

**Middleton Electric Light Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2021**

The following individuals were in attendance:

Frank Twiss, Chairman

Chuck Clinch

Jim Kelley

Tim Houten

Jim Carbone

Michael Cloutier, Manager

Chairman Twiss called the meeting to order at 5:13PM.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion:

Tim Houten motioned to approve the agenda as written. Chuck Clinch seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion:

Tim Houten motioned to approve the minutes of January 13, 2021 as written. Jim Kelley seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Financials:

Steady as they have been all year. We ended on a positive note. Solar was up 600K hours and the output was greater this year than last. Overall cost for energy at year end was \$0.083. This is the lowest cost since Mr. Cloutier became manager. It should stay the same in 2021 due to things that have been done in the past. Overall usage went down in 2020. Our residential usage was up 9%, our commercial was down 3% and industrial was down 3%. The commercial and industrial usage was down due to the pandemic. The Essex Rink was almost

completely closed, and they owe MELD money but are currently under a payment plan.

We finished the year with a healthy net income of \$1,985,404.47. Sales were down 3%-4%. We did not do as many capital projects due to the pandemic restrictions. Interest income rebounded to \$904,387.44 but was not quite as good as 2019. In December, we put \$300K into the reserve trust for rate stabilization. Previously, Mark Kelly had taken out all but \$1,482.08 of the money from the MMWEC Trust.

Mr. Cloutier signed a PPA for a gravel pit solar project as it was inexpensive. He is also expanding our renewable energy portfolio.

In Lieu of Tax Payment:

The In Lieu of Tax payment to the Town has been calculated as \$243,252.62 which is higher than 2019.

Motion:

Mr. Houten motioned to approve the \$243,252.62 In Lieu of Tax payment to the Town. Mr. Kelley seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Budget:

Mr. Cloutier presented the budget to the Commissioners. We now have a credit rating of A+. A comment was made by the Rating Board that we did not have multiyear forecasting, so Mr. Cloutier has also created a 5-year budget. There is not a lot of change from the 2020 budget. The revenues changes show Residential Sales up \$150K, Industrial Sales down \$100K, Municipal down \$10K, Resale up \$1K and Merchandising and Jobbing down \$15K. The expense changes show Purchase Power down \$400K, Depreciation up \$40K, Distribution Expense up \$55K, Maintenance Expense up \$87K, Customer Expense up \$125K and Admin/Gen Expense up \$57K. The budgeted Net Income shows a \$29K decrease from 2020.

In the Capital Budget, the big expenses will be the new meters, station equipment (regulators) and new trucks. We are having problems with the leveling system on the Kiley truck which presents a safety issue. Usually, the Kiley trucks last 10 years but this truck is almost 5 years old. We will either trade it in or put in auction.

Motion:

Mr. Houten made a motion to accept the 2021 budget as presented. Mr. Kelley seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Manager's Report:

Everyone is back in the office. The question was asked if the employees had any exemptions for the Covid-19 shots. Mr. Cloutier answered that we are aligned with the DPW. Mr. Cloutier spoke with Derek Fullerton and we will be taken when the DPW is eligible. When the employees were asked if they wanted the shots only 4 said they did.

Mr. Cloutier is working on the grant program for the EV chargers. One will be at the library and the other behind Memorial Hall.

David is going ahead with the metering system. David said we could get data on our cell phones with the system, but it would not make sense to do it until all meters are installed.

Climate Bill is getting kicked around. It has been approved by both the Senate and the House, but the Governor vetoed it and sent it back with some suggested changes. The House and Senate now have to accept the changes or send it back to the Governor stating they passed it twice and are doing so again. The Section 33, Carbon Emissions, which affects the municipals was not changed. The Governor's biggest concern was that he wants to get to 45% non-emitting by 2030 and not 50%. He claims that the extra 5% will cost an additional six billion dollars. As our section of the bill was not changed, it will still stay at 50% as written when approved.

Mr. Cloutier met with Brian Cooper from the Middleton Little League regarding the lighting at Sgt. Edward M. Couture Field. They are working with Cooper Lighting and are very appreciative of MELD's offer to help. It will be privately funded through fund raisers and, as it is on school property, it will be gifted to Howe Manning School. The next step will be to approach the neighbors for their input.

Rail Trail Project still has a lot of momentum. Mr. Cloutier gave the Commissioners a phase breakdown of the rail trail progress prepared by Katrina O'Leary, Town Planner.

Still planning to hold the MEAM Plymouth meeting in May, if at all possible.

Next meeting March 24, 2021.

Mr. Carbone took a rollcall vote to go into executive session. Yes votes were voiced by Jim Kelley, Frank Twiss, Tim Houten, Chuck Clinch and Jim Carbone.

Going into executive session at 6:10PM and not going back to regular session. Chuck Clinch removed himself from executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

James Carbone
Clerk