

## **Approved Minutes: Stowe Electric Board of Commissioners' Meeting**

March 25, 2025, at 8:30 am at Town of Stowe Electric Department Conference Room with remote participation available via Zoom.

### **Present:**

BOARD MEMBERS: Larry Lackey, Chair; Sarah Teachout, Vice Chair; and Mark Gilkey, Commissioner

STAFF: Jackie Pratt, General Manager, Brent Lilley, Director of Operations; Michael Lazorchak, Manager of Regulatory Compliance; Caroline Klosowski, Business and Communications Manager; Lily King, Customer Care Manager; and Amber Ives, Clerk of the Board

**Call to Order:** L. Lackey called the meeting to order at 8:33 am.

### **Agenda Approval:**

L. Lackey moved to approve the warned agenda, M. Gilkey seconded, all were in favor, and the warned agenda was approved.

### **Approval of February 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes:**

On a motion made by M. Gilkey and seconded by S. Teachout, the minutes of February 25<sup>th</sup> were approved.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financial Report:**

The Board of Commissioners and staff discussed 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter financial results (July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024), contributing factors that impacted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter financials, and the effect of Canadian tariffs on financials.

### **Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) Strategic Membership:**

J. Pratt provided the Board of Commissioners with an overview of the history between Stowe Electric Department (SED) and VPPSA, the services offered by VPPSA, and the potential to pool resources and share Regulatory and purchasing costs. In addition, J. Pratt presented the Board of Commissioners with resources and services that SED could potentially provide to VPPSA at an hourly rate.

J. Pratt explained that a “Strategic Membership” with VPPSA would provide SED with important regulatory and legislative communications; insight into other utilities’ policies and practices; collaboration with VPPSA in aligning legislative positions; access to resources and opportunities for group purchasing; as well as a non-voting seat on the VPPSA Board of Directors and subcommittees.

S. Teachout inquired as to how SED’s current policies align with VPPSA’s policies and how this would impact strategic membership.

J. Pratt explained that Strategic Membership allows the flexibility for SED to speak for Stowe in the way that makes the most sense without always being tucked under the VPPSA umbrella.

The Board of Commissioners and staff discussed the cost and timing of rejoining VPPSA as a Strategic Member.

L. Lackey moved to authorize the General Manager of Stowe Electric to enter into a Strategic Membership Agreement with the Vermont Public Power Supply Authority, effective as soon as practicable. S. Teachout seconded the motion, and all members of the Board of Commissioners were in favor.

At 9:10, L. King joins the meeting.

### **Uncollectible Accounts:**

J. Pratt notified the Board of Commissioners that SED has started the process of establishing clear financial policies, and that one of the initial areas of review relates to past due accounts and implementing policies designed to limit the financial impacts of delinquent customers.

The Board of Commissioners and staff discussed:

- The option and ability to write off bad debt expense
- Sending accounts to collections
- Collecting customer deposits
- The ability to place a lien on property owners for bad debt incurred by tenants

The Board of Commissioners preliminarily settled on a policy that would establish preferred methods of debt collection:

- A property lien would be leveraged in owner-occupied residences.
- The account would be sent to a third-party collection agency in tenant-occupied residences.

The Board of Commissioners requested more information on how the Collections process would work, as well as if there was a difference in treatment of residential versus commercial customers.

In addition, the Board of Commissioners suggested including guidelines for low-income customers as well as de minimis amounts in the uncollectable accounts policies.

It was determined that the General Manager and staff would draft a policy for review and discussion by The Board of Commissioners at a future meeting.

At 9:36, L. King exited the meeting.

### **General Manager Highlights:**

J. Pratt discussed the Trump Administration tariffs on Canadian energy, the Green Mountain Power outage that caused an outage on SED's system on March 11, 2025, employee reviews, community involvement, and the implementation and functionality of Operations Analytics.

M. Lazorchak informed the Board of Commissioners that the Federal Energy Regulatory Committee (FERC) accepted SED's application for an exemption from licensing for the hydroelectric project.

The Board of Commissioners and staff discussed the Tier III Renewable Energy Standard program, SED's compliance and credits, as well as potential changes to the program depending on the outcome of Senate Bill S.65.

There being no further business, L. Lackey moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:16 am. M. Gilkey seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Amber Ives*

Amber Ives

Clerk of the Board