

Chairman Thomas Reynolds called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. in the BELD Board Room. Those present at the meeting included Chairman Reynolds, Vice Chairman Anthony Agnitti, Secretary James Regan and General Manager William G. Bottiggi, all of BELD. Also present were Mr. Steve Leonard, Mr. Tom Kent and Ms. Sunny Shaw from the Braintree Historical Society and Ms. Elizabeth Inglis from the Festival of Trees.

I. Minutes of Prior Meetings

i. September 10, 2024 Open Meeting

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Agnitti, to accept the minutes of September 10, 2024 Open Meeting as written. So voted.

II. Items for Action

i. Braintree Historical Society

Chairman Reynolds welcomed the members of the Braintree Historical Society. Mr. Leonard introduced himself as the board president of the Braintree Historical Society. He gave an overview of the Braintree Historical Society: they serve all members of the town – from elementary school children to senior citizens. They are the guardians of some great properties in Braintree: the General Sylvanus Thayer House, the French House and their resource center and barn. There is a museum in the resource center. Their mission is to protect the assets and make them available to the public with an eye on education and community involvement. He gave a summary of many of the events they do. They are here today to ask BELD for some assistance as they rely on donations to keep their operations running.

Mr. Kent explained that he is the treasurer for the Braintree Historical Society, but full disclosure is also on the Braintree Planning Board. He gave an overview of their financial status: the sources of revenue are from the French House. They have previously received some monies from the Town but that has ceased with this fiscal year, given the Town's situation. They are trying to make up the difference. They have regular office expenses such as phone, insurance, occupancy costs, etc. but also maintenance on the older buildings. Mr. Kent gave more specifics on the Braintree Historical Society's finances and answered questions from Mr. Agnitti. Mr. Kent explained that they have retained a person to help with corporate fundraising. Mr. Agnitti asked for more specific information regarding what the Braintree Historical Society is asking for. Ms. Shaw reported that the Braintree Historical Society has served the community for a very long time with school programs and outreach to people coming into town. She continued, they need to develop our programs more in concert with what is going on in the world today – get the kids connected. They have volunteers to help preserve the history, but they need more support; there is no way they can meet the needs of the barn or the facilities without some meaningful help.

Mr. Regan explained there is nothing in the paperwork or the discussion that is related to BELD. The Board needs to be able to provide justification for their votes and spending. Mr. Regan will not second any vote to approve this request. There was a lengthy discussion about the maintenance and safety needs of the Braintree Historical Society's buildings and campus and how or if BELD could help in any way. Their fire protection and fire alarm needs re-wiring. Mr. Bottiggi explained that we cannot use BELD employees for this. They need some help with the lights on the street level of the barn. Mr. Bottiggi explained that we could help with that – although this would be a rebate for

up to a certain amount. They would need to get estimates. Mr. Ford would be who they would need to speak to about that. Mr. Reynolds explained that BELD is governed by state law on what we can and cannot do. There was further discussion. BELD cannot help with electrical bills or provide the means for maintaining the properties.

Ms. Shaw announced that they had an alternative request for the Board. They are trying to do a speaker series and would need to hire historians to bring more awareness to Braintree's history. There was discussion. The Board would like to help the Braintree Historical Society but they cannot do the things discussed today. If they were to have an event that BELD could advertise at they could possibly do so. The Braintree Historical Society could also make use of the BELD newsletter or include a flyer with the electric bills and social media to help promote any events. This needs to be something the Board can vote on and have it be appropriate for how BELD can help.

ii. Braintree Festival of Trees

Chairman Reynolds welcomed Ms. Inglis of the Braintree Festival of Trees. Ms. Inglis explained how she came up with the Festival of Trees idea. She grew up in Sturbridge and they did this type of event. She now lives in Braintree and has 3 children in the Braintree school system. She had tried to get a speaker to come to the middle schools and there was no funding in the schools' budget or the Town's. She decided to do something about the lack of funding.

This is the first year for the Braintree Festival of Lights. Their mission statement is to better the lives of Braintree residents. This is a mechanism for businesses and others to invest in programs to help benefit the lives of Braintree residents – not limited to the schools but also for elders, neighborhoods and emergency situations. Ms. Inglis mentioned if there was a house fire they could help support those people for a short period of time while they figure things out. She continued, this is a broad statement because she does not want to help just one group of people. There are many businesses that have signed up already to participate.

Ms. Inglis gave details on the event: it is a 4-day event, starting at 5:30 p.m. on the same day as the tree lighting at the town hall. They will have raffle tickets to win anything on or under the trees. Local businesses are donating decorated artificial trees with gifts and gift cards. The winner gets the tree as well. Ms. Inglis is hoping that if there are some people who do not want the tree then she could donate them to the Marge Crispin Center for families. They will have 50 trees and more than that in baskets. She listed the different themes for each day – there will be times for kids and for seniors to get in free but those times are not limited to those people.

There was discussion – BELD could advertise through one of the tree levels. Ms. Inglis' committee will decorate the tree.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to choose the silver tree level. So voted.

iii. Lightshift Battery Acquisition

Mr. Bottiggi explained that BELD installed the battery at Station 9 as part of the ACES grant in 2017. We spent about \$1.7 million and received \$700,000 from the State. We needed to do some demonstrations to prove how it would work – for us, it was a demonstration project. It is still working but it is more of a distraction because our electricians are spending a lot of time and we are dealing with contractors a lot to just keep it running. The technology is outdated and we have

negotiated a deal with Lightshift Energy to transition ownership of the battery to them. They will run and maintain it and we will get 50% of the savings. Their intention is to run it for another couple of years and then replace it with more modern technology. Then we will sign a new agreement so that they will get 80% and we will get 20% because they will be investing all the money. There was discussion.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Agnitti, seconded by Mr. Regan, to authorize the general manager to transfer ownership of the Station 9 battery. So voted.

iv. Braintree High School DECA Program

The DECA program at Braintree High School is to help kids who want to go into marketing, finance, business and hospitality. The kids go to competitions, leadership conferences, and community projects. There is an opportunity to have some advertising at their events, on their T shirts and on social media. There was discussion.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to advertise with the DECA program for this year only. So voted.

v. ENE Directors Votes – Saleeby and Scorzoni

Mr. Bottiggi reported that it was time to re-appoint the ENE Directors Ray Saleeby and Christian Scorzoni. Their term is for 3 years. There was discussion.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to re-appoint Raymond Saleeby as a Class B Director. So voted.

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Agnitti, to re-appoint Christian Scorzoni as a Class A Director. So voted.

III. Items for Discussion

i. Duke Engine Acquisition

Mr. Bottiggi commented that this item has been discussed previously. Duke Energy owns 4 engines: 2 on the BELD campus and 2 near Fireking. He continued, they would like to sell them to another company. They may be done by the end of the year with this transaction. Nothing will change as far as BELD is concerned. We have a shared savings agreement; we are involved – they tell us when they will be running them, etc.

ii. Common Street / Convergent Battery Update

Mr. Bottiggi reported that this process is going slow. Convergent's representative has sent an email asking for a phone call next week to the acting fire chief. There was discussion.

iii. S&P Rating

Mr. Bottiggi reported that BELD's S&P Rating has been A Stable for 25 years and we have gone to A+ Stable. They say there is room for BELD to go further. We have around \$30,000 left on the bonds – they will be done in 2028. We may get an update at that time.

iv. Budget

Mr. Bottiggi reported that the budget is being worked on now and he will present it to the Board at the December meeting. He continued, there will definitely be a rate increase of ½ cent. We do have a couple of big projects coming up. We are changing out the switchgear at Station 8 – installing a whole new lineup. That is the last one – we have done Station 4 and Station 10. This is the 3rd and last one we need to do. We will be in great shape. Mr. Bottiggi explained that BELD is trying to replace the duct bank that goes over the highway at Elm Street but you have to go over the MBTA tracks. He continued, we have been working on this for a couple of years – we have \$1 million budgeted in 2025. There was discussion.

v. BELD Gate

Mr. Bottiggi explained that there was a report of someone walking around the BELD campus taking pictures after hours – this happens every once in a while – so the hours of the gate will be changed to 4:00 p.m. Our customer service hours end at 4:00 p.m. and now the gate will close at the same time. If there is a public meeting we would keep the gate open so the public can attend.

IV. Personnel Update

Mr. Bottiggi reported that we have hired a new meter tech, Mr. Mitchell – he is also an electrician. There was discussion about the meter department.

Mr. Bottiggi reported that two people will be retiring in January. Both positions will be posted internally and most likely filled from within BELD. At some point there may be an opening that we will need to go outside for.

V. Old Business (As Determined/Needed)

None.

VI. New Business (As Determined/Needed)

None.

VII. Public Participation (As Determined/Needed)

None.

VIII. Tabled Items

None.

IX. Next Regular Meeting – Upcoming Meetings

i. Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

After discussion, it was determined that Thursday, December 12, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. will work better with the Commissioners' schedules.

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 9:44 a.m. So voted.

James P. Regan
Secretary