

**MINUTES OF GAS & ELECTRIC COMMISSION MEETING**  
**REGULAR SESSION**  
**NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

A meeting of the Holyoke Gas and Electric Department was held on November 18, 2025, at 5:02 P.M. in the Department's offices. In attendance were Commissioners Hoey, Sutter and Marrero; Manager Lavelle; Superintendent Brian Roy; Brooke McMahon, Kate Sullivan Craven, Lisa Rogers, and Attorney John Ferriter.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Hoey called the meeting to order at 5:02 P.M.

**MINUTES:**

On a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes from October 14, 2025.

**REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF MANAGER:**

**Financial Report:**

Ms. McMahon reviewed the draft September 2025 financial statements. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

**DIVISION REPORTS:**

**GAS DIVISION**

Mr. Brian Roy reported that wholesale natural gas purchases continue to be consistent with the hedging plan for the current 12-month procurement window and noted that 76% of planned winter gas is locked in price. He noted that the Purchased Gas Adjustment (PGA) was seasonally adjusted for the November billing cycle and was set to \$0.72/ccf (up 12% over last year) for firm customers and \$1.40/ccf for interruptible customers. He stated that the current PGA rates would result in an increase of between 4% and 8% compared to last winter, because winter fuel prices are currently 26% higher than last year. He then reported that unit sales through November are projected to be approximately 1% ahead of plan, with higher early winter sales offset by lower shoulder month sales (warmer weather). He also reviewed the November natural gas rate comparisons, noting that the Department remains very competitive in all rate classes.

Mr. Roy gave a brief update on the LNG I&R project noting that construction of the LNG spill impoundment is ongoing with construction expected to continue through December. He noted that the project is on schedule for completion by the end of the third quarter of 2026. He then reported that distribution crews completed planned work on South Street (near Main Street) and would now shift to planned cathodic protection and service replacements for the rest of the season. He stated that cast iron main replacements of 2 miles, and elimination of known bare steel services remain on schedule. He reported that construction of the PHMSA funded main replacement on Cabot and Clemente Streets is ongoing and that 5 of 7 tie-ins for the main segment between South East and Canal Streets have been completed. He noted that there are currently zero (0) leaks on. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

## **ELECTRIC DIVISION**

### **POWER SUPPLY**

Mr. Lavelle reviewed the September electric rate comparisons and reported that the Department remains competitive in all rate classes compared to regional peers and is currently the lowest in all categories. He then reviewed the November Mark-to-Market report and reported that all transactions and counter-party default risks are within policy limits. He also gave an update on peak load reduction activities and noted that the October peak occurred on October 10th, hour-ending 19, and that 5,744 MW were shed via Department load reducers. Chairman Hoey asked about arbitrage and the control of dispatch for the battery storage systems. Mr. Lavelle stated that the owners of the storage system do take advantage of arbitrage by charging the systems in off-peak hours and discharging the system during peak market hours. He also noted that there are restrictions on discharging the systems during periods of negative pricing. He then stated that the peak dispatch is ultimately the responsibility of the battery owner. He further noted that the Department provides its peak discharge recommendation to the battery owners and that the owners are subject to liquidated damages if they miss the peaks provided by the Department. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **TRANSMISSION & DISTRIBUTION**

Mr. Lavelle gave an update on maintenance and construction activities, noting that 10 of 33 commitments have been completed to date, with the remaining projects on schedule for completion by the end of the year. He stated that crews recently completed the 17L5 circuit cable replacement, the 1657 circuit line relay upgrades and stray voltage testing. He stated that crews will be moving to Winterberry Circle to replace the underground primary conductors, which is expected to take two to three weeks. He also reported that staff continues to work with the City on grant applications to upgrade the four flood stations along the river. He noted that the City will be applying for a Massachusetts EEA Dam & Seawall Funding opportunity which provides up to \$1 Million per year for the project and requires a 10% cost match. He further noted that the required upgrades are estimated to cost up to \$1 Million for each station and the plan is to complete one station each year over the next four years. Commissioner Hoey asked if the pump stations are owned by the Department or the City. Mr. Lavelle stated that the stations are owned by the City and that the Department has certain responsibilities, under the Flood Control Plan, to operate the stations. Mr. Lavelle then gave a brief update on current battery storage construction activity. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **ELECTRIC PRODUCTION**

Mr. Lavelle noted that hydro production through October is 15% below plan due to low water flows. He reported that the Fishway has been closed for the season. He then gave an update on the Gatehouse Head Gate Actuator Replacement Project noting that the new emergency generator has been installed and that 2 new station transformers are expected to be delivered in early December. He also gave a brief update on Cobble Mountain Unit #3 rebuild status. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Lavelle gave an update on sales and operations activity. He reported that Telecom Division sales are approximately 1% behind budget through September and are expected to be on plan by year-end. He reported that Telecom staff have started the installation of the new Cisco aggregation routers and have run into some operating issues and they are working with Cisco to troubleshoot and resolve those issues. He then reported that the annual cybersecurity training is substantially complete. He further reported that a new peak network bandwidth demand was reached during the recent Thursday Night Football game featuring the New England Patriots, noting that 74 Gbps of traffic was recorded. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Ms. Rogers gave an update on low-income heating assistance funding and stated that with the recent re-opening of the Federal Government that funds should begin to flow to the various fuel assistance agencies in approximately 4-6 weeks. She stated that income limits have not yet been communicated by the fuel assistance agencies. There was a brief discussion on the matter.

## **MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

Ms. Sullivan gave an update on the 2025 customer satisfaction survey results and noted that the Department received a net positive score of 97.4% as it relates to overall customer satisfaction with HG&E. She also noted that HG&E's scores were all above the 2024 Public Power Data Service national average scores. There was a discussion on the matter.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**2026 BUDGET APPROVAL:** Ms. McMahon then presented the 2026 Operating and Capital budgets for approval and stated that the budgets are the same as those discussed at the staff budget meeting on November 4th. She noted that the operating budget estimates total revenue (excluding investment income) of approximately \$93 Million; total operating expenses of approximately \$86.4 Million and total capital expenditures of approximately \$33.7 Million. After a discussion on the matter, and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the budgets as presented.

**2025 HOLIDAY DISCOUNT:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission approve an additional 10% Holiday Discount for the December billing, consistent with past practice, for all residential and commercial customers on non-contract rates. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Hoey, it was voted 2-0 to approve the additional 10% discount, consistent with management recommendation. Commissioner Marrero abstained from voting noting that he supports a 10% holiday discount but would like to see it linked to a cap on consumption.

**ELECTRIC RATE ADJUSTMENTS:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission approve the recommended adjustments to electric rate schedules ER001, ERCS1, EC001, ECCF1, ECS01, ECAF1, ECCU1 and ESI01, consistent with the November 7, 2025, memorandum from Jeanette Sypek, Sr. Energy Resources Coordinator. He stated that the recommended adjustments would amount to a 0.3% to 3% increase for all customers except those on contract rates. He further noted that the recommendation also includes re-balancing the base fuel rate and the Purchased Power Adjustment (PPA) to better align with actual costs. He also stated that the recommendation is consistent with the 2026 operating budget that was just approved. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the rate modifications as recommended.

**BID AUTHORIZATIONS:** None

## **BIDS RECEIVED:**

**ROAD REPAIRS ANNUAL CONTRACT:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the annual contract for Road Repair Services to JSC Construction, LLC, the sole and lowest bidder meeting all requirements of the solicitation. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to award the contract per the recommendation of management.

**SOLID WASTE RECYCLING SERVICES:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the contract for Solid Waste Recycling Services to Republic Services, Inc., the sole and lowest bidder meeting all requirements of the solicitation. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to award the contract per the recommendation of management.

**HYDRAULIC STRUCTURES MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS ANNUAL CONTRACT:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the annual contract for Hydraulic Structures Maintenance & Repairs to West Side Enterprises, the sole and low bidder meeting all requirements of the solicitation. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to award the contract per the recommendation of management.

**FIBER OPTIC INSTALLATION, SPLICING, TERMINATION & TESTING ANNUAL CONTRACT:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission award the annual contract for Fiber Optic Installation, Splicing, Termination & Testing to Collins Electric Company, Inc., the sole and low bidder meeting all requirements of the solicitation. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to award the contract per the recommendation of management.

**GAS ROTARY METERS ANNUAL CONTRACT - EXTENSION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize a one-year extension to the annual contract (24-31) for Gas Rotary Meters to DBI Inc. (dba Utilities and Industries), subject to a 5.26% increase in rates and all other terms and conditions remaining the same. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to authorize the extension per the recommendation of management.

**OVERHEAD CRANES & HOISTS INSPECTIONS ANNUAL CONTRACT – EXTENSION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize a one-year extension to the annual contract for Overhead Cranes and Hoists Inspections with Mass Crane & Hoist Services, Inc., subject to the same terms, rates, and conditions as the existing contract. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the contract extension per the recommendation of management.

**SPILL RESPONSE & HAZARDOUS WASTE ANNUAL CONTRACT – EXTENSION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize a one-year extension to the annual contract for Spill Response and Hazardous Waste/Material Transportation and Disposal with Environmental Services, Inc., subject to the same terms, pricing and conditions as the existing contract. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the contract extension per the recommendation of management.

**GENERAL CONTRACT WORK ANNUAL CONTRACT – EXTENSION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize a one-year extension to the annual contract for General Contract Work with JSC Construction, LLC, subject to a 5% increase in labor and equipment rates, with other terms and conditions remaining the same. He stated that the proposed rate increase is deemed reasonable as the new rates are still 21% below the second lowest bid received in 2024. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the contract extension per the recommendation of management.

**TREE TRIMMING & VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ANNUAL CONTRACT – EXTENSION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize a one-year extension to the annual contract for Tree Trimming and Vegetation Management with Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC, subject to a 3.76% increase in labor and equipment rates, with other terms and conditions remaining the same. He stated that the proposed rate increase is deemed reasonable as the new rates are still 16% below the second lowest bid received in 2024. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the contract extension per the recommendation of management.

**ELECTRIC LINE CONTRACTORS ANNUAL CONTRACT – EXTENSION:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize a one-year extension to the annual contract for Electric Line Contractors with Asplundh Construction, LLC, subject to a 3.8% increase in labor and equipment rates, with other terms and conditions remaining the same. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the contract extension per the recommendation of management.

**PURCHASE APPROVAL – 2026 WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE RENEWAL:** Mr. Lavelle recommended that the Commission authorize the expenditure of up to \$134,677 to renew the Department’s Workers Compensation Insurance Policy with Liberty Mutual. He stated that a \$1,500 PURMA management fee is included in the total request. Commissioner Marrero asked why the policy premium increase is fairly modest if it is tied to personnel wages which went up at a higher rate. Ms. McMahon stated that the premium is based on several factors, including wages. She noted that the Department’s good claims history and robust safety training program help keep premiums in check. She also noted that different employee titles have different risk factors that impact the premium. After a brief discussion and on a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to approve the expenditure per the recommendation of management.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

11/06/25 – Draft Commission Meeting Minutes from 10/14/25  
10/29/25 – JL/BM/Financial Statements, Balance Sheet & Summary Report – September 2025  
10/22/25 – JL/LR/2025 Holiday Discount  
11/07/25 – SR/JS/Electric Rate Adjustments  
11/13/25 – JL/CW/Bid Recommendation – Road Repairs Annual Contract  
11/13/25 – JL/CW/Recommendation – Solid Waste & Recycling Services  
11/12/25 – JL/CW/Bid Recommendation – Hydraulic Structures Maintenance & Repairs Annual Contract  
11/12/25 – JL/CW/Bid Recommendation – Fiber Optic Installation, Splicing, Term. & Testing Annual Contract  
11/13/25 – JL/CW/Recommendation – Extension of Gas Rotary Meters Annual Contract  
10/30/25 – JL/CW/Recommendation – Extension of Overhead Cranes & Hoists Inspections Annual

Contract

11/10/25 – JL/CW/Recommendation – Extension of Spill Response & Hazardous Waste Annual Contract

11/10/25 – JL/CW/Recommendation – Extension of General Contract Work Annual Contract

11/10/25 – JL/CW/Recommendation - Extension of Tree Trimming & Vegetation Mgt Annual Contract – Extension

1/14/25 – JL/CW/Recommendation – Extension of Electric Line Contractor Annual Contract

11/17/25 – JL/BM/Purchasing Approval: 2026 Workers Compensation Insurance Renewal

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

It was agreed that the next Commission meeting would take place on Tuesday, December 16th at 5:00 P.M.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion from Commissioner Sutter, seconded by Commissioner Marrero, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the Meeting at 5:59 P.M.

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HG&E Commission

Minutes 11/18/25