

**MINUTES OF GAS & ELECTRIC COMMISSION MEETING**  
**REGULAR SESSION**  
**MAY 19, 2021**

A meeting of the Holyoke Gas and Electric Department was held on May 19, 2021 at 5:30 P.M. in the Department's offices. In attendance were Commissioners Hoey, Griffin and Sutter; Manager Lavelle; Superintendents Beauregard, Brian Roy and Steve Roy; Brooke McMahon, Kirk Jonah, Kate Sullivan, Lisa Rogers and Attorney John Ferriter.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

Chairman Hoey noted that remote participation in the Commission meeting by Commissioners was authorized by an Executive Order issued by Governor Baker on March 12, 2020 and is required due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**MINUTES:**

On a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes from April 13, 2021 for approval.

**REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF MANAGER:**

**Financial Report:**

Ms. McMahon introduced Dan LeHaye from BakerTilly, HG&E's outside auditor. Mr. LeHaye was the lead auditor for the 2019 review and gave the Commission an overview of the audit process and findings. He stated that HG&E staff was well prepared and very cooperative throughout the audit. He also reported that her BakerTilly issued an unmodified opinion on HG&E's audit which is the highest review that is issued. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

Ms. McMahon reviewed the draft March financial statements. She also gave an update on the aging receivables and the efforts of staff to work with customers that are behind on their bills. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

**DIVISION REPORTS:**

**GAS DIVISION**

Mr. Roy reported that wholesale natural gas procurements continue consistent with the hedging plan for the current 12-month procurement window. He stated that approximately 50% of summer supply has been locked in price and that 17% of winter ('21-'22) supply is locked in price. He then reviewed the May natural gas rate comparisons and reported that the Department remains very competitive in all rate classes. He then gave an update on the status of leak reductions, cast iron main replacements and bare steel service replacements. He also gave an update on the Safety Management System program enhancements and the impact of the natural gas moratorium. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

## **ELECTRIC DIVISION**

### **Power Supply:**

Mr. Beauregard reviewed the May electric rate comparisons and reported that the Department remains competitive in all rate classes. 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 an update on the Citizens and Convergent Energy Battery Storage projects. He further gave an update on the NEPOOL RNS load reconstitution issue. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **TRANSMISSION & DISTRIBUTION**

Mr. Beauregard reported that all non-emergency field work that requires access to a customer premise continues to be suspended until further notice due to the COVID-19 outbreak. He then gave an update on replacement of VT's and CCVT's at North Canal substation and reported that he is working with Attorney Ferriter on a legal strategy with respect to the faulty ABB equipment. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **ELECTRIC PRODUCTION**

Mr. Lavelle reported that year-to-date hydro generation is slightly behind plan due to low water flows. He stated that fish lifting operations are ongoing and that over 150,000 shad have been lifted over the dam so far this season. He then gave an update on maintenance activities at the Cobble Mountain Reservoir facility. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Jonah gave an update on the status of sales activity, capital projects and help desk activity. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Ms. Sullivan gave an update on the Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) interest survey and reported that over 900 responses have been received to date. She also stated that efforts were underway to continue to promote the survey through various media outlets to ensure that all customers are familiar with how to access the interest form. She also gave an update on the website upgrade and the media plan for the SEPA award received by the Department. She then gave an overview of the Valley Heights backyard facility project and stated that significant outreach with the neighborhood has been conducted and that there have been two public hearings with the City Council on the matter. She further stated that approximately 50% of the neighbors favor moving the backyard facilities into the street, while the other 50% prefer to keep the facilities in the backyard. She explained that moving the facilities underground would cost approximately \$500,000 while the cost to the Department for upgrading the backyard services would be approximately \$150,000 (assuming Verizon paid \$125,000 for their portion of the project). There was a lengthy discussion on the matter.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

## **BID AUTHORIZATIONS:**

**TRANSMISSION POLES – 637 LINE:** Mr. Lavelle requested Commission authorization to solicit bids to purchase 24 new wood transmission poles to replace existing poles on the 637 transmission line that connects the Cobble Mountain Hydroelectric facility to the grid. He stated that a recent inspection revealed that 24 of the 36 existing poles were at the end of their useful life. He also stated that the purchase is fully reimbursable by the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to authorize the bid per the recommendation of management.

**ROOF REPLACEMENT – RIVERSIDE STATION:** Mr. Lavelle requested Commission authorization to solicit bids to replace the roof at Riverside Station due to its age and recent wind damage that have rendered the roof beyond repair. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to authorize the bid per the recommendation of management.

## **BIDS RECEIVED:**

**REPLACEMENT OF NETWORK VAULT TOP COVERS #412 & #452:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the contract to remove and replace two (2) network vault top covers to Rousseau Brothers, Inc., the low bidder meeting all requirements of the solicitation. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to award the contract per the recommendation of management.

**CIRCUIT BREAKER – 2000A INGLESIDE SUBSTATION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$22,350 for the purchase of 2000A spare circuit breaker for Ingleside Substation. He stated that the station does not currently have a spare of the recommended size and should have one in stock for routing maintenance purposes. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to authorize the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

**IP GATEWAY ROUTERS:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$213,840.31 for the purchase of two (2) IP Gateway Routers from Total Communications plus three years of software support. He stated that the units are required to support the Department's public Internet IP network routing infrastructure. Commissioner Griffin asked how old the existing gateway routers are and Mr. Jonah replied that the existing units have been in service since 2012. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to authorize the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

**102 CABOT OVERHEAD BRIDGE CRANE REPLACEMENT:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the contract for the Bridge Crane Replacement at 102 Cabot Street to Mass Crane & Hoist Services, Inc., the lowest qualified bidder meeting requirements for the solicitation. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to award the contract per the recommendation of management.

**ELECTRIC WIRE & CABLE ANNUAL CONTRACT:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the primary and secondary contracts for Wire and Cable to the lowest qualified bidder meeting requirements for each item as detailed on the May 7, 2021 memorandum from Carl

Peterson, Sr. Electrical Engineer. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to award the contracts per the recommendation of management.

**TREE TRIMMING & VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ANNUAL CONTRACT -**

**EXTENSION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize an extension of the Tree Trimming and Vegetation Management Annual Contract with All Reliable Services, Inc. for up to one year. He stated that the most recent Invitation for Bids (IFB) was canceled due to inconsistencies in applicable prevailing wage rates and the potential adverse impact to the Department. He further stated that staff was working with Department Counsel to appeal the most recent prevailing wage rates. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to approve the contract extension per the recommendation of management.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – LOG POND COVE WATER CHESTNUT REMOVAL:** Mr.

Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$19,416.53 for environmental services from Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) for services required to perform water chestnut removal at Log Pond Cove. He stated that the recommended services are required to comply with the FERC Project 2004 License. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to authorize the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

**ENGINEERING SERVICES – DEFORMATION MONITORING SURVEY:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$113,200 for engineering services from Clough Harbor & Associated, LLP. He stated that the services include a dam deformation study required to comply with the FERC Project 2004 License. Chairman Hoey asked if staff had evaluated alternative approaches to performing the study in an effort to reduce costs. Mr. Lavelle stated that staff had consultants review precision GPS technology and it was determined that the technology would not meet tolerance requirements for horizontal measurements. Mr. Hoey then stated that staff should review laser scanning and other technologies prior to committing to the proposed plan. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to table the item per the recommendation of management.

**ENGINEERING SERVICES – TWELFTH PART 12 DAM SAFETY INSPECTION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$46,700 for engineering services from HDR to perform the twelfth Part 12 Dam Safety Inspection required to comply with the FERC Project 2004 License. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to authorize the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES – MEDIA PLAN FOR FIBER-TO-THE-HOME CAMPAIGN:**

Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$30,000 for professional services required to complete planned Fiber-to-The-Home (FTTH) customer interest outreach. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to authorize the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

**NETWORK THREAT DEFENSE SYSTEMS:** Mr. Lavelle requested that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$135,560 for the purchase of two Network Threat Defense System appliances to replace the existing appliances that are at capacity. He stated that the systems have been

very effective in defending against distributed denial of service (DDOS) and other malicious attacks since they have been deployed in the network. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to authorize the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

**SALE OF REAL ESTATE- APPLETON STREET PARCEL:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the sale of the subject parcel to the highest and only bidder, Zhang Quihang and Le FeiFei. After a brief discussion on the matter, and on a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to award the bid per the recommendation of management.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

04/09/21 – Draft Commission Meeting Minutes from 04/13/21  
04/26/21 – JL/DD/Financial Statements, Balance Sheet March 2021  
04/20/21 – PD/SL/Authorization to Bid – Transmission Poles for 637 Line  
04/29/21 – PD/KT/Authorization to Bid – Riverside Station Roof Replacement  
04/29/21 – BB/VO/Purchasing Approval: Replacement of Network Vault Covers #412 & #452  
05/06/21 – BB/SD/Purchasing Approval: Spare 2000A Circuit Breaker Ingleside Substation  
04/22/21 – KJ/KO/Purchasing Approval: Two (2) Cisco ASR9902 IP Gateway Routers  
05/11/21 – BB/SL/Bid Recommendation – 102 Cabot Overhead Bridge Crane Replacement  
05/07/21 – BB/CP/Bid Recommendation – Electric Wire & Cable Annual Contract  
04/29/21 – JL/CW/Recommendation – Tree Trimming & Vegetation Management Annual Contract Extension  
04/15/21 – PD/SL/Purchasing Approval: 2021 Log Pond Cove Water Chestnut Removal  
04/30/21 – PD/SL/Recommendation – 2021 Deformation Monitoring Survey  
05/03/21 – PD/SL/2022 Independent Consultant for the Twelfth Part 12  
04/15/21 – PD/SL/Purchasing Approval: 2021 Log Pond Cove Water Chestnut Removal  
05/13/21 – JL/KS/Purchasing Approval: Media Plan for Fiber-to-the-Home Campaign  
05/13/21 – KJ/WM/Purchasing Approval: Corero DDoS Mitigation Solution Upgrade  
05/13/21 – KS/MC/Recommendation – Sale of Appleton Street Parcel

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

It was agreed that the next Commission meeting would take place on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 5:00 P.M.

Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to negotiations and potential litigation. Chairman Hoey stated that the Commission would not return to Regular Session.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the Meeting at 7:20 PM.

On a motion from Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted, on a roll call vote, to enter into Executive Session.

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HG&E Commission