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**Mansfield Municipal Electric Department  
Minutes of Light Commissioners Meeting  
January 24, 2022**

**Present:** Chair Frank Delvecchio, Vice Chair Jess Aptowitz, Clerk Neil Rhein, Commissioner Mike Trowbridge, Commissioner Steve Schoonveld, Business Manager Joseph Pereira, Office Administrator Laurie Anderson, Assistant Town Manager Barry LaCasse and Light Department Manager Joseph Sollecito

The meeting was virtual and called to order at 5:30 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A complete copy of the Board packet containing all documents that are referenced in the minutes is on file at the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department office.

**PILOT discussion** – Assistant Town Manager Barry LaCasse stated that he is requesting a special assessment from MMED in the amount of \$136,292.00 as the projected PILOT payment will be short by this amount. He said the shortage is due to the decrease in MMED's net book value and also due to the lowering of the tax rate from \$22.58 to \$18.88.

Commissioner Schoonveld wondered why MMED's assets decreased in value. He also said he had concerns about the PILOT amount not being based on a realistic number. Commissioner Aptowitz commented that it is not so much the asset value but that it's the rate. Chair Delvecchio asked Assistant Town Manager LaCasse how this will be handled in the future.

Assistant Town Manager LaCasse stated that all of the Commissioner's opinions were accurate. He noted that this policy was adopted in 2016. He suggested possibly having a hold harmless clause that the rate not go below the previous year value and said it should be a discussion for a later time.

Chair Delvecchio asked Manager Sollecito to put this on an agenda in a few months.

**Motion: To approve a special assessment for MMED to be paid to the Town in the amount of \$136,292.00 to cover the decrease in the PILOT payment**  
(Trowbridge/Schoonveld) Passes 5/0

**Roll call vote:** Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye

**Motion: To approve the minutes from the November 15, 2021 Light Commissioners meeting**

(Schoonveld/Trowbridge) Passes 4/0/1

**Roll call vote:** Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-nay; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye

Clerk Rhein abstained as he was not present at the November meeting.

**Special Request for Town insert in MMED bills** – Manager Sollecito told the Board that he had received a request from the Town about putting an insert into the MMED bills for tax clarification. The total estimated cost for this is \$4,247.93. As a matter of past practice, he said he usually avoids something like this since various inserts take away the effectiveness but he

was told there is an urgent need and feels this is a special case. He said since this is a below the line expense, he would need the Board's approval.

Vice Chair Trowbridge questioned why MMED would pay for this and feels the Town should be paying. He suggested that the Town put it in the next tax bill. Commissioner Schoonveld noted that the tax payers and the rate payers are not the same. He did not see the urgency and thought that putting the information on the website or in an email should suffice and then put it in a later tax bill. Clerk Rhein said he agreed with Commissioner Schoonveld. Chair Delvecchio said he was also in agreement and the request did not get approved.

**Appliance Rebate Program** – Office Administrator Anderson reviewed a recap of the 2021 Appliance Rebate Incentive Program. She noted that mini heat pumps had been added to the list and that 22 of them had been purchased by ratepayers in 2021. She believes no changes to the program are necessary for 2022.

**Motion: To approve the 2022 Appliance Rebate Incentive Program (Trowbridge/Schoonveld) Passes 5/0**

**Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye**

**Extending Fiber Optics at the Xfinity Center** – Manager Sollecito said there was nothing to vote on this evening but gave an update on the fiber optic connectivity project. The question of extending the fiber optics from the Xfinity Center property line to their Emergency Response Area was previously put on hold until the Xfinity Center agreed to assume some responsibility for the cost. Manager Sollecito said that at this time he only has a rough estimate of the cost and is still waiting for a commitment from Xfinity.

Commissioner Schoonveld said this is a lot of money and questioned whether there might be another way to go. Manager Sollecito said that he did talk to Doug Collette, IT for the Town, about this and he felt there was no other solution but to bring a fiber connection there. They had tried a modified VPN system previously but it did not work. Commissioner Schoonveld said that he had reached out to resident Mark Corsillo, who has an extensive background in this, and hoped that he would share his opinion during Citizens Questions and Comments.

**Town Hall Back Parking Lot Lighting** – Manager Sollecito told the Board there are eight fixtures in the back parking lot of the Town Hall and they are not effectively lighting the area. He suggested that MMED could do something similar to what they did for the Library at an approximate cost of \$28,000. He noted that the fixtures have been there for a long time and are warm, amber lights and the new LED's are brighter. His only concern would be to minimize light intrusion to the neighbors. He also said that if the cost was going to be more than \$28,000 that he would come back to the Board with the new amount.

Commissioner Schoonveld questioned whether grant money could be used for this expense. Manager Sollecito thought that the Town would be getting a fixed amount of grant money to put towards a certain amount of projects and that using some of that money for this would take away from other projects.

**Motion: To approve MMED to replace the light fixtures in the back parking lot of Town Hall at a cost of up to \$30,000 and to make sure there is appropriate shielding for the neighbors**

**(Trowbridge/Aptowitz) Passes 4/1**

**Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-nay**

Commissioner Schoonveld voted against as he thought grant money should be pursued for this rather than MMED paying for it.

**Financial Statements November 2021** – Manager Sollecito stated that net income through the month of November is \$919 thousand compared to prior year November of \$1.2 million. He noted that open market pricing has been outstanding. MMED’s operating cash position as of November 2021 is \$15.7 million down from \$15.9 million in 2020. Manager Sollecito also reported there has been an increase in energy sales. He said the depreciation fund balance is \$3.7 million and will fund MMED’s capital program.

**Citizens Comments** – Mark Corsillo, 1604 West St, said he has worked in IT for ten years with companies who have offices throughout the state and the country. He said they use site to site VPN for connecting them and gave an explanation to the Board about how that works. He would like to know what the difficulties are for not having a site to site VPN for connecting Xfinity and also the Town offices. His concern is broken fiber, either by construction or animals, which he says is very common.

Manager Sollecito told Mr. Corsillo that he appreciated his expertise. He asked Mr. Corsillo to send him an email so that he would have his contact information. Then he will get Mr. Corsillo in touch with the appropriate people who will be able to respond to his questions.

**Motion: To enter into Executive Session at 6:24 PM for the following reasons and to not return to open session**

- a. Review and possible approval of minutes of November 15, 2021 Executive Session where Exemption 2 was declared
- b. Pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 164, Section 47D and M.G.L. Ch. 30, Section 21, Exemption 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares
- c. Pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.164, Section 47D and M.G.L. Ch. 30, Section 21, Exemption 10, to discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information provided, in the course of activities conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier under a license granted by the department of public utilities pursuant to section 1F of chapter 164 and when such governmental body, municipal aggregator or cooperative determines that such disclosure will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling or distributing electric power and energy and the chair so declares

**(Rhein/Trowbridge) Passes 5/0**

**Roll call vote: Delvecchio-aye; Aptowitz-aye; Rhein-aye; Trowbridge-aye and Schoonveld-aye**

Respectfully submitted: Jacqueline Lee

    *J Lee*      
Signature of Clerk

    3/2/22      
Date of Approval