questions as follows:

1. When asked about the Country of Origin for the materials being used, D&K indicated that project specifications can require that the materials for the carbon fiber liner can be sourced in the United States.
2. When asked if the contractor can provide a list of successful project implementations similar in size and scope to ours, D&K indicated that the project specification and require qualifications such as "*Minimum 50 internal Carbon Fiber rehabilitation projects for the Carbon Fiber Engineer*" and "*Minimum 30 internal Carbon Fiber rehabilitation projects for the Carbon Fiber Contractor*"
3. When asked about the warranty period, D&K indicated the project specifications indicate a 5 year warranty. They noted that is typical for this type of work based on their conversations with Carbon Fiber contractors.

D&K has begun the next step of updating the design drawing/specifications for a carbon fiber reinforcement option. CEL was presented with an initial progress drawing on 1/26/2024, as of today, D&K has 95% construction drawings. The documents define the design parameters the carbon fiber design-build contractor would need to meet, including the concerns addressed above.

At the last meeting, it was discussed what the return on investment in the project looked like. At that time, the General Manager indicated that the cost to complete the rehabilitation of the plant to the point where it will once again be operational is likely very close to the life expectancy of those repairs, and that he would look into options to either

lease the property to a third party whom would be tasked with making the repairs in exchange for a long-term lease and a potential purchase power agreement at an acceptable rate, as well as investigate CEL's ability to sell the site. Since that meeting, the General Manager met with Mr. Lee Pouliot at the Planning Department. Since the location of the hydro facility is a critical aspect of the City's flood control program, outright sale of the property is highly unlikely. However, Mr. Pouliot was able to share some of the City's plans to redevelop the area near the hydro facility and indicated that green/renewable energy fell into a sustainability component of grant opportunities they were pursuing. There may be grant money available to CEL through these funding opportunities to offset what would be required by CEL to invest in the facility. This collaboration is ongoing.

The idea of offering up a long-term lease with options for a purchase power agreement with/without attributes is still an option. According to the records at the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety, CEL does own the dam at the hydro facility. A lease arrangement would not reduce CEL's insurance burden for the dam. The General Manager indicated that a lease agreement had been theorized leveraging the lessee performing the reconstruction activities at the location and absorbing them through the purchase power agreement. However, a reconstruction solution involving a CEL investment, plus grant funding to restore operability of the plant, plus a lease option, may result in a lowered purchase power agreement.

The General Manager provided an update on leveraging a dive team to evaluate the repair portions of the plant below the waterline. CEL's plant operator indicated in an email that the dive team couldn't do the work we were requesting because of high water. Furthermore, in order to make the repairs in the water box and the #2 tailrace bulkhead, they would need to utilize additional divers. The operator didn't want to move forward with this work until we knew the future of the plant. Additionally, there is approximately \$300,000 of needed improvements and repairs to get the plant operational after the penstock is repaired. The operator is concerned that the units have sat idle for some time and we won't be able to assess the full extent of damage to them until we try to get them operating. They are aware that the bulb seal needs replacement on one of the units, but they have a replacement seal already. They don't know the status of the other seal, gearboxes or generators of either unit. They indicated that they can warm and test the generators prior to operation, and we can change oil in gearboxes, but won't be able to provide CEL with a full assessment until we complete the penstock repairs, additional repairs, and perform testing. The operator offered to prepare a more formal SOW.

Front Street Generator Noise Testing Update

The General Manager indicated that CEL had a follow up call with MassDEP, whom has requested additional, longer testing more specifically in the area of concern. CEL then re-engaged Acentech to develop a testing strategy that will provide the comprehensive data being requested by MassDEP. Acentech suggested a course of action involving the mounting of a remote monitoring system (RMS) on a CEL-owned utility

pole near the area of concern. This RMS would allow for real-time monitoring of sound levels, event logging of potential and problematic events, alarm triggers, and downloading of data for further analysis offline. This approach has multiple advantages, including establishing a larger data set of both ambient and runtime noise levels, not requiring CEL to conduct costly, out-of-band runs on the generators (creating noise solely for the sake of testing), and providing an effective, semi-permanent yet unobstructive monitoring solution. The General Manager indicated that the RMS is configured to analyze specific frequency bands and ranges such that it does not store verbal communication, meaning that it does not represent a privacy concern for anyone speaking nearby.

MMWEC BTM Battery Project Update

The General Manager provided an update to the behind-the-meter battery storage project that began last year. Contract negotiations with the operator through MMEWC are progressing, but temporarily halted because CEL needed to prove site ownership. The General Manger worked with the City's Planning and Assessor's offices to complete the recording necessary to effectively validate CEL's ownership of the parcel adjacent to our 18L substation. Contract negotiations will resume on 3/1/24.

Crossroads Fiber Update

The General Manager informed the Board that we are nearing 4,365 active customers and approximately 86 additional in the survey/install queue. We have completed and activated all remaining 2023 builds. There are currently 3 Fiber Serving Areas (FSAs or Fiber hoods) in various construction stages with one pending opening this weekend.

The General Manager informed the Board that we are in the process of contacting MDU (apartment) owners in current active FSAs in an effort to provide service to these buildings. Our marketing coordinator and telecom engineer have been working on plans and presenting them to the MDUs we have been in contact with. This month we began the process of removing temporary field devices that were installed in FSAs during 2020/2021 due to supply chain issues. We anticipate the upgrades to be completed around May, 2024. We are underway with the build of the colocation facility, with the racks in place and preparations being made to provide secure access to the facility to outside customers.

City camera fiber construction will be completed and tested this week, handing over to the City IT department to complete their install with Vulcan.

New Business/Updates

1. **Phone Tree Follow-Up:** the General Manager informed the board that a simple phone tree has been implemented during business hours and has expedited the routing of calls to the correct department.
2. **APPA Coverage of Connected Homes:** The General Manager informed the board that both MMWEC and American Public Power Association

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- picked up CEL's recent newsletter article about joining the NextZero Connected Homes program and rebroadcasted it nationally.
3. **Record Update:** The General Manager requested the commissioners provide their addresses, phone number and email addresses for the purpose of updating the mayor's office.
 4. **E-Mail:** There was a brief discussion about @celd.com email addresses being created for commissioner so they could communicate using official CEL email in lieu of personal email addresses.

Commissioner Pasternak made a motion to adjourn at 5:09 PM. Commissioner Sittard seconded the motion. Discussion: None; Motion was passed 3 to 0.



Daniel R. Faille, Clerk of the Board

Approved: March 25, 2024