

Chairman Thomas Reynolds called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. in the BELD Board Room. Those present at the meeting included Chairman Reynolds, Secretary James Regan and General Manager William G. Bottiggi, all of BELD and Councilor Elizabeth Maglio, Mr. Vin Collins, Mr. Lee Dingee and Mr. David Oliva, all of East Braintree. Vice Chairman Anthony Agnitti arrived at 5:05 p.m.

I. Minutes of Prior Meetings

i. September 27, 2022 Open Meeting

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, to accept the minutes of September 27, 2022 Open Meeting as written. Mr. Reynolds stepped down and seconded. So voted.

II. Items for Action

None.

III. Items for Discussion

- i. Councilor Maglio and East Braintree Residents**
- ii. Tree Trimming Safety Practices and Policies**

Chairman Reynolds recognized Councilor Maglio and the East Braintree residents in attendance. After introductions Mr. Collins explained that he had taken some pictures and spoke with Councilor Maglio and Mr. Dingee about some trees that have branches growing over the electric wires on Glenrose Ave and Venus Ave. He is concerned and would like BELD to take a look at them. There was discussion on which trees and the electric wires. Some of the pictures were sent previously and Mr. Reynolds reported that BELD has already taken care of the issue. Mr. Bottiggi explained that we have a contract tree trimming company and they are arborists and qualified to work in a high voltage area. He continued we are tree trimming constantly but we don't take trees down unless we absolutely have to. Chairman Reynolds explained we do a V notch so that we get everything around the wire and within two years you cannot tell what has been trimmed. There was discussion. Mr. Bottiggi said the Town is responsible for the trees in total; BELD trims the trees to protect the electric infrastructure. There was discussion on the specific trees. Mr. Collins said he started noticing after he read the BELD newsletter and had been walking the neighborhood. Chairman Reynolds said we appreciate hearing about the trees as we would like to keep the trees trimmed in order to avoid an outage. Mr. Bottiggi said that is the most important thing – tree trimming – and squirrels – both can cause an outage. There was discussion.

Mr. Bottiggi explained that we also have a tree rebate program for residents: they should call BELD if they are thinking about taking down a tree and it looks like if that tree were to fall it would affect the electric infrastructure we offer a \$500 rebate. BELD's representative would go out and look at the tree first and approve the removal of the tree and rebate. There was discussion on this program with Councilor Maglio.

Secretary Regan asked about the tree ordinance that will be discussed at a future Town Council meeting. Councilor Maglio said that issue is coming up. Council President Boericke had come to a previous meeting and discussed the issue. She would like a member of the Municipal Light Board

on the committee so that BELD is aware of how trees would be handled and can offer their perspective. Chairman Reynolds has volunteered to be on that committee once it is settled by the Town Council.

Mr. Collins asked about the tree give-away program. Mr. Bottiggi said we give away maple trees – Mr. Collins explained that the previous owner at his house had 2 trees planted and he wondered if he could get another. Mr. Bottiggi said yes but we usually plant them in the spring. Councilor Maglio asked how big the trees are. Mr. Bottiggi said he thought they were 8 feet and the idea is that they provide shading so you save on air conditioning energy. The topic of trimming or removing trees around wires was revisited. Chairman Reynolds explained that not every tree company is certified to work within 10 feet of the power lines – that is an important thing to note. There is a certificate: they have to go to school and get certified so they can work within 10 feet of any electrical wires. There was discussion. Mr. Bottiggi said you need to make sure the trees are not under the wires or near the sidewalks as they will destroy the sidewalks as they grow. They would need to be planted back off the road. Chairman Reynolds explained that one of the biggest issues with planting trees along grass strips and sidewalks is that it heaves all the sidewalks. There was further discussion on different types of trees. BELD's program allows for maple trees in their Re-Leaf program.

Mr. Bottiggi said people's demand for electricity is going up because everyone uses more power now. There is also a big push for heat pumps and getting off of natural gas and oil. He continued: by changing over you will save money because our electric rate is so low and natural gas is what drives the cost of electricity. Chairman Reynolds commented that they say there will be 40% increase in natural gas prices. There was discussion. Vice Chairman Agnitti said the team at BELD are very strategic in buying energy and forecasting and keeping our rates competitive. Chairman Reynolds agreed and said they are hedging out our power costs in the future. Mr. Bottiggi said Mass Save is giving rebates for changing over to heat pumps. BELD also is giving rebates for heat pumps – \$1,000 per ton up to \$6,000 in addition to what Mass Save does. He continued we use a company called Abode – they are our energy consultant/auditor because we want to make sure that you hire a contractor that has proved they are not selling you too much equipment and make more money off of that. Mr. Oliva asked if we would work with Mass Save – Mr. Bottiggi said no, the resident would have to call Mass Save directly.

Mr. Oliva asked if BELD has considered subsidizing rooftop solar. Mr. Bottiggi said we do now – but the problem is: is it worth it? He continued: payback is so long because your electricity costs are so low and you are only going to save \$.10 per kilowatt here in Braintree - but in National Grid or Eversource's territories you will save \$.40 per kilowatt. The payback is probably fifteen years which is the life of the solar panels plus you need to be concerned about penetration to your roof.

Councilor Maglio mentioned that there is an East Braintree Civic Association (EBCA) on October 20, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. if anyone from BELD would like to attend. The meeting is held at the yacht club. Mr. Dingee said they have not had too many meetings the last couple of years, mostly due to Covid and they are trying to change that now. They are trying to increase their membership. There is no application or fees to join. They want to do a lot more in the future. There was discussion.

Councilor Maglio needed to leave at 6:45 p.m. She thanked the Board for their time and said she would be following up and getting the word out about all the programs discussed tonight.

Mr. Oliva asked about something he had noticed when he was walking on Toland Trail: little red flags going from one of BELD's manholes to the switchyard and then also red writing at the same manhole. He also noticed at the same time in Watson Park there was a big red square and was wondering about BELD putting lights in at Watson Park. Mr. Bottiggi explained about the red flags - we have a cathodic protection system, which is like electrolysis which protects our pipe type cable - the 115, 000 volt underground and that goes over to the station at Swift's Beach. He continued: the cathodic protection actually goes down into the river where it is grounded. Mr. Bottiggi is unsure about what is happening on the Toland Trail but we are not putting in lights at Watson Park. There are also some red marks in front of Mr. Dingee's house. Mr. Bottiggi said that it is most likely DigSafe - anytime a homeowner wants to do anything they are supposed to call DigSafe and we all get called to go out and mark our areas - everyone does, water, sewer, telephone, electricity. So, it could have to do with the road work or maybe one of the neighbors. There was discussion. There will always be a mark is being done so other utilities and contractors know what is underground. Mr. Bottiggi said if you ever have any questions just call BELD.

iii. Silver Blaze's My Electric Portal Demo

It was decided shortly before the meeting started to move this item to the November agenda.

iv. Watson Gas Turbine Upgrade Status

Mr. Bottiggi asked Mr. Bracken to give an update. Mr. Bracken gave some history - in 2021 BELD entered into a proposal with Siemens to perform an engine reliability project for both units. The proposal had modifications to the engine including some software changes - it was designed to eliminate potential operational risks and increase the reliability. In December 2021 engine 39 - Watson Unit 1 was shipped to Montreal, after it tripped due to high vibration, to get the modifications done as well as the repair. There was discussion. We have a leased engine and when Engine 39 was done in March/April there were travel issues and then they wanted to deliver to us during our peak summer season and we said no. It just came back a few weeks ago. We have done the swap out: we took engine 39 which has been berthed in Watson 1 and put it in Watson 2. Engine 40 is now out of Watson 2 berth and waiting to be shipped out tomorrow. There will be the same modifications and any repairs they find necessary. This past week we did testing of engine 39: we ran it, checked on software glitches and it is now back in service today. The production department also did some planned upgrades - part of which is to replace filters. There are 50 pound filter elements and there are 250 of them - they had a huge scaffold built and they had to rig them up and torque settings. It was quite a bit of work. Mr. Bottiggi said it was windy a few days and they had to set up tag lines, etc - they did a good job. Mr. Bracken explained these are new high efficiency filters which is designed to give you better reliability and keep minor particles out of the machine. He continued with further work that the production department has completed. He agreed with Mr. Bottiggi that they did a good job and most importantly no one got hurt. Mr. Bracken said we will be doing this all again with Engine 40, which was berthed in Watson Unit 2, in April when it comes back from Montreal. Mr. Bottiggi said this is basically an as new engine in Watson Unit 2 now - good for another 25,000 hours and 4,000 starts.

v. Watson Long Term Service Agreement (LTSA)

Mr. Bottiggi said we signed the original version of this 13 years ago and it expired at the end of September. We met with Siemens for 2 long days of negotiations. We have 1 more zoom meeting

to finalize details and then we will sign a new 15-year Long Term Service Agreement with Siemens by the end of the month. There was discussion. Mr. Bottiggi said we pay \$126,000 per year per engine in order to have access to a leased engine, like the one we have leased since Engine 39 went to Montreal. We know that cost so we just put it into our bid and once we get paid for that we put into our rate stabilization fund. There was discussion.

vi. Mutual Aid - Florida

Mr. Bottiggi reported that we sent 2 crews of 2 to Florida. They left on Tuesday because the hurricane was due to hit on Wednesday. They got down there on Thursday. They worked Thursday until the following Monday evening in Bartow FL mostly. There were 56 workers – all members of the Northeast Public Power Association (NEPPA). They work 5 a.m. until 9 p.m. every day so 16 hours on and 8 hours off. They did a great job.

IV. Personnel Update

None.

V. Old Business (As Determined/Needed)

None.

VI. New Business (As Determined/Needed)

i. Town of Braintree's Electric Charging Stations

Mr. Bottiggi reported that the Town had installed electric charging stations in 2017. They are at Braintree High School, the DPW on Quincy Ave, East Middle School and Town Hall. There are 16 heads all together. In 2020 they discontinued service and support for them. There are some that only partially work and some that do not work at all. Mr. Scribner of ENE called Mr. Bottiggi and suggested BELD taking over operation of those electric charging stations. If we did take over operations we would charge for the use of the charging stations enough to maintain and service the stations. There as discussion – Mr. Bottiggi will give a call to Mayor Kokoros.

ii. Budget

Mr. Bottiggi reported we have a very good electric rate and he expects it to continue to be good. He will present the budget to the Board at the December meeting. There was discussion.

iii. Town Council President Boericke

Mr. Bottiggi reported that he met with Ms. Boericke. She works at Eversource and she is looking at the National Grid rate and was worried that we might need to do the same thing. Mr. Bottiggi gave her the history of deregulation, why our rates are so much better than others and our hedging plan. She would like Mr. Bottiggi to go to the Town Council meeting on October 18, 2022 to present the same thing he presented to her. Mr. Bottiggi said when he was at the senior breakfast that we sponsor for Public Power Week many seniors came up to him and asked about the electric rate.

There was discussion. Mr. Bottiggi's presentation will be posted as a Light Board meeting so that all members can go to the Town Council meeting.

VII. Public Participation (As Determined/Needed)

Done previously.

VIII. Tabled Items

None.

IX. Next Regular Meeting – Upcoming Meetings

i. November 1, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

X. Executive Session (As Determined/Needed)

None.

XI. Adjournment

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 p.m. So voted.

James P. Regan
Secretary