

Chairman Thomas Reynolds called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. in the BELD Board Room. Those present at the meeting included Chairman Reynolds, Vice Chairman Anthony Agnitti, Secretary James Regan, General Manager William G. Bottiggi, all of BELD and Mr. Mark Kiley, of American Art.

I. Minutes of Prior Meetings

i. December 14, 2021 Open Meeting

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, to accept the minutes of December 14, 2021 Open Meeting as written. Mr. Agnitti seconded. So voted.

II. Items for Action

None.

III. Items for Discussion

i. NEPPA Update

Mr. Bottiggi explained that they are close to a settlement with the former executive director of NEPPA and he is on the search committee for a replacement. There are quite a few resumes from all over the country and they are in the process of reviewing them and setting up interviews.

ii. Watson Gas Turbine Upgrade Status

Mr. Bottiggi said the gas turbine was removed and shipped to Montreal – the leased engine is in its place and it is running. There is no root cause for why Unit 1’s engine went out on high vibration but they are still disassembling it. There was discussion. There is an 18 week turn around so that Unit 1’s engine should be ready to go back in April and the plan is to put it into Unit 2 and then we will send Unit 2’s engine to Montreal to have it overhauled as planned. When that comes back we will take the leased engine out of Unit 1 and put Unit 2’s engine in Unit 1. This saves us one evolution – so, engine 1 will be in Unit 2 and engine 2 will be in Unit 1. There was discussion. We had planned on this – every time that Watson ran we put in the bid money for an overhaul. So, we have accumulated enough to get us through this. This will be like 2 new units when we are done. There was further discussion. We have 20 year contracts with all the unit holders – so they expire in 2029 and then in 2029 they have the right of first refusal. There will be no debt but if they want to stay involved with the unit they can and we still get a fee to manage it. However, each unit holder will have to decide for their individual circumstances, depending upon how renewable their power supply is, if they will want to be involved with a gas turbine plant. There was additional discussion.

iii. Internet Transition Status

Mr. Bottiggi explained that Mr. Kiley has come to the meeting and said he would give an update and then the Commissioners could hear from Mr. Kiley. He continued the first month – December – was really a notification period – so there was not a lot of focus on transferring customers over. If customers wanted to they could reach out to Comcast and switch early. In January things are picking up –65 customers switched over in December and 25 businesses – so now Comcast is doing about 100 customers a week. They are doing this by streets –there are 450 or so streets in Braintree.

They are going to do 50 in January, 200 in February and 200 in March – so everyone will be switched over by the end of March. They are making businesses a priority and they have a dedicated representative Clayton Carelli.

Mr. Bottiggi explained we worked out a time period of 135 days that we will continue to run the system and at the end we are going to turn the system off and Comcast will come to BELD and take the equipment from the headend that is specifically for the high speed internet. They will shut down all the infrastructure. They already have a contract in place with a contractor for fiber, etc. They realize that they are tasked with taking the system down off of the poles. They have 3 years to get all that infrastructure – the wire, optical network units - down. Comcast now also owns all the equipment in the homes as well. Some people may need to have it swapped out with a new version.

We are tracking with Comcast – Ms. Cohen has a call with them every day to make sure things are going smoothly. He continued we are getting calls from customers to which we can only answer unfortunately it is. They will ask if they have a choice and that choice is now Comcast or Verizon. We are agnostic to that. The majority of people are going to Comcast but you can always change later. They have told us they are going to hold the pricing for up to 2 years. There was discussion.

Mr. Kiley was recognized at this point. Mr. Kiley explained he wanted to start with the fact that he is an unabashed BELD fan – he had tv until it wasn't offered and internet until now. He continued, he is a cheerleader for BELD but thinks this transition has given BELD a black eye. He has been a customer since its existence – for the past 18 years beld.net has been his email address – and the way they found out about the sale was through the Patch. He continued this is water under the bridge but is somewhat indicative of the way he feels the customer is being treated in this situation – 90 or 120 days notice for an email that he has had for almost 2 decades to go poof is really unnerving. Verizon no longer hosts email addresses, nor does Comcast but both have legacy addresses. Anybody who had a Verizon address, when Verizon stopped hosting email did not lose their email – it just continued. The same with Comcast. Mr. Kiley said starting March 31st, people who have been reaching out to me for 5, 7, 10 years – some sporadic as that is the nature of my company - will send an email that will go nowhere and they won't find me. He continued my wife's business, a golf pro, is a seasonal business – no one is taking golf lessons when it is 8 degrees. March 31st is not quite golf season and if they try to reach her it will go poof. Mr. Kiley stated: I don't think, given the nature of technology, and the nature of BELD in general – because you are super customer-focused, as has been my history with BELD – this was done particularly well – 90 days is not a long time for a business email address. My company has been in business for 90 years and I have had 1 email address since the internet started basically and it was with BELD and March 31st it is going to be gone.

Mr. Bottiggi asked if Mr. Kiley had a domain – yes. Mr. Bottiggi said that he was familiar with using an email through your domain – so Mr. Kiley could use mark@americanart.com for his new email. Mr. Kiley said he has that already but his website came into play 12 years after his beld.net email so the legacy aspect of this – people don't look for him, they just start typing and it auto-fills and now that will be gone. He continued, he went to the local computer store, New Age, a great resource, and he said that there are 2 very inexpensive options that could make our email addresses legacy. This is what Verizon and Comcast did with theirs.

Mr. Bottiggi said to Mr. Kiley that he is the only one with this issue. Every other business we have dealt with understands that they get a new email address. There is a transition website and you can link your old email address to your new email address – which is only good until March. It is

unfortunate but the people who run this operation for us will be gone. They are being laid off. So, you have 3 months to reach out to everyone you have ever done business with before and inform them – send them an email with your new email address. There was discussion. Mr. Bottiggi said it is not ideal but it has to close down. Mr. Kiley said I am not second guessing the decision you had to make but I do think that 90 days for people who have been with you for 18 years is really, really precipitous – if you had given me a year I could do it.

Commissioner Agnitti asked Mr. Bottiggi if he could speak to Comcast and ask if there is any way they can port any of that over with an additional time frame and see if there is any expense to it or are we too far along in the process. Mr. Bottiggi said Comcast won't do that at this point – we literally have 1 customer that wants this. There was discussion. Mr. Kiley said Verizon wired his building for FIOS 6 or 7 years ago and every time they wanted us to change I said no, I am a Braintree resident, I run a Braintree business, I'm staying with BELD. Mr. Bottiggi commented that if Mr. Kiley could have got 6,000 neighbors to take BELD Broadband we wouldn't have this problem. Mr. Kiley reiterated 90 days is really short - after 18 years, really, really short. Mr. Agnitti said we acknowledge that but there is not much more we can do about this and asked what else would make the transition easier for Mr. Kiley. Mr. Kiley said he honestly does not know and had reached out to New Age - he forwarded an email over to Mr. Agnitti and will share with anyone interested – and was told that there are ways to make this work for little to no money. Mr. Agnitti asked Mr. Bottiggi if he would willing to have BELD staff speak with Mr. Kiley's computer person at New Age. Mr. Bottiggi said yes. Mr. Agnitti asked that Mr. Kiley forward the information to Mr. Bottiggi – yes. There was discussion. We will look at it to see if there is anything we can do but cannot promise anything.

iv. Energy Storage Project

Mr. Bottiggi said we are looking into doing an energy storage project at Station 10 (Middle Street and Adams Street). We cannot do anything at this point other than some preliminary engineering until FERC comes out with their ruling on what can be put in behind the meter. That ruling should come out in March.

It was decided to discuss New Business as Mr. Agnitti would be leaving.

IV. New Business (As Determined/Needed)

Mr. Regan reported that he had a conversation with Town Council President Boericke recently and she asked if the Board would be interested in moving our meeting to town hall. There was discussion. It was decided that we will continue to give updates to the Town Council occasionally. We would post a meeting if all the commissioners wanted to attend.

Mr. Agnitti left the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

V. Personnel Update

None.

VI. Old Business (As Determined/Needed)

i. Commissioner Emails Status

There was discussion - the Commissioners will be changing their beld.net emails over and our IT staff will update the website.

VII. Public Participation (As Determined/Needed)

This was taken care of under Internet Transition Status.

VIII. Tabled Items

None.

IX. Next Regular Meeting – Upcoming Meetings

i. Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

X. Executive Session (As Determined/Needed)

None.

XI. Adjournment

Voted: on motion of Mr. Regan, to adjourn the meeting at 5:59 p.m. Mr. Reynolds stepped down and seconded. So voted.

James P. Regan
Secretary