

# **AGENDA ITEM - 06**

## **SHREWSBURY ELECTRIC & CABLE OPERATIONS COMMISSION MEETING**

**April 29, 2020  
1:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Conducted Via Remote Participation**

**PRESENT: R. HOLLAND  
M. LEMIEUX  
K. MARSHALL  
M. REFOLO  
A. TRIPPI**

**ABSENT: NONE**

### **OTHERS**

**PRESENT: M. HALE  
R. IACCARINO  
J. PRATT  
J. LAVERTY  
J. MALAVER  
J. COVEY  
M. QUITADAMO  
JON. MALAVER  
K. MIZIKAR  
T. KENNEDY  
K. ANDERSON  
K. RYBA**

### **1. Meeting Called to Order – 1:00 PM**

R. Holland, SELCO Chairman, called the meeting to order, confirming all members and persons invited to participate in the meeting were present and able to hear him. He then called names of Commission members, asking they respond in the affirmative if present:

Anthony Trippi - “Present”  
Kelly Marshall - “Present”  
Maria Lemieux - “Present”  
Michael Refolo - “Present”  
Robert Holland - “Present”

Mr. Holland then called names of SELCO staff, asking they respond in the affirmative if present:

Kevin Mizikar - Town Manager – “Present”  
Kristina Anderson - H.R. Coordinator – “Present”  
Tom Kennedy – H.R. Advisor - “Present”  
Michael Hale – SELCO General Manager - “Present”  
Kathleen Ryba - Administrative Assistant – “Present”  
Joel Malaver – Cable Operations Manager - “Present”  
Jackie Pratt – Marketing and Customer Service Manager - “Present”  
Jonatan Malaver – Senior Engineer - “Present”  
John Laverty – Electric Operations Manager - “Present”  
Ralph Iaccarino – Electric Systems Manager - “Present”  
Michael Quitadamo – Finance Manager - “Present”

Mr. Holland continued:

Good afternoon. This Open Meeting of the SELCO Commission is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker’s Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the “COVID-19 Virus.”

In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor’s Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will not feature public comment.

For this meeting, the SELCO Commission is convening by videoconference via Google as posted on the Town’s Website identifying how the public may join.

Please note that this meeting is being recorded, and that some attendees are participating by video conference.

Accordingly, please be aware that other folks may be able to see you, and take care not to “screen share” your computer unless asked by the chairperson or the staff person. Anything that you broadcast may be captured by the recording.

We are now turning to the first item on the agenda. Before we do so, permit me to cover some ground rules for effective and clear conduct of our business and to ensure accurate meeting minutes.

- The Chair will introduce each Board Member or Staff Member who has the lead role for this particulate item or guest/speaker associated with this item on the agenda. After they conclude their remarks, the Chair will go down the line of Members first and then to staff members, inviting each by name to provide any comment or questions. I will then call upon the members to offer a motion and then for a second. Please hold until your name is called. Further,
  - Please remember to mute your phone or computer when you are not speaking; remember that unless a document is being shared, your camera feed is triggered by your speaking or background noise;
  - Please remember to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate minutes.

For others in attendance that are expected to present:

- Please hold until your name is called to present
- Please remember to mute your phone or computer when you are not speaking; remember that unless a document is being shared, your camera feed is triggered by your speaking or background noise;
- Please remember to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate minutes
- After your presentation, members of the Board/Committee will be given the opportunity to ask questions.

## **2. Review and Approve Bill Schedules and Warrant Articles**

R. Holland reported that copies of the warrants were sent to the Commission for their review prior to the meeting. With Commission approval, R Holland stated that he alone will sign the warrants in order that members avoid visiting the Town Hall during the current shut down.

***Roll call vote to approve was as follows:***

***A. Trippi – “Yes”***  
***M. Lemieux – “Yes”***  
***K. Marshall – “Yes”***  
***M. Refolo – “Yes”***  
***R. Holland – “Yes”***

R. Holland stated that Agenda Item 7, Selection of the General Manager will be the last item on the agenda.

**3. Review and Consider Approval Commission Minutes – April 7, 2020**

R. Holland asked if there were any comments or corrections with the minutes of the April 7, 2020 Commission meeting.

- A. Trippi – “No comments”
- K. Marshall – “No comments”
- M. Lemieux – “No comments”
- M. Refolo – “No comments”
- R. Holland – “No comments”

*A motion:*

*Approve the minutes of the April 7, 2020 Commission meeting as presented.*

*Motion made by A. Trippi and seconded by M. Refolo.*

*Roll call vote was as follows:*

- A. Trippi - “Yes”*
- M. Lemieux – “Yes”*
- K. Marshall – “Yes”*
- M. Refolo – “Yes”*
- R. Holland – “Yes”*

*Motion carried.*

**4. Review and Consider Approval – Electric Cash Statements - March 2020**

M. Quitadamo presented and briefly reviewed the March 2020 Electric Cash Statements.

- Total Cash Receipts were \$9.6M 11% lower than 2019 and about 4% less than budget projection.
- Total Cash Expenditures were \$8.5M, 23% less than 2019 and 3.7% less than budget projection.
- Total Available Funds were \$16.9M, 27% greater than 2019 and 4.3% more than projected.

There being no further discussion,

*A motion:*

*Approve the March 2020 Electric Cash Statements as presented.  
Motion made by A. Trippi and seconded by M. Refolo.*

*Roll call vote was as follows:*

*A. Trippi - "Yes"  
K. Marshall - "Yes"  
M. Lemieux - "Yes"  
M. Refolo - "Yes"  
R. Holland - "Yes"*

*Motion carried.*

**5. Review and Consider Approval – Cable Cash Statements – March 2020**

M. Quitadamo presented and reviewed the Cable Cash Statements for March 2020.

- Cash Receipts YTD were \$5.3M; 2% less than 2019 and 3.5 points below forecast. Noted: The customer count dropped more significantly in the first quarter by 235 precipitous of the rate increase.
- Cash Expenditures were \$3.9M; 2.3% less than 2019 and 2.1% greater than budgeted expenditures.
- Other Plant Investment was \$34,000 less than 2019 and \$106,000 under budget. Significant expenditures include \$55,000 for cable inventory and \$18,000 for converters and muxers.
- Total Available Funds was \$28.1M; 20% above 2019 and even with forecast. Noted: Two-thirds of the balance is reserved for the fiber project

*A motion:*

*Approve the March 2020 Cable Cash Statements as presented.*

*Motion made by A. Trippi and seconded by M. Lemieux.*

*Roll call vote was as follows:*

*A. Trippi - "Yes"*

*K. Marshall - "Yes"*

*M. Lemieux - "Yes"*

*M. Refolo - "Yes"*

*R. Holland - "Yes"*

*Motion carried.*

## **6. Review and Consider Approval – Operating Brief**

M. Hale presented and gave a brief overview of the Operating Brief after first thanking managers and their teams for the tremendous work with improving the cable plant to accommodate the load.

He reported the following:

March to April 1, ninety-seven (97) new Internet customers were added.

Proliferation of speed requests increased as people moved to a work from home environment sharing bandwidth with their children who were studying, gaming, or watching streamed videos.

There was an increase of 48 Silver customers; Silver to Gold increased by 137; Platinum customers increased by 59; and approximately 76 WiFi customers were added.

He expressed his gratitude to the entire organization for their response to the heavy rain/wind storm on April 13. There were widespread outages throughout town with over 120 calls received. All staff worked remotely except for those in the field. All power was restored by 5:30/6:00 PM. Tremendous effort by all given the circumstances.

Electric crews continue to work on projects:

- New Beal School
- Route 140 Bridge
- New Cell Tower Located on Spring Street

John Lavery did a good job arranging for safety training via remote to crews working from home.

Additional money was received from the State for the solar program. More information is available on SELCO's web site.

To date, no staff have been exposed during work related issues. Every precaution is being taken to protect both staff and customers.

Unfortunately, \$250,000 to \$300,000 was spent on equipment needed for splitting nodes as a direct result of COVID-19.

## **7. General Update of COVID-19 Emergency Operations**

J. Pratt reported the following:

- All Customer Care personnel is working well remotely from home.
- Both R. Iaccarino and J. Pratt attended an ACA webinar about getting back to work safely.
- Attended a NEPPA Credit and Collections Roundtable via remote to discuss terminations, collections, payment plans and how to navigate fall out from COVID-19.
- Reached out to a representative of ACA about extending the "Keeping America Connected" pledge. No plans have been at this time but will keep SELCO posted.
- Critical installation strategy has been extended through May 15 with limited home contact for staff, customers, and contractors. This date may also be extended.
- Looking at a phased in approach for the customer wait list once back into normal operations.
- All staff including linemen, CSRs working from home, and staff at the Service Area did a great job navigating the storm on April 13.

J. Malaver reported the following:

- There was approximately a 50% increase in bandwidth consumption due to COVID-19 occurring in two weeks as opposed to one year.
- There was an increase in customer calls regarding slow Internet speeds
- Following an analysis of congested areas, eight areas were identified as the most congested were hitting up to 90% capacity. An aggressive plan was put into place to add capacity. Two areas were completed March 29 resulting in a return to 60% capacity. One area was migrated to fiber.
- In 2019, IT, School Department and Headend staff engaged in a project to add capacity to the Institutional Network that included all town departments. Equipment was installed used to migrate all users to work remotely, including the

telephone system, during COVID-19. The Virtual Private Network (VPN) allowed business to continue as usual for all town departments.

**8. Review and Consider Warrant Articles for Town Meeting**

Authorization to borrow funds for the Fiber to the Home (FTTH) deployment project.

M. Hale reported that the Commission voted last fall to endorse FTTH as the selected technology over DOCSIS 3.1, a \$28M to \$30M investment with the hopes to have it deployed within three to four years. SELCO has approximately \$18M put aside for the project. The balance SELCO would like to ask Town Meeting for authorization to borrow the money at the next Town Meeting. He would like endorsement of Town Meeting for the entire amount. To reiterate, SELCO will borrow the money not the Town.

Authorization to purchase three parcels of land located at 234 Boston Turnpike, 2-4 Worthington Avenue, and 6-8 Worthington Avenue for the sum of \$250,000.

M. Hale recommended that the Commission vote to authorize the purchase of three parcels of land: 234 Boston Turnpike, 2-4 Worthington Avenue, and 6-8 Worthington Avenue

M. Hale reported that SELCO's Logan Substation, located on Worthington Avenue, is adjacent to a substation owned by National Grid which was decommissioned in 2019 and no longer in use. National Grid approached SELCO asking if there was any interest in purchasing the property. An environmental site assessment was done by SELCO's consultant, ENSTRAT. It is M. Hale's recommendation that the Commission exercise the option of purchasing the property for \$250,000

Following a brief discussion, R. Holland called for roll call vote if there are any questions from the Commission,

***Roll call vote was as follows:***

***A. Trippi - "No questions"***

***K. Marshall - "No questions"***

***M. Lemieux - "No questions"***

***M. Refolo - "No questions"***

***R. Holland - "No questions"***



There being no further discussion,

*A motion:*

*Approve the submittal of both warrant articles for a future Town Meeting tentatively scheduled for June 22, 2020.*

*Motion made by A. Trippi and seconded by M. Refolo.*

*Roll call vote was as follows:*

*A. Trippi - "Yes"*

*K. Marshall - "Yes"*

*M. Lemieux - "Yes"*

*M. Refolo - "Yes"*

*R. Holland - "Yes"*

*Motion carried.*

## **9. General Manager Search – Final Selection**

Before M. Hale stepped out for Item 9, R. Holland stated there has been only three SELCO General Managers over the past half century: James Baker, Thomas Josie and Michael Hale. Michael Hale has done an excellent job as SELCO's General Manager, taking the lead in SELCO projects such as Fiber-To-The Home (FTTH), constructing the solar site located on Route 20, Peak Shaving generators to help cut costs, assisted in negotiations with SMC becoming a private entity, and has a state wide reputation. He has built a great staff and a great team effort.

M. Refolo agreed and added that Michael Hale is a true professional and has been a pleasure to work with. His knowledge of SELCO and his passion for it increased each day. Always very happy to work with him.

M. Lemieux agreed with both comments adding he's been great and sorry to see him leave.

R. Holland reported that the Commission and the Town Manager initiated a search process in early March. Twenty applications were received. A screening committee interviewed seven candidates using video conferencing technology. The seven candidates were narrowed down to three finalists. On April 22, 2020, the Commission and the Town Manager interviewed the three finalists in an open meeting that many may have seen.

The three finalists interviewed were the following individuals:

- Joel Malaver, SELCO Manager of Cable Operations
- Jackie Pratt, SELCO Marketing and Customer Care Manager
- Christopher Roy, General Manager of the Belmont Municipal Light Department

R. Holland stated that SELCO was fortunate to have three well qualified candidates, each with their own specific skill set. SELCO and Town staff participated in the process including providing over fifty written feedbacks on the three candidates. Ordinarily a time would have been arranged for the finalists to meet with the employees and Town officials. Due to the Corona virus this was not possible but through the use of technology, staff was able to view the interviews and provide their feedback on each of the finalists.

He also publically acknowledged and thanked Kristina Anderson, H.R. Coordinator for the Town, for her assistance and expertise in coordinating the process including the logistics of the video conferencing interviews. Tom Kennedy, outside agent, who assisted in previous hirings in the Town including Michael Hale several years ago.

Following R. Holland's request that each Commissioner and the Town Manager voice their recommendation for General Manager. Recommendations were as follows:

A. Trippi – “Jackie Pratt”  
K. Marshall – “Chris Roy”  
M. Lemieux – “Jackie Pratt”  
M. Refolo – “Chris Roy”  
K. Mizikar – “Chris Roy”  
R. Holland – “Chris Roy”

With four votes for Chris Roy and two votes for Jackie Pratt, R. Holland asked for a motion as to how to proceed.

A. Trippi stated that he would like to have unanimous support for Chris Roy and is changing his vote to Chris Roy.

Following a brief discussion, M. Lemieux agreed with A. Trippi and changed her vote in support of Chris Roy.

There being no additional comments,

*A motion:*

*Make an offer to Christopher Roy to be the next General Manager of SELCO.*

*Motion made by A. Trippi and seconded by M. Refolo.*

*Roll call vote was as follows:*

*A. Trippi - "Yes"*

*K. Marshall - "Yes"*

*M. Lemieux - "Yes"*

*M. Refolo - "Yes"*

*K. Mizikar - "Yes"*

*R. Holland - "Yes"*

*Motion carried 6 to 0.*

R. Holland asked if there were any additional comments.

*Roll call vote was as follows:*

*A. Trippi - "No"*

*K. Marshall - "No"*

*M. Lemieux - "No"*

*M. Refolo thanked the whole team and the applicants. Adding "It's been a wonderful process and a thoughtful one. It's been a great conclusion."*

K. Mizikar asked if the Chair should reach out to Chris Roy to negotiate a contract to bring back to the Commission for approval.

R. Holland responded stating that he will first reach out to Chris Roy to congratulate him then call both Joel Malaver and Jackie Pratt, adding that he will work out a contract with the help of K. Anderson, T. Kennedy, and K. Mizikar then bring it back to the Commission for approval at the next meeting.

**10. Adjourn**

*A motion:*

*Adjourn the meeting.*

*Motion made by A. Trippi and seconded by M. Refolo.*

*Roll call vote was as follows:*

*A. Trippi - "Yes"*

*K. Marshall - "Yes"*

*M. Lemieux - "Yes"*

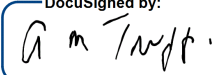
*M. Refolo - "Yes"*

*R. Holland - "Yes"*

*Motion carried.*

Meeting Adjourned – 2:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Anthony Trippi, Clerk  
SELCO Commission