

Chairman Thomas Reynolds called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the BELD Board Room. Those present at the meeting included Chairman Reynolds, Vice Chairman Anthony Agnitti, Secretary James Regan, General Manager William G. Bottiggi, Ken Stone and Joe Bracken, all of BELD.

I. Minutes of Prior Meetings

i. September 15, 2020 Electric Open Meeting

Voted: on motion of Mr. Agnitti, to accept the minutes of September 15, 2020 Open Meeting as written. Mr. Regan seconded. So voted.

II. Items for Action

None.

III. Items for Discussion

i. Rate Study

Mr. Bottiggi reported we haven't done a rate study in five years. He continued Mr. Cameron of ENE did our last rate study and we asked him to do another one. We have made some changes in the way we charge the peak and demand charge. Mr. Stone commented that this is to make sure our rates are set accordingly for our expenses. He continued this came up as part of revising the RP3 application; good utility practice is to at least review your rates every five years. Mr. Bottiggi said he would ask Mr. Cameron and present his findings to the Board.

ii. Hydro Quebec

Mr. Stone explained back in the 80's Hydro Quebec constructed two high voltage lines: one going into New Hampshire and the other into Vermont to bring hydropower down into New England. BELD and several other municipalities signed entitlement agreements through Hydro Quebec which includes energy, capacity and transmission. The energy stopped in 2001 because they did not want to negotiate in good faith with us. Since then we still retain transmission and capacity rights for the high voltage lines. Those existing contracts expired on October 31, 2020 and last week Mr. Bottiggi signed a twenty year license extension to continue to get transmission and capacity rights for Hydro Quebec. Mr. Agnitti asked if this cost us anything. Mr. Stone said in order for us to have that entitlement it costs us \$16,000 per month but we sell those rights through ENE and we get about \$23,000 per month. He continued the Board members will have to sign for part of this contract down the road as we are still negotiating part of it. There was further discussion.

iii. Coronavirus Update

Mr. Bottiggi reported that we have not had any employees test positive for coronavirus but we have done a lot of testing. Mr. Bottiggi asked Ms. Teele, the energy analyst, to pull some numbers together to show the impact on kilowatt sales.

Ms. Teele compared this year's kilowatt sales to the average of the last four years of kilowatt sales. Mr. Bottiggi continued our sales were down but it has not hurt us financially as our expenses have gone down because we are not buying as much energy and energy prices are very low. We continue to try and get good deals and add to our renewable portfolio. We are in good shape from a hedging perspective. There was further discussion.

Mr. Stone explained that we are keeping track of all the coronavirus-related expenses: PPE, plexiglass around the customer service area and cubicles, cleaning of the building. He continued this information is filed with the Town of Braintree every couple of months and we are spending an estimated \$95,000 for the year 2020. Mr. Agnitti commented that amount is very inexpensive – BELD has done a good job. Mr. Stone reported we didn't generate much overtime – almost negligible – just the PPE, plexiglass and sanitizing. There was discussion.

iv. Potter II Insurance Claim

Mr. Bottiggi explained we are making progress with the insurance company for the Potter gas turbine damage that was done. He went over the information and our options with the Board.

v. Watson Update/Capacity Supply Obligation

Mr. Bottiggi reported that the Watson plants have been running a lot and the team has changed out all the lube oil, control oil – all the original oil. Watson 1 was done yesterday and Watson 2 will be done tomorrow. There was further discussion.

Mr. Bracken explained the process and said the plant ran last night. He continued both units will be out for one week simultaneously. Mr. Bottiggi said for the month of November we sold the capacity supply obligation.

vi. Internet/Email Update

Mr. Bottiggi reported that we are up one hundred customers year-to-date – this includes our transition period of stopping cable TV. We are adding a few customers a week. We added thirty last month but we do lose some each month too. He continued the cable TV equipment in the headend is being dismantled and a new A/C has been put in there so we can combine the computer room with the headend. Then the old computer room can be used for storage.

Mr. Regan asked for an update on the internet for the schools program. Mr. Bottiggi said he will check to see how many residents are taking advantage of this. He said some customers get their internet for online learning free and with others it is subsidized depending on where they fall on the low income bracket. Mr. Stone reported that this works out to about \$1,500 per month for October and November in savings to the customers. There was further discussion.

Mr. Bottiggi explained that we are seriously considering getting out of the email business – this would be the beld.net emails. We had about 15,000 beld.net email

addresses and we are down to 3,000 at the most. There was discussion. We would not be doing this until after tax season. We have not offered email to any new customers for a couple of years.

vii. Electronic Sign

Secretary Regan reported he had an impromptu meeting at the Farmer's Market with Mayor Kokoros and his assistant Kate Naughton on the electronic sign and they walked the site – the town green. The mayor is enthusiastic about this and agreed on putting on the sign something like Welcome to Braintree, a public power community. Mayor Kokoros would have any trees removed or benches relocated to accommodate the sign. There was discussion on how this process would work and what would be needed. There would probably need to be a schematic, we need to check on some of the town bylaws for signs, building review and permit, RFP and who would be responsible for the changeable content. There was further discussion.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to move forward on design of the sign and communication with the Town on how we will go forward from here. So voted.

IV. Personnel Update

Mr. Bottiggi reported that Mr. Campbell at the plant will be retiring in January. There may be another retirement coming up as well.

We will also be hiring a meterman. We already have an apprentice in that department so this will be a fully qualified meterman position.

There was discussion about the meter and the production departments.

V. Old Business (As Determined/Needed)

None.

VI. New Business (As Determined/Needed)

Chairman Reynolds asked about the recent snow issues on Granite Street. Mr. Bottiggi said the BELD team responded very well – we got some good comments from residents. He explained that our engineering & operations department had put sectionalizers in over the years – so if we have an outage and there is damage in an area we can open the sectionalizer up and put everyone back in service. He continued we also have ties between circuits so if we know it will take a couple of hours to fix something we tie as many customers as we can to other circuits, get them powered up again and do the repair. There may be still be some 10-20 customers without power but not 800 customers without power. The customers who are without power are usually closer to the damage. Another part of this is our guys get in here fast and start working.

VII. Public Participation (As Determined/Needed)

None.

VIII. Tabled Items

None.

IX. Next Regular Meeting – Upcoming Meetings

- i. Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.**

X. Executive Session (As Determined/Needed)

Not needed.

XI. Adjournment

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m. So voted.

James P. Regan
Secretary