

Chairman Thomas Reynolds called the meeting to order at 5:02 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 and Production Division Manager Joseph Bracken, all of BELD. Guests were Mr. Seamus McNamee of GreatBlue Research, and Ms. Karen Mosman of the American Cancer Society.

I. Minutes of Prior Meetings

i. December 12, 2023 Open Meeting

Voted: on motion of Mr. Agnitti, to accept the minutes of December 12, 2023 Open Meeting as written. Chairman Reynolds stepped down and seconded. So voted.

II. Items for Action

i. ENE Director A Vote - Bottiggi

Mr. Bottiggi explained that this is the vote that is taken every three years for him to continue to be a director for ENE.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to re-appoint Mr. Bottiggi to the ENE Director A position. So voted.

ii. ENE-T Vote for Braintree Director – Bottiggi

Mr. Bottiggi explained that the T in ENE-T stands for Transmission and is a sub-cooperative of ENE.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to appoint Mr. Bottiggi as the director for Braintree in ENE-T. So voted.

iii. Relay for Life

Chairman Reynolds recognized Ms. Mosman from the American Cancer Society Relay for Life of the Greater South Shore. Ms. Mosman reported to the Board on the 2023 Relay for Life. The day for the Relay was a cold, windy, rainy day and they stayed from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. when they called it. Despite the weather, people did walk and they raised just shy of \$87,000. Ms. Mosman continued: they are geared up for the 2024 event and they learned from the 2023 event that they lacked an indoor option. They are going to move to French's Common which gives them the option of Town Hall if the weather does not cooperate. This is a better location for the general public to see and become involved. The Relay will be held on Saturday June 8, 2024. Big Daddy Entertainment will be there and will be having three different DJs there all day for the whole shift. There was discussion on the different levels of advertising that ACS Relay is offering. All of the Relay for Life printed materials would all have "presented by BELD" and also on the website, emails, anything online.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to go with the platinum level of advertising. So voted.

iv. Nelson Chin Summer Concert Series

Chairman Reynolds reported that a letter had come from Mayor Joyce regarding the Nelson Chin Summer Concert Series. The Board had been supplied with a copy of the letter. There was discussion. The letter included the concert information, including the cookout and the concert that is held at Smith Beach.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, for BELD to continue with the sponsorship of the Nelson Chin Summer Concert Series. So voted.

III. Items for Discussion

i. BELD Customer Survey Presentation

Mr. Bottiggi introduced Mr. McNamee from GreatBlue. They have done customer satisfaction surveys for BELD for many years now. Mr. McNamee explained that this year's survey was done entirely digital – the last time they did a survey for BELD it was more of a pilot due to the scale of what they did, along with phone calls. This year we got more respondents than we ever got with the phone surveys. This is also more cost-effective. Mr. McNamee said there is much good news in this year's survey and that this is some of the highest ratings that he has seen – 96.7% satisfaction rating. He also commented that since the wrap-up of BELD's survey GreatBlue has become one of the preferred partners for APPA so they now do a national public power survey and ask basically the same questions. He continued: for overall satisfaction for 2022 and 2023 the national rating for satisfaction is 68% so that means BELD is 28 points higher than the nation as a whole. Mr. McNamee reported the results to the Board. There was discussion. We will send out a press release and put information on beld.com to show the results and our appreciation for those that took the time to complete the survey.

ii. OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits)

Mr. Bottiggi reported that we are in good shape for OPEB which covers our retirement medical. He continued: every two years an audit is done – the Town hires Odyssey Partners. Parker Elmore has been doing the audit for quite a few years. He gives us a fifty seven page report but to summarize: our liability is \$11,032,000.00, it was invested and we now have \$9,744,000.00 so we have an actual liability of \$1,288,888.00.

The Commissioners had authorized us to invest years ago and we have been putting \$520,000.00 away. This year 2024-2025, if things do not change and Parker's projection is exact and we put away the \$520,000.00, we are done. It starts to pay a dividend to us of 494,000.00. However, things do change – there could be a recession. There was a discussion. The dividend would come back to BELD. This should be fully funded within two years if all goes well.

iii. Floating Solar Array on the Reservoir

Mr. Bottiggi explained that when we tried this back in 2018 we ran into Chapter 91 issues – the DEP said we couldn't put floating solar on a Massachusetts "great pond", which is a legal term that covers any pond that in its natural state is at least 10 acres – the Braintree/Randolph Great Pond falls into this category. Now, Mr. Ragucci of ENE is working with us and the Massachusetts Department of

Energy Resources (DOER) is interested in doing floating solar. They are realizing that there is no land left in eastern Massachusetts and there are a lot of bodies of water. There is also a federal Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) program for innovative generation of electricity so we may still have a floating solar array.

Mr. Bottiggi reported this is long-term – it won't happen in 2024-2025. Mr. Bottiggi met with Mayor Joyce and talked with her about it. She is an engineer so she understands what we are trying to do. Mr. Bottiggi plans on meeting with Tri-Town Water Board so they will understand that the water is still safe. The last time we tried this there were no floating solar arrays in the U.S. but now there is one in N.J. on a drinking water supply and another being installed right now in N.Y. on a drinking water supply. Mr. Bottiggi thinks there is a good chance we could make this happen.

There was discussion. Great Pond is a great location because there are no homes on it and it can't be used for recreational use. The one thing we have to be aware of - and we are - is there are two 24-inch water lines across the middle of Great Pond over to Randolph as part of the new Tri-Town Treatment. We have a map that shows where they are. The solar array would take up about 20 acres and can be shaped any way that we want. We may split it so that it is on either side of the water line so that maintenance can be done on the water line. There was further discussion.

iv. Station 9 Battery Storage

Mr. Bottiggi explained that we are making progress on this; we are trying to transfer ownership to Delorean which is a battery company. We mostly have the money back that we invested in this project. We will continue to benefit through a shared saving agreement - this transfers the risk of ownership and the actual ownership. Their idea long term is to run that battery for five years and then re-power it with new technology if it makes sense financially for us and them. There is a site walkdown on Thursday. Weijun and his team will go out. There was discussion.

There is another battery storage project that is happening behind St. Catherine's on Common Street. We are doing that with Convergent and it will be a 5 megawatt, 3 hour which is much bigger than the Station 9 battery storage. That will happen in 2024. We will use that for peak shaving.

v. SoundThinking/ShotSpotter

Mr. Bottiggi showed a google map of the area that the SoundThinking (formerly ShotSpotter) would cover. He explained after much work and effort the South Shore Plaza (SSP) decided to kick in \$25,000 for one year. He explained that we capture the high school, the plaza, the MBTA corridor, both squares, and the Washington corridor with the SoundThinking program. What we have now is Netwatch which is good for substation security and very effective for the fence line in but this will be good for outside of the fence. There was discussion.

IV. Personnel Update

Mr. Bottiggi reported that, as a result of an internal posting, Mr. McDonough was awarded the relief engineer position. We have also hired Mr. Leslie as a fireman and will be starting May 13 and Mr. Reymo as an electrical engineer who will be starting in June.

V. Old Business (As Determined/Needed)

i. Potter Demolition

Mr. Bottiggi reported that the air-cooled condenser has some asbestos siding on it that will need to be taken off first and then Costello is going to demolish it. They are going to take the stack and the air intake off. This will be \$480,000 but is important to do as it is rusting away. In order to completely demolish Potter II Station we need to relocate all the transmission system controls out of the control room. We will need to build a small building in the switchyard to relocate the controls. There are a lot of big projects coming up so we will not get to the relocation for a few years and it doesn't have to be done immediately. We have been selling any equipment that is still usable. Mr. Bracken said the demolition is really for the parts that are outside exposed and getting rusty; we want to make it the Potter building to protect the relaying equipment and the batteries for Station 16 until they can move them out.

ii. MBTA Update

Mr. Bottiggi said we are starting construction in March. We are going to do the Hawthorne Road piece first. Mr. Bottiggi met with Mayor Joyce and went over the job with her as they will probably get some phone calls at Town Hall. The installation of the conduit from Station 10 to Hawthorne Road is done. We need to complete the conduit running from Station 10 to Ross School area along Elm Street. There is duct there but it needs to be cleared in some areas – it is the old “Orangeburg” that tends to de-laminate and plug the pipe. We are bringing a company in to use cameras and a boring instrument and open it up.

We had sent estimates for the total cost and the MBTA has paid us for that. We have now sent the T the first status report in January and will continue to do it once a quarter which will include cost information. We have ordered all the wire and it is being held currently by Hurley because we don't have the room for it.

We are running two new overhead circuits: Hawthorne Road to Independence Avenue and Commercial Street, top of Penns Hill which is where we hand it off to National Grid. We will meter at Penns Hill and at Independence Avenue overhead. We need to replace a lot of poles on Penns Hill - Hawthorne Road is mostly done. There is one circuit running on Hawthorne now. We are going to lower that one and build a new one over it. The reason you do that is the new one will have no taps on it at all – it will be direct service – so we don't want our guys having to go above one energized circuit to work on the one above it. We have to do some substation work too.

VI. New Business (As Determined/Needed)

i. Union Contract

Mr. Bottiggi said that this did not need to be held in Executive Session as the Union has ratified the contract.

He reported the highlights of the final contract, pending approval of the Board. He explained one of the items that management has been trying to get is when we have standby for storms we have brought in four linemen and four electricians and Mr. Bottiggi wanted to change that to six linemen and two electricians. That is a benefit to BELD as the linemen are busy during a storm. We

increased their vacation so that there is five weeks after fifteen years instead of having to wait until twenty years. This will increase gradually with an additional day each year. We also increased the sick time buy back at retirement from 20% to 22% which is comparable to the industry. We have a safety incentive of \$250 if we go six months without a lost time accident. It used to be done by calendar and they wanted it re-set to the day after an accident. Management asked for and got the key accounts rep position out of the union – this needs to be a management position, reporting directly to the general manager. There was discussion about some of the key accounts in town. We increased the GWF pay: they were only making \$1.00 an hour over the WF so we increased it to \$3.00 an hour. That is the changes except for the cost of living raise. Mr. Bottiggi looked at inflation over the last five years and it averaged 4.7%; it was 7.2% in 2022. He offered them 5%, 3% and 3% over the next three years and negotiated to 5%, 4% and 3%. There was discussion.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to accept the Union contract. So voted.

VII. Public Participation (As Determined/Needed)

None

VIII. Tabled Items

None.

IX. Next Regular Meeting – Upcoming Meetings

i. Tuesday, April 16 or 23, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

There was discussion among the Board that April 16, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. works best for all members.

X. Executive Session – To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining; an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body.

This was discussed under New Business.

XI. Adjournment

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. So voted.

James P. Regan
Secretary