

Minutes:

Stowe Electric Commissioners' Meeting
April 13, 2011 at 7:30 a.m. Town of Stowe Electric Offices

Present:

BOARD MEMBERS: Art Lloyd, Chairman; Tom Evslin, Commissioner; Richard (Dick) Marron, Commissioner (via phone);

STAFF: Ellen Burt, General Manager; Pat Householder, Controller; Aimée Green, Director of Operations & Regulations; Dawn Foster, Clerk of the Board; Ed French, SED Attorney

Art called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Approval of the March 16, 2011 Meeting Minutes

On motion made and seconded, the Minutes of March 16, 2011 were approved.

Corporate Resolution for Additional Credit Card

Ellen explained that Union Bank has requested a Board approval for an additional credit card for Aimée to use for traveling incidentals. The credit card will have a \$5,000.00 limit. On a motion made and seconded, the resolution for an additional credit card for Aimée was approved. Art and Tom signed the original Board resolution previously signed by Dick.

Smart Meter Presentation

Aimée delivered a presentation on the Smart Grid Program in which SED will participate. She noted that Stowe is part of a statewide eEnergy grant, which was awarded to Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO) by the U.S Department of Energy in March 2010. The total amount of the statewide grant is \$68.9 million; however each utility is required to match 100% of the actual total granted and so the total project budget is \$137.8 million. Thus, SED's maximum net outlay would be \$450,000, against its fully granted amount of \$894,688. At the 2011 Town Meeting Stowe voters approved SED's use of \$450,000 in unexpended bond proceeds from the 2009 Electric Department improvement bonds toward the Smart Meter project.

Aimée also updated the Commissioners on the status of the bidding process with vendors for the Smart Meter project. SED has released its Meter Data

Management (MDM) Request For Proposal (RFP) and is presently accepting questions from nine potential MDM vendors. This will be followed by a period of review, vendor presentations, and then selection and award in June. SED is also on schedule to release its Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) RFP to potential vendors in early May, which will then be followed by a period of questions and answers, review, vendor presentations, and selection and award in July.

Aimee noted that in the interest of savings it will be paramount for SED to contract with MDM and AMI vendors who can provide hosted solutions. The alternative would be for SED to establish an Information Technology (IT) Department, which would be cost prohibitive for this project.

Dick asked if the technology that SED chooses would be compatible with the state's Investor Owned Utilities (IOU's) and Municipal Utilities (MU's) Smart Grid projects. Aimée assured the Commissioners that it is very important for SED to contract with vendors who provide technology that is, for instance, compatible with GMP, CVPS and Burlington Electric. She also noted that SED will be meeting with GMP later in the month to discuss a potential partnership whereby GMP would host SED's AMI solution.

Aimée noted the capacity of the MDM to store and process the large amounts of data that is created by the AMI system. The MDM validates and analyzes data, handles the synchronization of the meter and customer account information, interfaces between customer billing and the AMI system, and then finally supports Web Presentment of the data for the customer and the utility. The process begins with the AMI meter on the customer's home/pole/business. That data is then fed into what is commonly known as the AMI Head End Software System (Head End), which is a storehouse of data that the MDM processes. The MDM translates this data into interactive Web Presentment for the customer via the Internet.

Aimee then gave a basic overview of AMI topology, discussing the process from the meter which is equipped with a Radio Frequency (RF) chip which feeds data to a collector/router on transformers in the field; to the information that is then sent from the collector down to the Head End, back through the MDM where customer information and billing is stored. She explained that all of this data/information is managed by the MDM system, which in turn processes and sends this information out to the consumer and the utility.

Dick inquired if there would be a back-up system in case one of these processes failed. Aimée explained the MDM system acts as the server, and backs up all data received from the meter. Tom added that if any collector were ever to go down, the meter itself would store all data, which could then be retrieved. In this way the data is saved on both ends of the process.

A discussion followed as to Web Presentment, which gives consumers the opportunity to monitor and be actively involved with their electrical usage. Aimée explained that Web Presentment will allow for customers to connect to their usage information from a link on the Town of Stowe's website. The information that will be available to the consumer will include such things as usage, the previous month's bill, as well as tips on how they can save money on their electrical use. Web Presentment will allow for real time usage for the utility for outage purposes, in addition to educating the consumer on their own consumption. Art asked if the Web Presentment will be phased in gradually or if it will happen simultaneously with the deployment of the Smart Meters in Stowe. Aimée explained that it will happen simultaneously: as meters are installed SED will be implementing the Web Presentation. Tom asked that as we look at vendors for Web Presentment that we make sure the data from the MDM system is in standard format. He questioned if there will be a single Web Presentment supported by each utility, or if in the future the customer will be able to choose their own solution such as Google, Microsoft, or using a smart device. Pat informed the Board that Web Presentment technology has not yet evolved to that level. As it evolves, the technology will be working towards those types of standards. Currently the data that comes from the Smart Meter is raw data which require multipliers to be applied in order for the consumer to interact with the information.

Pat and Aimée then informed the Board that the Public Service Board (PSB) requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is an agreement made between each utility using the eEnergy grant and the PSB whereby the PSB approves the technology chosen and implemented. Pat noted that due to consumer data being shared via the Internet privacy may become a matter of concern for some consumers; and that the utilities may be faced with "opt-out" requests from consumers where the consumer would request not having a Smart Meter installed on their home/place of business. He noted that consumers will have the option to choose to not share personal information about their consumption with the utility while researching options on their account online via Web Presentment. Tom asked if we anticipate customers opting out of the Smart Meters, and suggested that if a customer decides to opt out of the Smart Meter that they would have to pay the difference of having a regular meter requiring a manual read. Aimée commented that ultimately the PSB would be coming out with a ruling on this for the State of Vermont.

Aimée concluded by telling the Board that she will plan on giving status updates every month at the Commissioners' meetings. Art thanked Aimée for the informative presentation. Ellen commented that if customers ask questions of the Board regarding the Smart Meter process to please send them to the office so that we can educate and pass on information as we roll the Smart Grid out in Stowe.

Executive Session

Art moved to go into Executive Session at 8:10 a.m. to discuss legal issues; Tom seconded the motion and the motion carried. Art moved to come out of Executive Session at 8:30 a.m.; Dick seconded the motion and the motion carried. There was no action taken.

The Board scheduled the next Commissioners' meeting for Wednesday, May 11, 2011 at 7:30 am.

There being no further business Art made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 a.m.; Dick seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dawn E. Foster
Clerk of the Board