



Public Lighting Authority

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OUR MISSION is to improve,
modernize and maintain the
street lighting system in Detroit.

PUBLIC LIGHTING AUTHORITY
Board of Directors Regular Meeting
September 18, 2019

Board Members in Attendance

Dr. Lorna Thomas, Chair
Melvin Butch Hollowell
Patrick Padgett, Secretary
Rod Parker, Treasurer (via teleconference)
Ric Preuss
Beau Taylor, Executive Director

Resolution:

Resolution 2019-06

Motions Carried/Failed:

Resolution 2019-06 Carried

Legal Representative(s)

George Pitchford

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Board Meeting of the Public Lighting Authority (PLA) was held on September 18, 2019 at the PLA, 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 3100, Detroit, MI 48226. Dr. Lorna Thomas, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Patrick Padgett, Secretary. Members in attendance included: Dr. Lorna Thomas, Chair, Melvin Butch Hollowell, and Ric Preuss. Also in attendance was Beau Taylor, Executive Director, and George Pitchford, Legal Representative. In attendance via teleconference was Rod Parker, Treasurer.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion made to approve and change the order of the Agenda by: Melvin Butch Hollowell

Motion seconded by: Patrick Padgett

Motion Carried

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion made to approve the June 19, 2019 Regular Board Meeting Minutes by:
Melvin Butch Hollowell
Motion seconded by: Patrick Padgett
Motion Carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Beau Taylor gave an update on the Leotek replacement numbers stating that over 19,500 replacement lights had been installed in about 3 months and there were no issues regarding operations from start to finish. Credit was given to A. Ben Barker with putting over 800 installation packets and maps together, as well as coordinating delivery of materials to crews. He further states the Mayor is pleased and the citizens are happy. He then thanked the entire PLA staff for their efforts in this endeavor.

Beau Taylor also mentioned that there would be a new Green Belt project – Jamal Harrison would complete the project started by a former PLA employee which would save money on the City's DTE bill; DéAndre Brooks is continuing his Green Belt project on poles; 4 PLA employees will be taking Project Management Courses; and PLA is coordinating with DPW with regard to streetscape projects.

Melvin Butch Hollowell – Is there an overall plan for streetscape projects?

Beau Taylor – A lot of it is burying the wire and placing a decorative pole along the corridors that the City has chosen. We're overseeing that to make sure they are compatible with our standards and our system. PLA is doing the Vernor Streetscape, the extension of the phase from Woodmere to Clark. It's very stressful as we have to interface with the agencies and business owners.

Patrick Padgett – Are we limiting the options or decorative poles?

Beau Taylor – Yes.

Report – African American Commerce Center – Chairman K.B. Stallworth

Chairman Stallworth begins by stating – based on the pathways to improve the local workforce and diverse employment related to the Public Lighting infrastructure system the team at the African American Commerce Center began to look at what other communities have done, instructional methods are underway in things that could provide a more inclusive environment for Detroiters in working within the system. The interim report outlined some clear opportunities, one of which was based on advocacy that began with the Public Lighting Authority, the Edison Electrical institute has provided some funding to HFCC to begin an interim pre-apprenticeship program for what I would call “metropolitan” residents.

The objective was to try and find a way to have more local employment in not just electric but in gas distribution services. The challenge is that HFCC level we're not real certain how many will be Detroiters diverse. In the report, the initial recommendation talks about looking at residents from Detroit and use those local residents in a pre-apprentice program with existing contractors within the Authority to graduate them up through the system.

Ultimately, with discussions with Detroit Public Works related to their Forestry Program and most specifically their emergency response to tree trimming on easements, they have indicated a willingness to collaborate with the PLA on one of 2 things: (1) either transferring the tree trimming work for emergency services to PLA so that you would have a learn and earn construct for a pre-apprentice program; meaning you would have some young people, old people your selection that might be going into a classroom instruction at either Henry Ford College or WCCCD for

classroom instruction related to being in this business, but they would be paying a wage through the contractors that already exists at DPW to do the work associated with trimming trees. That's important because it's a step up to line construction.

Director Taylor has asked for is a sustainable process that would allow him to graduate Detroit residents through the entire system where they wouldn't totally be relying on public infrastructure – they can move on into the private sector into careers of their own. The report talks about a pathway from moving from tree trimming in forestry not related to line clearance to tree trimming related to line clearance to line construction and maintenance. The pre-apprentice program is considered a low risk task that would be comparable to what would be considered a woodsman classification in IBEW Local 17 - it would be considered a groundman classification related to line construction. So, these would be individuals working on secondary lines – no primary or working specifically in tree trimming.

The most significant point is there is an opportunity to leverage existing Detroit resources in Forestry to create a pathway for a skillset to move Detroit residents. This will be a slow process, whether you start with five or ten per year. Brad Dick, DPW assumes he can hire five to ten per year but the easy way for him would be to require all contractors to use these pre-apprentices as a condition of having a contract with DPW. If that's the short mission, the question becomes how many existing students in the Henry Ford College program are Detroit residents? If you're not a Detroit resident, you're not only eligible for continuing education at HFCC but now you have a learn and earn opportunity with the Public Lighting Authority, and then moving those individuals through the system. Ultimately, what Director Taylor aspires to do is have a direct pathway into construction and maintenance. That will be some work and some time.

My ask of the Public Lighting Authority Board is to receive and review the report, look at recommendations, identify cost neutral options related to financing this so that it's not a cost on tax payers or the Authority. The report describes ways to achieve this.

Lastly, I want to suggest there has to be a way for the City of Detroit and The Authority in general to have sincere and direct conversations with the Detroit Public Schools. Because right now, there is no contract or articulation agreement with HFCC or WCCC with DPS related to Career/Technical Education on these kinds of trades. It's important because at the High School level what we would like to do is have 10th and 11th Grade students have the rubric for what it takes related to MIOSHA, safety, etc., and all the other things; but begin this pathway related to a career opportunity. Another ask is that the PLA contemplate moving forward, and Director Taylor was very specific that his intent was to try to have a program up and available by September of next year where there was an opportunity for young Detroiters at a low risk and low skill level to begin to pull cable and do other things related to making the system secure and stronger. We have enough time if there's a commitment from the Board to engage to create this opportunity. I think it's unconscionable if we don't create pathways to create real opportunity to people when we have a chance. You have a good collaboration with Dave Manardo and Brad Dick to create this kind of platform with their vendors and yours to create an infrastructure to move people in a trade that we really don't have access to. The question becomes that at \$40K per year for an apprentice and \$80K for a journeyman, why isn't there more diversity with these occupations across the country?

Director Taylor has been very candid by saying if there was a way to fix this- to move the envelope a little, he would feel very good about it. I think with the collaborative support of Dave, Brad, and others that understand that there's an opportunity for sustainability that these heads together can figure out how to push the envelope.

Melvin Butch Hollowell – This is one of the great families of the City of Detroit. The nugget of “learn and earn” how important it is for our younger citizens to move forward. So, you asked us to do two things: (1) is to receive your report; (2) is to light a fire to get a commitment from this Body to move in that direction so we can create a pathway for tree trimming and forestry which

will lead to line construction and maintenance. So, if there is no objection, I would move that we do that with appropriate speed and support this with everything we've got.

Dr. Thomas – That's a great motion. Is there support?

Ric Preuss – I support with a few comments...Henry Ford and WCCC – Why not Randolph CTC? That's been the chosen CTC.

Chairman Stallworth – It's in my report. Everyone knows that when I redesigned Randolph and tried to get it funded to provide this kind of instruction. Detroit still has the same systemic issues related to its image even though we've come remarkably far. Why did Edison Electric Institute opt not to go to WCCC or Randolph and go the HCCC is above my paygrade. Director Taylor's objective has always been was to make sure that students with Applied Mathematic experience and have the desire would have summer employment and co-op experience that would lead to full time employment. Likewise, that's where I am. There is absolutely no reason an articulation agreement which is a formal agreement between a Community College system that has job training dollars and a school district could not be achieved to provide all the funding. The funding source – you've got DPS, CTC dollars, Detroit Employment Solutions, providing this baseline for classroom instruction driven by WCCC or HFCC that's driving these dollars down. So, driving the dollars up is the co-op experience related to contractors or vendors that say, you go to class 2 days a week, you come to us 3 days a week. Most apprenticeship programs have a class requirement and a field experience requirement. All we're doing is moving that model down to the "low risk" area where there is not the safety concern or the technical capability. We do that – we're there. If I had my way, every student in DPS system would have as part of their counseling apparatus, exploration of a skilled opportunity - continue what you do, but explore that...If you're interested, your class schedule will afford you the opportunity.

Motion made to approve by: Melvin Butch Hollowell

Seconded by: Ric Preuss

Motion Carried

Beau Taylor – This will be a heavy lift, but I think if we can be successful will be not just a few jobs here, but we can actually move this far.

Ric Preuss – Have we identified areas where we can self-perform?

Beau – We have identified areas. That's a discussion for a forthcoming Board Meeting. We will have to make a decision 9 months from now regarding the direction of future operations. I would like to keep that door wide open and see what fruit we can bear.

Melvin Butch Hollowell excused himself from the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- a. Lease of New Office Space 400 Monroe Memorandum

PLA Board members toured the proposed new office space prior to the meeting. Our current lease expires the end of November. We will be moving to smaller office at 400 Monroe. In addition, our parking is directly across the street. Since we still have meetings downtown, we will be able to get on the People Mover if need be and won't have to go outdoors. The new price saves us \$6K per month. We currently pay \$13,000/per month plus utilities. Parking is separate.

Rod Parker - Who is responsible for new space build out?

George Pitchford - The landlord would with our input. We have approximately \$100K for build-out. Besides, staying in this building is not an option. It has been sold and will be used for hotel and retail space.

Patrick Padgett – Are we leaving early?

George – We tried to leave early but as it turns out they like our lease payments.

Dr. Thomas - When will they start construction?

Peter McGrath – As soon as the lease is signed.

George Pitchford –They have indicated we will be allowed to pay month to month if we cannot move at the end of our lease. Also, George would like entered into the minutes if there's an opportunity for the PLA to enter into an amendment or side agreement regarding the conference space we saw while touring to be used 5 times a year to hold board meetings.

Ric Preuss - How many employees are currently on staff?

Ben Barker - 16 during the day and 4 at night.

Ric Preuss – We also spoke about a central location for contractors to pick up materials and we would hold our own materials. Are we still working on that?

Beau Taylor – All of that will come as part of a restructuring and/or next phase as we exit our contractual obligations for maintenance. Regardless of how we move forward, it's not appropriate for ones that install material to manage that material. So, we will have some additional checks and balances on material.

Patrick Padgett – So that is somewhat related to what Chairman Stallworth was discussing – an area where we are not currently operating?

Beau Taylor – What Chairman Stallworth contemplated is flexible – if we stayed with contractors, or hired our own people, we could still do that. As far as management of inventory, I believe that PLA employees should manage our inventory.

b PLA Employee Handbook

Beau Taylor – George, Marie and our former HR Director worked on this document, but some of the things I wanted updated were issues related to the use of vehicles, giving notice to employees that we monitor via GPS, vacation, sick leave, floating holidays, the sexual harassment policy will now include not discriminating against sexual orientation. One highlight I thought it was important to bring to the Board was that with Executive Staff salary increases. Right now, it's myself, Ben and Marie. I wanted the Board would have to weigh in when those get raised. Those are generally what get agencies like this in trouble. So, I wanted to ensure transparency with Executive staff.

Ric Preuss – How does this differ from the current policy we have in place? I would like to look at what we've changed.

Beau Taylor – George, how does the proposed policy differ from the existing policy?

George Pitchford – Some of the highlights, the sexual harassment policy now includes sexual orientation, prohibiting harassment based on sexual orientation, which brings us in line with the City's policy. Another was clarification on issues of attendance. A lot of unevenness as far as the call off policy, the leave policy etc. They will be articulated and standardized going forward. The policies in place were behind the times, for instance there was no policy on recording with phones.

We just need the “rules of the road” to deal with that sort of thing to make sure all employees know what is expected of them. The approach on this was essentially we used the City of Detroit, although the PLA is a separate entity, we used that as a baseline of sorts, and went back through and made sense to depart from how the City is doing things for one reason or another with some things.

If Board members have additional comments, please direct them to Marie, as this is not finalized.

ACTION ITEMS:

Resolution 2019-06 Authorizing Executive Director to enter a Lease Agreement with 400 Monroe Associates

Motion made to approve by: Patrick Padgett

Seconded by: Ric Preuss

Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION

Dr. Thomas makes a motion to go into closed session to discuss pending litigation. In order to go into closed session, a voice roll call must be performed. Mr. Padgett, Board Secretary performed a voice roll call. All Board members unanimously approved, and the board went into closed session at 6:02 p.m.

Dr. Thomas makes a motion to return from closed session to regular session. In order to return to regular session, a voice roll call must be performed. Mr. Padgett, Board Secretary performed a voice roll call. All Board members unanimously approved, and the board returned to regular session at 6:38 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Thomas adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

