

STERLING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT

Light Board Executive Session

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: September 25, 2013

LOCATION: Butterick Municipal Building, Room 205
1 Park Street, Sterling, MA 01564

SMLD BOARD MEMBERS: Matthew Stelmach (Stelmach), Chairman
Michael Rivers (Rivers), Vice-Chairman
George Pape (Pape), Clerk

SMLD STAFF: Sean Hamilton (Hamilton), Manager

**TOWN OF STERLING
BOARD OF SELECTMEN:** Ronald Furmaniuk, (Furmaniuk), Chairman
Brian Patacchiola, (Patacchiola) Vice-Chairman
Robert Cutler, (Cutler) Clerk

OTHER ATTENDEES: Terri Ackerman, (Ackerman) Town Administer
Kama Jayne, (Jayne) Exec Assistant to the BOS

Meeting called to order at 6:34 p.m. Roll Call Attendance, Stelmach present, Rivers present, and Pape present. All present.

Both Selectman Cutler and Commissioner Rivers expressed concerns about whether it was appropriate or necessary for the meeting to be held in Executive Session given that the topic was scheduling a Special Town Meeting. Both felt the meeting could have been held in open session.

The Board of Selectmen entered Executive Session under M.G.L Chapter 30A, Section 21, Clause 10.

6:38 p.m. Pape made a motion to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 30A: Section 21, Clause 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) – Natural Gas. Stelmach Second. Roll call vote - Pape aye, Stelmach aye, Rivers nay. Vote was 2 to 1 in favor.

The Light Board met in a joint session with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to discuss the scheduling of the first of two Special Town Meetings (STM's) required under Massachusetts General Law to create a natural gas plant. The Board and Manager reviewed most of the data that was contained in a "heads up" letter sent from Hamilton to the BOS in May of 2013. Manager Hamilton explained the timing of the STM's and that Town Administrator Ackerman had recommended that it be held well before the holiday season. Both the Manager and the Light Board concurred with this timing.


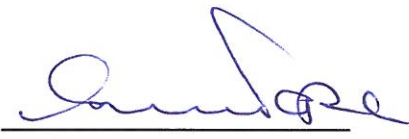
The Light Board explained that the first STM would show whether the voters of the town wanted the Light Department to move forward with more definitive plans and negotiations. The SMLD does not want to waste time and money working on a project that might not have the support of the voters.

The Board expressed their concerns about the extreme need for confidentiality of prospective plans given that there will be many months of delicate negotiations with other utilities, landowners, etc. that could be compromised.

The Board further explained that as the gas system was planned, there would be no financial impact to either the Town of Sterling or the taxpayers, and that the costs of the planned gas system would be borne by those customers who chose to be natural gas customers. It was made clear to the BOS that this STM process simply gave the SMLD the right to establish a gas company, but made no further commitment. The Board also offered to pay the costs related to the first Special Town Meeting if the BOS called the meeting for that purpose.

Selectmen Cutler and Patacchiola spoke in favor of the SMLD plan to bring natural gas to Sterling. Furmaniuk stated that he was unwilling to move forward at this time. Furmaniuk read from an email from Joe Curtin of E.H.Perkins which supported the SMLD plans, but expressed concern about the timing. Chairman Furmaniuk also said that he knew nothing about natural gas and needed to learn more. The Light Board recommended that Furmaniuk and the other Selectmen meet individually with SMLD Manager Hamilton to review the draft feasibility plans and to ask any technical or financial questions they might have. Cutler said that while he was satisfied that the plan made sense; he would defer to give Chairman Furmaniuk time to review the data. Chairman Furmaniuk would not commit to any timeframe to either personally review the data or schedule a future agenda item for reconsideration.

7:15 pm. **Rivers made a motion to adjourn Executive Session to return to Regular Session only to adjourn. Motion seconded by Pape. Roll Call Vote – Rivers ay, Pape aye, Stelmach aye, All in Favor.**

ATTEST:  
George Pape, Clerk Board Approved

DATE: 10/29/13 10/29/13
Board Approved For Release

Referenced Documents:

- 1. "heads up" letter sent from Hamilton to the BOS in May of 2013.
- 2. Email from Joe Perkins of E. H. Perkins to Hamilton and Furmaniuk