

# Rowley Municipal Lighting Plant



**December 11, 2019 Commissioner's Meeting**

**6:00 PM –Rowley Light Plant**

Commissioners Present: Bryan DiPersia, Mark Cousins, Sayad Moudachirou. Also in attendance was General Manager Matthew Brown, Office Manager Eric Grover

See attendance sheet for the public sign-in.

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Bryan DiPersia opened the meeting at 6:00 PM

## ***Citizen Query***

Bernie Cullen stated he received the third quarter financials from General Manger Matt Brown and it looks as though the running expenses are ahead. It looks to have a six hundred thousand greater amount than what was budgeted. He explained other concerns he had and asked some general questions regarding the budget. The 2019 budget was left for Manager Brown by his predecessor in March. The town made some changes to the way RMLP pays for health insurance at the same time they separated our accounts. RMLP paid a years insurance in full before the towns fiscal year end. (June 30<sup>th</sup>) Then starting in July 2019 began insurance payments month to month. The first year of these changes results in paying 1.5 times the cost of insurance which was not budgeted for. RMLP operates on a calendar year budget. This had been mentioned in previous meetings.

## ***Review and Approve Meeting Minutes***

After reading the minutes from the previous meetings session October 9, 2019 provided, there were no corrections.

*Bryan DiPersia made the motion to accept the regular minutes for October 9, 2019 Mark Cousins seconded the motion. All voted in favor at 6:04 PM.*

## ***Mangers Update***

- **New Website:** The new website was rolled out on November 19<sup>th</sup>. We had placed notices on the town website, flyers in the bills, and it will go out on our social media page. There were some great pictures such as the drone shot of the Central Street Solar field that were added. The company we are using will have a quick turn around time for any important issues that may need to be added.
- **Christmas Lights Town Common:** The Rowley Girl Scouts and the RMLP had their annual tree lighting ceremony on the town common in early December.
- **Yankee Pine Pole Line:** We are running a new pole line into Yankee Pine per their request to divide up service to 300 Newburyport Turnpike. They are also adding new lights to the property at the owner's request.

- **Rowley Ready Mix:** The last of the equipment has been ordered by the electrician and we are just waiting to get it installed. This will be the last customer we have on the 5KV system on that circuit so we will be able to remove the three stepdown transformers once complete.
  - **URD GIS Primary Lines Complete:** Mark Bixby has been called back in to complete the GIS URD primary mapping on the computer. Mark is a great resource as he was working here when most of this was installed. Now that we have it complete, it is invaluable.
  - **Tree Trimming:** Hoping for a mild winter; we hope to get started on tree trimming. This will be the third phase of the project and as we have seen, vegetation removal cuts down on outages. Valley Tree/Northern Tree has a two-year contract left and they do a great job.
  - **APPA Legislative Rally Washington DC February 24-26, 2020:** The General Manager has been invited to join in the rally as it is an annual event supported by other municipal light departments. It has great exposure for the department and helps in the cause of promoting public power.
  - **Computer Upgrades:** There were a couple computers that had Windows 7 on them and needed to be replaced because Microsoft won't support them after January 2020. Northern Data came in and did the computer work and replaced what we had to.
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### ***Summary 11/20/19 MEAM Meeting***

It ended up being a short meeting. The discussing concentrated around minutes, legislative report, new website estimates, MLP new clean peak standards, 2020 budget. Also mentioned was a new nominating committee in which Matt was invited join. But the big talk was the Verizon 5G devices being added to the poles. It was mentioned the contracts with each department being the same and just where, if anything, has anyone seen a proposed contract yet. All in all, it was a good meeting and very productive.

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### ***Discuss Creating a "Commissioners Year End Report"***

Bryan DiPersia was thinking about the possibility of doing more friendly report for the rate payers. Even though we have our annual DPU report, it really isn't clear on how we performed over the last year. His thoughts were to include outages and how they happened, revenue, how many poles and how much wire was added to the system, etc. There could also be a section in there about how many energy efficient audits were done, rebates and their types, and a section on solar we are offering to our customers. General Manager Matt Brown said it was something we could investigate and put together.

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### ***Wethersfield Solar Update***

Manager Brown said the new owners of the Rowley Solar Field are Powerfund 1 LLC. They are here tonight at the meeting to introduce themselves and build a relationship to serve our community.

In the next few days there will a walk through of the field to see what must be completed. RMLP has UPG coming in on Monday to check over and test to make sure we can energize the site. There will be some work done per the request of the conservation commission and the request of the fire department. Some screening, fixing of the driveway, and hydroseeding must be done. Powerfund 1 LLC has been working with the town very diligently to get this project up and running.

Bernie Cullen asked if the community solar part was going to be added with the new owners. At this point, there must be a working solar field to have this. Once we get through the hurdles of getting in online, we will think about how we can proceed with that.

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**First Amendment to Employment agreement [Bond/Mutual Aid]**

There were two changes to General Manager Matt Brown's contract:

- Section 4.5 Mutual Aid - A salaried employee may go on mutual aid with the permission and the advance notice to board and be compensated for it with an hourly wage. [See contract attached]
- Change in section 1.3 from "Town of Rowley" to "RMLP".

*Mark Cousins made the motion to accept the amendments to Matt Browns employment agreement and bond agreement by council. Bryan DiPersia second the motion. All voted in favor at 7:20 PM*

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**All other items not anticipated by the Chair**

Manger Matt Brown brought up humanity effort of helping the Navajo Nation Effort. At this time there are too many unknown questions on how the liability insurance would fall into effect. The lineworkers would be working over the 40 hour per week cycle which brought up questions on if something should happen, who would cover that injury if one should occur. This is a volunteer effort and where would the cost of getting the lineworker there. So as of right now, the RMLP won't be participating in the efforts to help them out. Maybe in future once questions get ironed out.

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**Adjournment**

*Bryan DiPersia made the motion to adjourn. Sayad Moudachirou seconded. All voted in favor in favor at 7:25 PM.*

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Minutes submitted by Eric R. Grover

  
Bryan DiPersia, Chairman

  
Mark Cousins, Clerk

  
Sayad Moudachirou, Member