

MINUTES OF GAS & ELECTRIC COMMISSION MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
SEPTEMBER 13, 2022

A meeting of the Holyoke Gas and Electric Department was held on September 13, 2022 at 5:00 P.M. in the Department's offices. In attendance were Commissioners Hoey, Sutter and Marrero; Manager Lavelle; Superintendent 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 5:00 P.M.

MINUTES:

On a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes from August 16, 2022.

REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF MANAGER:

Financial Report:

Ms. McMahon reviewed the draft July 2022 statements. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

DIVISION REPORTS:

GAS DIVISION

Mr. Lavelle reported that wholesale natural gas procurements continue consistent with the hedging plan for the current 12-month procurement window. He stated that 54% of winter ('22-'23) gas supply is locked in price. He then reviewed the September natural gas rate comparisons and reported that the Department remains very competitive in all rate classes.

Chairman Hoey noted a recent article warning about very high winter heating costs and he asked what staff is doing to communicate with customers and assist them through the winter. Mr. Lavelle stated that certain communications have already been sent to customers on the Budget Plan notifying them of the expected cost increases. He further stated that the September Newsletter will have a similar notification for all of customers and will also include all available fuel assistance outlets that customers can reach out to for assistance in paying the bills. Commissioner Marrero asked if the Department typically budgets for the Holiday discount in order to plan to give some relief to customers. Mr. Lavelle stated that the budget does typically include the Holiday Discount. There was a lengthy discussion on the matter.

Mr. Lavelle gave a brief update on the County Road inter-connect upgrade project. He then gave an update on the LNG reliability project and stated that a pre-filing meeting would be held with the EFSB on September 19th. He further reported that he gave an update on the project to the City Council Finance Committee on September 12th. He then reported that the bare steel services and cast-iron main replacements continue on schedule and that there are currently four leaks on the books, down from 12 last month, and all are scheduled for repair. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

ELECTRIC DIVISION

Power Supply:

Mr. Steve Roy reviewed the September electric rate comparisons and reported that the Department remains competitive in all rate classes. He then reviewed the September Mark-to-Market report and reported that all transactions are within policy limits. He also gave an update on peak load reduction activities. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

TRANSMISSION & DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Roy gave an update on the electric distribution circuit conversion activity, and he reported that work is currently focused on the H-4 circuit. He then reported that crews completed planned stray voltage testing and that other distribution projects are on schedule for completion by the end of the year. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

ELECTRIC PRODUCTION

Mr. Roy reported that year-to-date hydro generation is 13% below plan through August due to low water flows. He stated that year-to-date river flows are the lowest on record since 1958. He then gave an update on planned maintenance work for the fall canal outage starting September 17th and running through September 24th. He also gave an update on preparations for the 2023 outage for Hadley Falls Unit #2. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jonah gave an update on the status of sales activity and capital projects. He stated that supply chain issues are impacting several projects, largely due to the lack of availability of computer chips. He then gave an update on wholesale ISP services. Commissioner Marrero asked if we risk any opportunity costs for future service to the Holyoke residents if we expand too quickly with wholesale ISP services to other communities. Mr. Jonah stated that there is really no risk as additional bandwidth can be procured to meet any increase in demand, and that revenues from wholesale ISP services would help offset the cost of any increased bandwidth required to serve Holyoke residential customers. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Ms. Rogers gave an update on fuel assistance communications, accounts receivable and credit and collections activity. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Sullivan gave an update on the outreach efforts for the LNG Reliability Project. She then gave an update on planned activities for Public Power and Public Natural Gas week scheduled for October 5th. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

BID AUTHORIZATIONS: None

BIDS RECEIVED:

DIVE SURVEYS INSPECTIONS, MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS ANNUAL CONTRACT - EXTENSION:

Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize a one-year extension to the annual contract for Dive Surveys Inspections, Maintenance, and Repairs with Underwater Construction Corporation subject to a 5% increase in rates with all other terms and conditions consistent with the existing contract. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Marrero, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to authorize the contract extension per the recommendation of management.

15KV PADMOUNT PRIMARY METERED THREE-WAY SWITCHGEAR:

Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the contract for 15kV Padmount Primary Metered Three-Way Switchgear to E.L. Flowers and Associates, the low bidder meeting all requirements of the solicitation. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Marrero, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to award the contract per the recommendation of management.

ARCGIS DESKTOP SUPPORT:

Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$82,500 for a three-year renewal of ArcGIS software support from ESRI. Chairman Hoey asked if the Department has integrated ArcFM software capabilities with ESRI or are both systems being utilized. Mr. Jonah stated that both systems are used as the ArcFM has additional capabilities that facilitate certain field operations. 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

09/08/22 – Draft Commission Meeting Minutes from 08/16/22

08/25/22 – JL/DD/Financial Statements, Balance Sheet & Summary Report – July 2022

08/26/22 – JL/CW/Recommendation – Dive Surveys, Inspections, Maintenance & Repairs Annual Contract - Extension

08/31/22 – SR/CP/Bid Recommendation – 15kV Padmounted Primary Metered Three-Way Switchgear

09/06/22 – KJ/EG/Purchasing Approval: 3-Year Renewal of ArcGIS Desktop Support

NEXT MEETING DATE:

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

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion from Commissioner Marrero, seconded by Commissioner Sutter, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the Meeting at 5:55 PM.

HG&E Commission