

## **Minutes: Stowe Electric Board of Commissioners' Meeting**

February 21, 2024, at 8:30 am at Town of Stowe Electric Department Conference Room with remote participation available via Zoom.

### **Present:**

BOARD MEMBERS: Larry Lackey, Chair; Sara Teachout, Vice-Chair and Mark Gilkey, Commissioner

STAFF: Jackie Pratt, General Manager, Brent Lilley, Director of Operations; Sarah Juzek, Director of Finance; Michael Lazorchak, Manager of Regulatory Compliance; Amber Ives, Clerk of the Board

GUESTS: L. Ashworth, Small Hydro Consulting, LLC

**Call to Order:** L. Lackey called the meeting to order at 8:26 am.

### **Executive Session:**

At 8:26 am, S. Teachout made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a legal matter. The motion was seconded by M. Gilkey, all were in favor and the motion carried.

At 10:00 am, S. Teachout made a motion to exit Executive Session. M. Gilkey seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

After a brief recess, the Board of Commissioners' meeting resumed at 10:07 am.

### **Agenda Approval:**

L. Lackey moved to modify the agenda to discuss 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financials prior to discussion of both the Hydroelectric Project Funding and the Alchemist Fast Charger in order to accommodate staff availability. All were in favor and the modified agenda was approved.

## **Approval of January 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes:**

On a motion made by M. Gilkey and seconded by S. Teachout, the minutes of January 24<sup>th</sup> were approved.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financials:**

The Board of Commissioners and Staff discussed Mystic Generating Station, financial highlights, forecasting, power supply contracts and the importance of keeping power costs minimal in order to provide reliable power at a reasonable rate.

## **Hydroelectric Project Funding Discussion:**

J. Pratt informed the Board of Commissioners that the Smith's Falls Dam, located on the Stowe Electric Department's (SED) parcel, is under a Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC) corrective action order for stabilization/repair and that the options available to SED are A. Repair the Dam, B. Remove the Dam, or C. Repair the Dam and implement Hydroelectric Generation.

J. Pratt discussed the pros and cons of each option, the various pathways to the end result, funding, and cost/benefit analysis.

J. Pratt apprised the Board of Commissioners that SED's preferred option is to repair the dam and implement hydroelectric generation as it represents a long-term investment for SED and its ratepayers, supports the Vermont Renewable Energy Standard, and offers a unique opportunity to provide low-income customers with an on-bill credit for renewable generation through the Affordable Community Renewable Energy (ACRE) program.

The Board of Commissioners and Staff discussed equitable opportunity, a potential low-income rate design, qualification measures for low-income designation, the conditions of the ACRE program, and the timeline for construction on the dam.

S. Teachout moved to implement new hydroelectric generation as part of the Smith's Falls Dam stabilization project and to authorize the General Manager to proceed with any actions related to said implementation, including applications for additional grant funding, regulatory filings, request for proposal (RFP) issuance, vendor selection, and licensing.

L. Lackey clarified that the proposed motion pertained only to the stabilization of the Dam and implementation of hydroelectric at said Dam, and that the motion did not include other projects, such as the Second Office and the Seaver Sawmill. In addition, L. Lackey confirmed that beyond SED's current participation in the ACRE program, the

Board of Commissioners would be involved in the discussion and implementation of any programs related to the generation credits produced by the hydroelectric system.

As there was no further discussion, M. Gilkey seconded the motion made by S. Teachout. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Guest, L. Ashworth, exited the meeting at 10:56 am.

### **Alchemist Fast Charger Discussion:**

J. Pratt informed the Board of Commissioners that a course of action needed to be determined for the inoperable fast charger located at the Alchemist. J. Pratt presented the Board of Commissioners with the option of decommissioning the machine or replacing it. L. Lackey suggested that a third option would be for the Alchemist to take over/purchase the inoperable charger.

L. Lackey suggested that the Board of Commissioners and Staff should engage in a broader discussion as to the level of SED's involvement with Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers in the Town of Stowe.

The Board of Commissioners and Staff discussed the number of chargers owned by SED, EV charging rates, Return on Investment, charger brands and software, and whether Stowe, as a large tourist destination, has the appropriate number of EV chargers available in the community in suitable locations.

J. Pratt suggested that SED and The Board of Commissioners may want to discuss implementing a policy for SED's chargers as they fail, become uninsured and need replacement.

The Board of Commissioners and Staff decided to initiate conversation with the Alchemist to see if they had interest in replacing the inoperable fast charger and decided that if there was no interest from the Alchemist that SED would decommission the charger.

### **General Manager Highlights:**

J. Pratt apprised the Board of Commissioners that SED was working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to secure significant mitigation funding for projects related to Winter Storm Elliott, and that this potential funding offered SED an incredible opportunity to improve resiliency and upgrade infrastructure to support long-term needs.

J. Pratt notified the Board of Commissioners that N. Houske had been hired as SED's new Tree Crew Foreman and that N. Houske had been working as Lucas Tree Experts' Training Foreman for the past three years. J. Pratt expressed that SED was glad to welcome N. Houske to the team and continue the excellent work being performed by the Tree Crew.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:36 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Amber Ives*

Amber Ives

Clerk of the Board