

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING - MONDAY EVENING - APRIL 25, 2011

PRESENT: Marshall, Barboza, Teixeira, and Herreshoff

ABSENT: Parella

ALSO PRESENT: Diane C. Mederos, Town Administrator
Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer

The Council met in special session on Monday evening, April 25, 2011 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 7:13 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Marshall presiding:

Town Treasurer Goucher introduced Marisa Albanese and William Isaksen from National Grid who was present for this evening's meeting.

Council Chairman Marshall informed those present that the Council is considering the Town's streetlight requirements and is also considering that some of the Town's streets may have redundant lighting in that both decorative street lights and traditional "cobra" street lights are illuminating the same basic area.

He also noted that the Town maintains some seventy-seven (77) individual electricity accounts with National Grid and that the Water Pollution Control Plant and the Composting Facility each consume vast amounts of electricity.

Council Chairman Marshall added that the Council would like to explore ways in which the Town may be more efficient with its utility usage and costs.

Ms. Albanese explained that National Grid is working with several of the cities and towns and that there appear to be "a lot of options" toward more efficient energy usage. She added that the Town's options are somewhat dictated by its constituency and that a reduction in street lights, as an example, appears to be working effectively in Scituate.

Ms. Albanese described that a "public safety committee" examined the effectiveness of lights at dusk and during the middle of the night and that town ultimately removed approximately 700 street lights. She added that National Grid allows for the removal of up to one percent of any town's street lights during one year without a shut-off fee. After the one percent, National Grid imposes what might be considered as an "inventory" fee which considers the amortized cost of the light fixture.

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Ms. Albanese also reported that it would be the Town's responsibility to develop the light removal list and that National Grid will provide a cost estimate to implement the plan.

Ms. Albanese informed the Council that there is a "temporary turn off provision" in the National Grid's tariff which allows for a "red cap" to be placed over the light sensor in order to allow a study of the effect of turning off the light without removing it permanently.

Ms. Albanese also noted that the Town is buying its light service through the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns so that it has a "balanced cost" for its street lights.

Council Chairman Marshall asked to know if the lights are energy-efficient.

Ms. Albanese noted that the decorative street lamps are "self metered" and may accommodate any type of fixture that the Town may wish to utilize. She added that there are no currently acceptable overhead lights which are considered as energy efficient. She added that the new lights proposed for Hope Street are made to shine only on the road but these are not specifically energy efficient.

Ms. Albanese also informed the Council that National Grid will not advise as to which lights should be turned off and that this action would be the responsibility of the Town.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know if there is a "standard price list" for street lights per year with Ms. Albanese responding that street lights, on the average, cost \$150 per year.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know if the lights may be shut-off temporarily and at what cost with Ms. Albanese noting the "red cap" program and that there is a rate to turn off the lights for three years and a fee of \$25 to "uncap" each light if done so in less than one year.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know if any other Towns are considering light removals or efficiencies with Ms. Albanese reporting that Warwick, Newport, East Providence are "looking at the issue" and Scituate has already removed some lights.

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Councilman Barboza asked to know if the program was tried anywhere unsuccessfully with Ms. Albanese responding that residents in Cranston complained about the City's attempt to turn off certain lights.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know if there were plans to change bulbs to more efficient products with Ms. Albanese noting that there were pilot programs in place. She added that most new LED bulbs cost more than the traditional type.

Mr. Isaksen added that the technology is evolving and that the LED product "is not there yet."

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know if the energy costs are cheaper with the LED bulbs with Mr. Isaksen reporting that the energy costs of the LED bulbs is much cheaper.

Council Chairman Marshall stated that he was interested in an "overall look" at the Town's energy program to include more than street lights. He added that street lights, however, was the impetus for the meeting.

Council Chairman Marshall asked to know if the School District was part of the League of Cities and Towns consortium with Town Administrator Mederos reporting that she would check on this.

Council Chairman Marshall suggested that that Town should have an energy audit building-by-building.

Mr. Isaksen responded to inform the Council that National Grid will provide this service. He added that there is already a program to provide information on the water pollution and composting facilities. He added that this audit is at no cost and has resulted in energy reductions and also incentives to change lights.

He added that there is also a program with the Bristol Housing Authority.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know the Town's rate per kilowatt hour with Mr. Isaksen responding that the rate is \$.16 per kilowatt hour. He added that "anything with a meter" is available for the energy audit program and he offered to accommodate any of the Town's requests for energy audits.

Ms. Albanese stated that the plan is to have a grassroots program and that there is a small pool of funds to support

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audits of cities and towns and local non-profits. She added that National Grid is attempting to reach small businesses also.

She added that cities and towns are encouraged to develop their own programs and that National Grid will make presentations. She stated that National Grid is attempting to build "partnerships" with the utility customers and agreed to contact Town Administrator Mederos about the availability of the presentation.

Council Chairman Marshall suggested that the Town may wish to do a "test" turning off the cobra lights in certain areas. He suggested Thames Street and Wood Street from State Street to Bay View Avenue.

Town Administrator Mederos suggested that the intersections might be considered differently than the remainder of the street.

Ms. Albanese stated that she would investigate if the fee for the temporary shut-off could be waived in the case of a pilot program.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that a two-week period might be acceptable for the temporary shut off with Ms. Albanese agreeing to investigate whether or not this would be possible.

A discussion ensued regarding the public safety issues with Town Treasurer Goucher reporting that the Town posed the matter to the Interlocal Trust and has not yet received a response from the Trust.

Councilman Barboza asked what was meant by the term "village" in the documentation with Ms. Albanese explaining that she did not know the specific meaning. She agreed to check on this and provide the definition.

Council Chairman Marshall noted that the property at 500 Wood Street has been taken over by a non-profit and that the electrical service is in need of an upgrade.

Mr. Isaksen suggested that an energy audit should be completed for the entire facility.

Charles Millard of 620 Hope Street suggested that the cost of the planned decorative lighting along Hope Street might wipe-out

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the savings realized at the water pollution and composting facilities.

Council Chairman Marshall asked that this information should be investigated as part of the program.

Ms. Albanese noted that the Town pays for the lighting along Hope Street.

Council Chairman Marshall asked to know if there was any cost saving advantage for National Grid to provide a "consolidated bill" to cover the Town's seventy-seven (77) accounts with Ms. Albanese responding "not really" since the bills must comply with the PUC regulations.

Mark Wolff of 25 Fesser Avenue informed the Council that he represents manufacturers and distributors of LED lighting and that he can do an audit to address the Town's lighting. He added that there are companies which make LED "cobra" lights.

Ms. Albanese explained that since standard street lights are not metered it is not possible to swop the National Grid lights for others.

Councilman Herreshoff suggested that Mr. Wolff might be asked to make a recommendation.

Mr. Wolff noted that LED lighting does not require a ballast and that there is significant labor cost associated with ballast installation and replacement.

Council Chairman Marshall noted as a "recap" that the Town would like to consider a test on Wood Street and Thames Street on a short-term basis. He added that the Town would also like to participate in an audit of the remainder of the Town's properties (similar to the ones regarding the water pollution and composting facilities).

Council Chairman Marshall suggested that Town Administrator Mederos follow up on the discussion and report back to the Council.

There being no further business upon a motion by Councilman Barboza, seconded by Councilman Herreshoff and voted unanimously, Council Chairman Marshall declared this meeting to be adjourned at 8:30 o'clock PM.

Louis P. Cirillo, CMC, Council Clerk

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