



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

RMLD Board of Commissioners

Date: 2022-05-06

Time: 2:30 PM

Building: Reading Municipal Light Building

Location: Winfred Spurr Audio Visual Room

Address:

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

#### Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Marlena Bitá, Chair; Philip Pacino, Vice Chair; John Stempeck, Commissioner; David Talbot, Commissioner; Robert Coulter, Commissioner.

#### **Members - Not Present:**

#### **Others Present:**

RMLD Staff: Coleen O'Brien, General Manager; Janet Walsh, Director of Human Resources, Hamid Jaffari, Director of Engineering & Operations; Gregory Phipps, Director of Integrated Resources; Wendy Markiewicz, Director of Business Finance; Erica Morse, Executive Assistant.  
Citizens' Advisory Board: Jason Small, Chair.  
RMLD Liasons: Karen Herrick, Reading Select Board

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Philip Pacino, Secretary Pro Tem

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#### **Topics of Discussion:**

##### 1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Bitá called the Board of Commissioner's (BOC) meeting to order at 2:45 PM and announced that the meeting would be held remotely on Zoom and streamed live on RCTV and YouTube.

##### **Opening Remarks and Introductions**

Chair Bitá read the RMLD BOC Code of Conduct and asked all remote attendees to identify themselves.

Vice Chair Pacino, Commissioner Coulter, and Coleen O'Brien, General Manager, participated in the meeting remotely on Zoom.

Vice Chair Pacino served as Secretary at the meeting.

##### 2. Appointment of the Interim/Acting General Manager

##### **Introduction**

Chair Bitá remarked on the importance of the decision to appoint the Interim/Acting General Manager and noted that the BOC is grateful for the dedicated pursuit of this position at RMLD.

In its 100 plus year history, RMLD has served a growing residential, commercial, and industrial customer base with near perfect reliability for its customers and safety for its employees.

The BOC is humbled to have three extraordinarily strong in-house candidates: Hamid Jaffari, Gregory Phipps, and Wendy Markiewicz. All of whom envision furthering their passion for the power industry with team collaboration. This passion and collaboration will innovatively drive mandated climate change goals by changing human habits.

Chair Bitá stated that the General Manager position has been served dutifully by Coleen O'Brien for nine years, whose leadership has mentored all three candidates. The BOC wished the General Manager a happy and rewarding retirement and thanked her for providing constant leadership in a rapidly changing industry.

### **Nominations**

Chair Bitá explained the procedure for nominations. The Chair will state the names of each candidate, starting with the candidate who interviewed first. The BOC will indicate if the stated candidate is their first choice by show of hand.

- Hamid Jaffari, Director of Engineering and Operations  
By show of hand, Vice Chair Pacino voted for Hamid Jaffari as the first-choice candidate for the Interim/Acting General Manager position.
- Gregory Phipps, Director of Integrated Resources  
By show of hands, Chair Bitá, Commissioner Stempeck, Commissioner Talbot, and Commissioner Coulter voted for Gregory Phipps as the first-choice candidate for the Interim/Acting General Manager position.

It was stated that a majority of the BOC (4 in favor) voted for Gregory Phipps as the first-choice candidate for Interim/Acting General Manager.

Chair Bitá congratulated Greg and noted that the BOC is grateful for his interview. The BOC proceeded with the motion for the appointment of the Interim/Acting General Manager.

Chair Bitá made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Talbot, move that the RMLD Board of Commissioners hereby appoints Gregory Phipps to serve as the Interim General Manager effective upon the retirement of the incumbent General Manager until a permanent appointment is made. The Employee also shall serve as the Acting General Manager during absences (such as vacation, sick leave, etc.) of the incumbent General Manager until the effective date of her separation from employment. While serving as the Interim or Acting General Manager, the Employee shall be responsible for his current duties as the Director of Integrated Resources.

**Motion Carried: 4:1** (4 in favor, 1 abstained) Roll Call: Chair Bitá, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Abstain; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye

Vice Chair Pacino could not hear the motion and it was clarified that the motion was read from item #2 on the regular session posted agenda.

Commissioner Stempeck said he agreed with Chair Bitá's remarks. Any one of the candidates would be able to fulfill this position. Commissioner Stempeck noted that he is proud of the candidates and the dedication that they put in, which was shown through the resumes and materials. Commissioner Stempeck said that the Q&A interview portion was spectacular, and from a historic viewpoint, the last interview process did not have anywhere near the level of sophistication and quality of individuals. The choice was extremely difficult.

Commissioner Talbot echoed what Commissioner Stempeck and Chair Bitá said. Commissioner Talbot thanked the candidates and said it speaks so highly of RMLD that three people of this caliber work for the Department. Commissioner Talbot noted that it is a pleasure working with the candidates and he is glad to be back together in one room.

Commissioner Coulter echoed all the Commissioners' comments and noted that all of the

candidates were unbelievable and did a great job in the interviews. It was an extremely difficult choice and he appreciated everyone putting themselves forward.

Vice Chair Pacino noted that he was unable to hear Chair Bitra and Commissioner Stempeck remarks. Vice Chair Pacino stated that these were three excellent and fully qualified candidates, and he appreciates all three for putting their names forward.

### 3. Executive Session

At 2:55 PM Chair Bitra made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Stempeck, Move that the Board of Commissioners go into Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts G.L. c.164 section 47D, exemption from public records and open meeting requirements in certain instances, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; and return to regular session, for the continuation of regular session. Note: Roll call vote required.

**Motion Carried: 5:0:0** (5 in favor) Roll Call: Chair Bitra, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye After discussion in Executive Session the Board returned to Regular Session.

### 4. Adjournment

The BOC adjourned executive session and returned to regular session for the sole purpose of adjournment.

At 3:35 PM Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Stempeck, that the Board of Commissioners adjourn Regular Session.

**Motion Carried: 5:0:0** (5 in favor) Roll Call: Chair Bitra, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye.

A true copy of the RMLD Board of Commissioners minutes as approved by a majority of the Commission.

  
Philip B Pacino (Oct 21, 2022 10:04 EDT)

Oct 21, 2022

Philip B. Pacino, Secretary Pro Tem RMLD Board of Commissioners