

**MINUTES OF GAS & ELECTRIC COMMISSION MEETING**  
**REGULAR SESSION**  
**MAY 14, 2024**

A meeting of the Holyoke Gas and Electric Department was held on April 9, 2024, at 5:30 P.M. in the Department's offices. In attendance were Commissioners Hoey, Sutter and Marrero; Manager Lavelle; Superintendents Steve Roy and Brian Roy; Brooke McMahon, Kirk Jonah, Kate Sullivan, Lisa Rogers, Tim Haas, Jim Crowley, and Attorney John Ferriter.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Hoey called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

**MINUTES:**

On a motion from Commissioner Marrero, seconded by Commissioner Hoey, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes from April 9, 2024.

**REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF MANAGER:**

**Financial Report:**

Ms. McMahon reviewed the draft March 2024 financial statements. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

Ms. McMahon presented the 2023 DPU report for Commission approval. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commission Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the 2023 DPU report as presented.

**DIVISION REPORTS:**

**GAS DIVISION**

Mr. Brian Roy reported that wholesale natural gas purchases continue consistent with the hedging plan for the current 12-month procurement window. He stated that 73% of summer supply is locked in price and that 16% of winter ('24-'25) is also locked in price. He reported that April unit sales are down approximately 7% below plan, and year-to-date unit sales are 15% below last year due to mild weather. He then reviewed the May natural gas rate comparisons and reported that the Department remains very competitive in all rate classes. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

Mr. Roy reported that distribution crews have begun main replacement work on Lincoln Street, in advance of street paving work, and EN White area of the Highlands, in advance of sewer separation work. He also reported that bare steel service replacements on progressing according to plan and that there is one leak on file that is scheduled for repair by the end of the week. He then gave an update on the natural gas moratorium statistics and reported that a response has been sent to the DPU regarding the recent notice relative to Operator Qualification testing. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

Mr. Roy then gave an update on the PHMSA Grant applications and noted that the Department has been recommended for an award pursuant to the FY 2025 funding opportunity. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

## **ELECTRIC DIVISION**

### **POWER SUPPLY**

Mr. Steve Roy reviewed the May electric rate comparisons and reported that the Department remains competitive in all rate classes compared to regional peers. He then reviewed the May Mark-to-Market report and reported that all transactions are within policy limits. He also gave an update on peak load reduction activities and noted that the April peak occurred on April 3rd, hour-ending 19, and that 5.35 MW were shed via Department load reducers. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **TRANSMISSION & DISTRIBUTION**

Mr. Roy reported that 56% (1391) of planned AMI meter deployments have been completed as of May 1st and that four (4) vacuum switches have been replaced so far this year, with five (5) remaining to be replaced. He also reported that all planned pole inspections and manhole inspections have been completed. He also provided an update on other distribution projects. He then gave an update on FERC Order 881 which requires that all transmission line ratings be adjusted on an hourly basis starting in July 2025. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **ELECTRIC PRODUCTION**

Mr. Roy stated that hydro production through April was 10% ahead of plan due to favorable river flow. He then gave an update on planned capital, including the Hadley Falls Unit #2 rehabilitation project that is scheduled to begin in the second quarter.

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Jonah gave an update on the status of sales activity, and he reported that staff continues to summarize the findings of the FTTH design and will have recommendations on next steps in the near future. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Ms. Rogers gave a brief update on accounts receivable, fuel assistance and payment method statistics for 2023-2024. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

Ms. Sullivan gave an update on planned spring public outreach activities including the safety awareness program for the schools and seniors and collaborative fishway education program. She then gave an update on Green Team activities including collaboration with MMWEC and DOER on potential funding for conservation and electrification assistance. She also gave an update on various grant opportunities being pursued by the Department. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

### **COMMERCIAL ENERGY CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE REQUEST – 6 WATER**

**STREET:** Mr. Lavelle reported that the Department received a Commercial Energy Conservation Assistance request from the owners of Remote Opportunities, LLC (Valley Malt) at 6 Water Street, in the amount of \$105,980 for the installation of energy efficient replacement doors and windows, and he recommended that it be approved as requested. Commissioner Marrero disclosed that his employer has

a contractual relationship with the customer, and he abstained from deliberation on the matter. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Hoey, it was voted 2-0 to authorize the assistance per the recommendation of management. Commissioner Marrero abstained from the vote.

**COMMISSION RESOLUTION – RMUC GRANT APPLICATION:** Mr. Lavelle reported that the Department has submitted a grant application to the Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity (RMUC) Advanced Cybersecurity Technology funding opportunity through the Department of Energy (DOE). He noted that the funding requested would help HG&E establish a comprehensive Operation Technology (OT) security solution to enable both system operators and IT staff visibility into isolated networks containing electric-specific network devices located throughout the network, significantly enhancing the Department’s cybersecurity posture. He stated that the DOE is recommending that applicants provide a letter from their governing boards to evidence support at the governance level of the organization and he presented a resolution for approval. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the resolution as presented by management.

### **BID AUTHORIZATIONS:**

**SALE OF SURPLUS ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:** Mr. Lavelle requested authorization to solicit bids for the sale of surplus electrical equipment that would include the removal and disposal of various transformers, breakers, and switches from various substations and buildings throughout the system. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to authorize the bids per the recommendation of management.

### **BIDS RECEIVED:**

**WHITNEY AVE BRIDGE GAS MAIN REMEDIATION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the contract for the Whitney Avenue Bridge Gas Main Remediation to MSR Utility Maintenance Corp., the low bidder meeting all technical requirements of the solicitation. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to award the contract per the recommendation of management.

**2024 ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION PADMOUNT TRANSFORMERS:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the contract for Electric Distribution Padmount Transformers to Graybar/GE Prolec, the low bidder meeting all technical requirements of the solicitation. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to award the contract per the recommendation of management.

**SPECIALTY CONSTRUCTION & FACILITIES MAINTENANCE ANNUAL CONTRACT - EXTENSION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize a one-year extension to the contract for Specialty Construction & Facilities Maintenance with Garland Construction Corp. with rates terms and conditions consistent with the existing contract. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to authorize the contract extension per the recommendation of management.

**PURCHASE APPROVAL – DELL-EMC UNITY 400 NETWORK ATTACHED STORAGE (NAS):** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$57,295 for

the two (2) year renewal of the Dell-EMC Unity 400 Network Attached Storage (NAS) software support and maintenance services contract in support of the Department's data centers at Suffolk Street and Walnut Street. He stated that the current support contract expired on May 1<sup>st</sup> and that the support contract renewal is required to ensure continued proper operation and management of the data center storage. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to authorize the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

**PURCHASE APPROVAL – VEHICLE #96 REPLACEMENT:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$55,599 for the purchase of a new vehicle for Station Electricians to replace existing Vehicle #96 which is at the end of its useful life. He stated that the vehicle would be purchased from Marcotte Ford off the State Vehicle bid list. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to authorize the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

**PURCHASE APPROVAL – VEHICLE #10 & #26 REPLACEMENT:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$133,000 for the purchase of two new vehicles to replace existing Vehicles #10 and #26 which are at the end of their useful life. He stated that the vehicles would be purchased from Marcotte Ford off the State Vehicle bid list. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to authorize the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

05/09/24 – Draft Commission Meeting Minutes from 04/09/24

04/26/24 – JL/DD/Financial Statements, Balance Sheet & Summary Report – March 2024

05/09/24 – COMM/BM/DPU Report 2023

05/03/24 – JL/KC/CECP – Valley Malt-Remote Opportunities, LLC

05/08/24 – JL/KC/HG&E Commission Resolution – RMUC Grant Application Support

04/30/24 – SR/MS/Authorization to Bid – Sale of Surplus Electrical Equipment

05/08/24 – JL/CW/Bid Recommendation – Whitney Ave Bridge Gas Main Remediation

04/26/24 – SR/VO/Recommendation – 2024 Electric Distribution Padmount Transformers

05/03/24 – JL/CW/Recommendation – Extension of Specialty Construction & Facilities Maintenance Annual Contract

04/16/24 – KJ/EG/Purchasing Approval: Dell Unity NAS Support Renewal

05/01/24 – SR/JP/Purchasing Approval: Vehicle #96 Replacement

05/14/24 – CW/BR/Purchasing Approval: Vehicle #10 & #26 Replacements

### **NEXT MEETING DATE:**

It was agreed that the next Commission meeting would take place on Tuesday, June 18th at 5:00 P.M.

Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission enter into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to telecommunications. Chairman Hoey stated that no votes would be taken in executive session and that the Commission would not return to regular session.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion from Commissioner Marrero, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the Meeting at 6:10 PM.

On a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted, on a roll call vote to enter into executive session at 6:11 PM.

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HG&E Commission

Minutes 05/14/24