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Westfield Gas & Electric Municipal Light Board Regular Meeting Minutes February 18, 2021

Location: Gas & Electric Operations Center, 40 Turnpike Industrial Rd. Conference Room,
Westfield, MA

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Roman stated that in accordance with Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting law, G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Municipal Light Board will be conducted via remote participation. The notice for this meeting invited members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting to do so by calling in telephonically to any of the numbers provided in the meeting notice. This virtual meeting will be audio recorded and, per the WG+E MLB Video Policy, the recording will be available on the WG+E website within one week. The Chairman asked if anyone, other than the Municipal Light Board, was recording the meeting. Hearing none the Chairman welcomed the public that may be listening to the meeting.

II. ROLL CALL was taken as follows:

Present: Ward #1 Commissioner, Kevin M. Kelleher
Ward #2 Commissioner, Ray Rivera
Ward #3 Commissioner, Dawn Renaudette
Ward #4 Commissioner, Francis L. Liptak
Ward #5 Commissioner, Joseph B. Mitchell
Ward #6 Commissioner, Robert C. Sacco (Participated Remotely)
Appointed Commissioner, A. Edward Roman

Absent:

Present: 7 Absent: 0

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

V. REPORTS FROM THE GAS & ELECTRIC:

A. Action Required Items

a) General Manager Selection

Prior to discussion each Commissioner chose a number from a bowl to determine the order of voting on the General Manager. The Chairman noted that the selection had been postponed from Friday night to this evening to allow Commissioners further time to seek input and consider the choices. He indicated he had received a number of opinions including those of employees. He thanked the employees for their input. In the order of the numbers selected each Commissioner provided their comments.

Commissioner Liptak indicated Hamid Jaffari had excellent qualifications but he disagreed with his projected use of consultants. The GM should surround himself with qualified people and lead them. Commissioner Liptak didn't feel he was a fit. As to Mr. Leary, he presented great enthusiasm for WG+E and he is a great asset to the department but the Commissioner didn't feel he had enough experience on the electric or gas side of the business. Mr. Flaherty is very strong candidate and has been in marketing for a number of years but questioned his managerial and operations experience. Mr. Coates was highly qualified with experience in many facets of the business and he intended to vote for Mr. Coates.

Commissioner Sacco indicated all candidates had great set of skills. It was a very difficult decision with such highly qualified candidates. He further stated the appointment of the General Manager is the most important job the MLB makes. He felt the delay for the decision was helpful.

Commissioner Mitchell indicated he received a lot of input from others. He wanted to clarify his comments at the last meeting and did not intend to disrespect the employees when he indicated to Commissioner Rivera that the decision was his decision to make. He then stated all are very qualified candidates. He felt the most important challenge facing the new GM will be upcoming climate change legislation. The proposed decarbonization legislation will be a dramatic change to the industry and landscape. He felt someone who has been involved in all the prior presentations to the MLB and involved in the issue is the best qualified for the job. He felt Mr. Flaherty was the best qualified.

Commissioner Kelleher thanked all the strong candidates and those that reached out to him with their input. It is a very difficult decision. He indicated he will do his best and hope the decision is the best for WG+E.

Commissioner Rivera thanked the MLB for allowing more time to receive input and consider this difficult decision. In his opinion it will be nearly impossible to find someone with the skill set in all 3 of WG+E's businesses, electric, gas and telecommunications. He thanked the employees and people in the community who provided their thoughts to him.

Commissioner Renaudette indicated it was a difficult decision. While she received a great

deal of input from others, it didn't change her choice as to who to select. The delay did allow for her to receive input. All are very strong candidates, yet all have a piece that is missing. Any candidate that is selected there is a risk associated with them.

Chairman Roman indicated the other Commissioners have said much of what he was going to say. There were a lot of strong candidates. In his view, one candidate wasn't a fit for WG+E. That left 3 for his consideration and looked at experience which narrowed his choice to 2. Of the 2 he indicated he would vote for Mr. Flaherty because of his longevity on the Board and general knowledge of the business and who is a community asset for all he does for the community.

At this time the MLB voted as follows:

Commissioner Liptak	Coates
Commissioner Sacco	Coates
Commissioner Mitchell	Flaherty
Commissioner Kelleher	Flaherty
Commissioner Rivera	Flaherty
Commissioner Renaudette	Flaherty
Commissioner Roman	Flaherty

The Chairman indicated there were 5 votes for Mr. Flaherty which is a majority.

On the motion of Commission Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Sacco for unanimous consent it was unanimously:

VOTED: To appoint Thomas J. Flaherty, Sr. as General Manager of WG+E, subject to satisfactory contract negotiations.

VI. NEW BUSINESS: None

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On the motion of Commission Rivera, seconded by Commissioner Liptak and on the basis of a roll call it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the regular meeting of the Municipal Light Board meeting and enter into executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, as noted on the agenda, and not to reconvene the Regular Session after adjournment from Executive Session.

Sacco	"aye"
Roman	"aye"
Kelleher	"aye"
Rivera	"aye"
Renaudette	"aye"
Liptak	"aye"

Mitchell 'aye"

Motion passed 7-0. 0 absent

Chairman Roman stated that the Municipal Light Board would be entering into executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, as noted on the agenda and would not reconvene the Regular Session after adjournment from Executive Session.

Chairman Roman declared the regular session portion of the meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD.

Attest:


A. Edward Roman, Chairman