

Middleton Electric Light Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2024

The following individuals were in attendance:

Frank Twiss, Chairman
Chuck Clinch
Tim Houten
Jim Carbone
Michael Cloutier, Manager

Chairman Twiss called the meeting to order at 5:03PM.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion:

Tim Houten motioned to approve the agenda as written. Chuck Clinch seconded the motion. Motioned carried 4-0.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion:

Tim Houten motioned to approve the minutes of November 15, 2023, as written. Chuck Clinch seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Financials:

Power Supply is tracking less than last year. Our purchases are down about three million KWH from 2022. So, it appears we will be selling less KWH in 2023 than in 2022. Our cost per KWH is down. November PPA cost was \$0.093, which was the same as last year. However, we are a penny less expensive overall for every KWH we are buying this year.

Our cash position is up, as we are spending less. We went down a penny on our PPAC and Energy Charge, but we still have a positive net income. We are doing very good financially. Cash account is higher than 2022 and our investments are back in the black, up 142% from 2022 returns. Account 926, Employee Pensions and Benefits will continue to go up. Contract and natural gas prices continue to be lower. A few weeks ago, Mr. Cloutier locked up a good natural gas prices for January and February.

Designer Selection:

Mr. Cloutier previously sent Commissioners the proposal Manole put together for design services for the 2024 MELD building renovation. We have received a proposal from GIENAPP ARCHITECTS. Mr. Cloutier recommends that we go with this firm. The Commissioners will have to vote to approve this recommendation. The cost would be \$248K from pre-design through construction completion administration. GIENAPP will also help us with the construction administration of the office renovations that need to be completed or replaced. This firm has previously done work for the Town of Middleton.

Motion:

Tim Houten motioned to approve going ahead with the GIENAPP ARCHITECTS proposal. Chuck Clinch seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Manager's Report:

Several outages since the last meeting. On November 26th a fuse was blown on Kenney Road, later two fuses were blown on Spring Road. On December 6th a car ran into a pole and broke the guy wire on Liberty Street, and on December 7th the same pole was hit two more times. It was suggested that a guard rail be placed at that pole to prevent future damage. Another outage was caused by a tree down on Second Avenue that took out a primary and secondary, and a final outage was on School Street. No more than 50 customers at a time were affected.

Chuck and Bryan went to Vermont for storm coverage for four days.

On January 17, 2024, lineman Ryan fell in the parking lot and hit his knee on the plow blade. He was in pain and was encouraged to go to the doctor to have it

checked out. A workers' comp claim has been filed, but hopefully Ryan will be back at work shortly.

The Ford Lightning is at the dealer now. We got the paperwork to register it and we should have it within a week. As an electric vehicle, a charge should last about 240 miles.

Kiley bucket truck was inspected, and we added on a rack, changed the ladder rack and added some strobe lights. We should have the truck delivered within a month.

We have been spending a lot on Account 933, Transportation Expenses. The fleet is getting older. In previous years, we budgeted \$40-\$45K, in 2022 we were at \$70K and the first eleven months of 2023 it is \$67K. Hopefully, with the newer vehicles, the cost will drop.

Mr. Cloutier has almost completed the job description for the Sustainability Manager/Accounting Clerk. This person will be a bridge learning the ropes, cleaning up our conservation program, working with Bernie and Manole on some accounting projects and learning the office procedures over the next eleven months.

MELD has joined PURMA, after an insurance review with Mr. Cloutier and its Executive Director. We will be getting some supplemental coverage, such as additional general liability. Health insurance split is up 2%, but the Town has put in writing that they are working toward the Town paying 70%. The current Town payment is 62%.

Manager's Review:

A new five-year extension was signed last year. It included 3% per year, plus 1% for each of three goals. The goals being low rates, system reliability and employee retention. Mr. Cloutier stated that the rates were lowered in November. The system's reliability has been kept up, and continually tracked. Mr. Cloutier reports on them each month. MELD lost two employees, but quickly replaced them with three additional employees. When Kenny retired, Bernie,

Chuck and Brendan were promoted, and Mike was promoted to truck boss. Another accomplishment is solar savings. We were able to save a net \$32K on transmission and capacity charges with the batteries. In addition, we saved \$149K with the solar. We missed only two peaks.

When asked what is in place should Mr. Cloutier become incapacitated. Mr. Cloutier feels confident that the Office Manager, Bernie and Manole are all capable of taking control of everyday operations should that happen. He also stated that he is confident that the GML Co-op would step in to help as they have a vested interest in the success of MELD. It was also suggested that Mr. Cloutier put together a comprehensive booklet stating what reports, forms or duties that need to be prepared on a monthly or yearly basis. Also, who would you choose to be the person to make the immediate decisions or to take charge of personnel problems or decisions. Mr. Cloutier agreed to work on compiling this information.

The Commissioners now need to vote on the salary increase to be given to Mr. Cloutier. Mr. Cloutier stated that using MEAM information he is no longer in the top ten among his peers at his current salary. It was agreed that a vote will be taken at the next meeting after the Commissioners have reviewed the specifics of Mr. Cloutier's contract.

Next meeting February 21, 2024.

Tim Houten motioned to adjourn at 6:03PM. Jim Carbone seconded motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Carbone
Clerk