

Middleton Electric Light Commission
Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2020

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 5:10PM.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Motion:

Tim Houten motioned to approve the minutes of September 16, 2020 as written. Chuck Clinch seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Financials:

Power supply costs are down significantly over the last few years. We have not received an invoice from Rivermill Hydro since May. This may indicate that the river is not flowing. It has been a good year overall as shown in the net income. ISO charges are also down over last year. We had a battery discharge last night

and will have another discharge today. In March they started discharging 2 megawatts over 3 hours and now they are discharging 3 megawatts over 2 hours. Typically, when they hit peak it is now \$33,000.00 compared to \$22,000.00 in March.

A woman in central/western Massachusetts requested our PPA for a biomass plant in West Springfield. This facility will burn wood chips from line clearing and tree debris. Biomass is considered a class one rec when burning this type of wood. It has not been built yet, but MELD is in for a megawatt. This will represent approximately 8% of the power we purchase. If the wood chips were to decay on the land, they would create three times as much carbon than if it is burned in the plant.

Investments have fully recovered. The YTD interest income is \$328,182.00 compared to \$95K last month. Our cash position remains solid and the cash flow is good. We had a lot of electricity used in August due to the hot temperatures. Purchased power is down \$80K from 2019. Our net income is tracking very close to 2019.

Manager's Report:

The rail trail groundbreaking was October 2, 2020. It is basically done other than 4" of stone dust that will be installed next week. The gates, signs and flasher signs are scheduled to be completed in the next couple of weeks. All feedback has been positive. Everyone was appreciative of MELD's involvement. It was suggested that the rail trail should be mentioned on our website. Mr. Cloutier will check with the Rail Trail Committee to see if we are linked to their website.

Mr. Cloutier spoke with Andy Sheehan regarding the installation of fiber optics between the municipal buildings. Mr. Cloutier proposed that MELD run it, own it and charge the Town a user fee. It can also be used as a backfall for our metering system. David informed Mr. Cloutier that then we would not need cell phone

modems. In the future we could also offer services to businesses along Route 114. We could also lease out dark fiber.

We have made some headway for the purchase of poles from Verizon. Mr. Cloutier has recently contacted someone and is waiting for them to get back to him. Mr. Cloutier has a copy of a purchase and sales agreement from another municipal which he is looking over.

The metering project is coming along nicely. The software has the same protocols as Itron. We currently have 200 residential meters in stock to install with minimal investment. The oldest meters will be replaced first. David has 168 commercial meters coming in within the next couple of weeks. The new commercial meters will be able to be read in a day. Door hangers will be put on doors about a week in advance. They will explain that it should be a relatively short outage. David, who is thorough, said the mapping system we put in a few years ago has made it so much easier to plan the AMI project.

A new sign for the MELD front yard has been ordered. The old one has been washed out by the sun and elements. It should be in place by the end of the year.

The billing and accounting software is on the office server. The server is a 2012 and will no longer be supported by Microsoft. Instead of buying one, we will have a hosted server in Maine. They will own and maintain it, so we will never have to do any updates. This will save us approximately \$5K a year. We were hoping to get it online by the first of the year but it maybe a little longer. The two old office computers will be replaced. Email, which is now with OnPoint, will be transferred to GoDaddy. This will include Microsoft 365 and will be automatically updated. The new computers are expected sometime in November.

Other:

A question was brought up asking, what triggers a call to MELD when the 911 Call

Center receives a call pertaining to electric business/problem. It was decided that the current protocol was probably outdated. Mr. Cloutier will arrange a meeting at the Call Center to discuss and update the procedure.

Next meeting: November 18, 2020

Chuck Clinch motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:15PM.

Respectively submitted,

James Carbone
Clerk

