



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

RMLD Board of Commissioners

Date: 2022-11-03

Time: 5:00 PM

Building: Reading Municipal Light Building

Location: Winfred Spurr Audio Visual Room

Address: 230 Ash Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: Members - Present:

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

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Citizens' Advisory Board: Jason Small, North Reading Representative.

RMLD Liasons: Karen Herrick, Reading Select Board.

RMLD Staff: Gregory Phipps, Interim General Manager & Director of Integrated Resources; Erica Morse, Executive Assistant; Ben Bloomenthal, Director of Accounting & Finance; Robert Weiden, Credit and Collections Manager; Julie Blackley, Communications Manager; Janet Walsh, Director of Labor Relations.

Public: Mary Ellen O'Neill, 125 Summer Ave, Reading, MA; Martin K. Goldenblatt, 20 Cider Mill Road Stow, MA 01775.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Philip B. Pacino, Secretary Pro Tem

Topics of Discussion:

The meeting agenda and materials can be found on the RMLD website. The recording of this meeting can be viewed on the RMLD website and RCTV YouTube page.

Call Meeting to Order

- Chair Bitá called the RMLD Board of Commissioner's (BoC) meeting to order at 5:00 PM and announced that the meeting would be held in person, remotely on zoom, and streamed live on RCTV and YouTube.

Opening Remarks and Introductions

- Chair Bitá read the RMLD BoC Code of Conduct and noted that there were no remote attendees. Vice Chair Pacino served as Secretary at the meeting.

Public Comment

- There was no comment from the public during the meeting.

Approval of General Manager Search Committee Minutes

- Vice Chair Pacino expressed his uncertainty about voting since he did not attend the General Manager Search Committee meetings.
- Morse clarified that the voting will only involve Jason Small, Bob Coulter, and Dave Talbot.
- Commissioner Talbot asked if they need to call themselves to order, Morse said no.
- Commissioner Talbot made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Coulter, that the RMLD General Manager Search Committee approve the regular session minutes of the October 4, 2022, and October 12, 2022, meetings. **Motion Carried: 3:0:0** (3 in favor, 0 absent, 0 abstained). Roll Call: Chair Small, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye;
- Commissioner Talbot made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Coulter, that the RMLD General Manager Search Committee approve the executive session minutes of the August 4, 2022; August 10, 2022; September 7, 2022; September 12, 2022; September 13, 2022; September 14, 2022; September 19, 2022; September 20, 2022; and October 4, 2022, meetings. **Motion Carried: 3:0:0** (3 in favor, 0 absent, 0 abstained). Roll Call: Chair Small, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye.
- Commissioner Talbot explained that there were many executive session minutes because the Committee had several finalists to interview, and each one had their own executive session.
- Commissioner Coulter acknowledged the help of Janet Walsh in facilitating the process.
- Commissioner Talbot thanked Jason Small and everyone who contributed to the process.

Discussion of the General Manager Candidates

Nominations for the position of General Manager.

- Chair Bitz asked if there were any discussions among the Commissioners before proceeding with the nominations.
- Vice Chair Pacino confirmed that the vote is going in order of seniority.
- Chair Bitz explained the nomination and voting process, noting that each commissioner would state their first choice of candidate with a brief explanation, and there would be no discussion from the other Commissioners.
- Vice Chair Pacino stated that all three candidates were extremely capable and thanked the General Manager Search Committee for bringing these candidates forward.
- Vice Chair Pacino nominated Gregory Phipps, highlighting his leadership skills especially in relation to union contracts, securing new substation land, and fostering a different workplace at RMLD.
- Vice Chair Pacino referenced David Zeek's public comment letter which commended Phipps for his personal energy and vision to lead the RMLD into a changing and

dynamic future of the electrical power industry.

- Vice Chair Pacino referenced John Pelletier's public comment letter, which recognized Phipps for his hard-to-find mix of technical and people skills, understanding that without the team there is no RMLD.
- Commissioner Stempeck nominated Gregory Phipps, and highlighted Phipps' business analysis skills, his background, and his excellent leadership qualities.
- Commissioner Talbot nominated Gregory Phipps, echoing Commissioners Pacino and Stempeck's comments and added that Phipps fosters a positive atmosphere and lets people succeed.
- Commissioner Talbot briefly mentioned the other two candidates, Jared Carpenter and John Blair, and their impressive qualifications.
- Commissioner Coulter expressed how difficult the selection process was and that all candidates had strong skill sets.
- Commissioner Coulter nominated Gregory Phipps due to his vision, leadership, and skill set.
- Chair Bitá congratulated Gregory Phipps, as he received four out of five nominations.
- Chair Bitá nominated Jared Carpenter to show faith in his talent with her nomination.
- Commissioner Talbot suggested adding "subject to the successful completion of employment contract negotiations" to the motion. This was accepted and added to the main motion.
- Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Stempeck, that the RMLD Board of Commissioners appoint Gregory Phipps as General Manager of Reading Municipal Light Department subject to the successful completion of employment contract negotiations. **Motion Carried: 5:0:0** (5 in favor, 0 absent, 0 abstained) Roll Call: Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye; Chair Bitá, Aye.
- Vice Chair Pacino mentioned the other two candidates and expressed interest in finding a way to bring them on board as well.
- The Commissioners discussed the possibility of hiring the other two candidates and forming a "Dream Team."

Adjournment

- At 5:17 PM, Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Chair Bitá, that the Board of Commissioners adjourn regular session. **Motion Carried: 5:0:0** (5 in favor, 0 absent, 0 abstained) Roll Call: Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye; Chair Bitá, Aye.

Documents

- Public Comment – David Zeek
- Public Comment – John Pelletier
- Public Comment – Tyler Abegg

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

Philip B Pacino
Philip B Pacino - Apr 20, 2023 - 8:01

Apr 20, 2023

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

From: [Contact form at Reading Municipal Light Dept](#)
To: [Erica Morse](#)
Subject: [Reading Municipal Light Dept] I endorse Greg Phipps for RMLD General Manager (Sent by David Zeek, [REDACTED])
Date: Thursday, November 3, 2022 11:11:00 AM

Hello emorse,

David Zeek [REDACTED] has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.rmld.com/user/1426/contact>) at Reading Municipal Light Dept.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.rmld.com/user/1426/edit>.

Message:

I encourage the Board of Commissioners to select Gregory Phipps to be the next General Manager of Reading Municipal Light Department.

I have worked with Greg since he joined RMLD on strategies of joint interest with the Town of Reading for energy efficiency, electrification, and clean energy. He has been a partner with the Town on achieving our own sustainability goals. Greg regularly updates our Climate Advisory Committee on RMLD's plans and forecasts including such things as the customer-focused programs for Renewable Choice and Solar Choice, EV charger deployment, heat pump deployment, and the evolving outlook for energy acquisition, load, and use.

Greg aggressively developed RMLD's strategy to achieve the non-carbon emitting energy goals set by the Next-generation Climate Roadmap law passed last year.

Several RMLD employees have commented to me that they enjoy working for Greg. They like the environment and the culture that he fosters at RMLD.

I watched your interviews of the candidates for general manager. The other candidates seemed like capable managers. Only Greg came across as a leader.

Greg knows the business, and he knows the RMLD family. He has the personal energy and the vision to lead RMLD into a changing and dynamic future for the electrical power industry. I encourage you to choose Greg.

Regards,
David Zeek
8 Sanborn St., #4002
Reading, MA 01867

While I have not had the privilege of meeting the other applicants, I am sure they have strong backgrounds to have advanced to the final selection round.

A brief background on myself, I have worked with many different governmental and private sector operations at various locations globally throughout my career. As such I have experienced many different leadership styles to include U.S. Army Generals David Petraeus and Martin Dempsey who both went on to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before they retired. As well as some former managers in the private sector who were strong leaders and some I would prefer to forget.

Adult professionals follow leaders by choice, the days of leadership by coercion or intimidation are long gone.

A leader is more than an impressive resume or advanced degrees.

Greg is not only an expert in the field of electricity, alternative energy, business operations, regional and global energy markets. He also possesses the intangibles that make for a strong leader, some of those include:

- He is mission focused, the mission of RMLD is to provide reliable, low cost and carbon neutral electricity service.
- A great listener, a strong leader needs to both speak and listen.
- He is forward thinking, always looking for new opportunities, searching for new knowledge to provide the best service possible to the customers.
- Decisive, there is little time wasted in analysis paralysis, he understands sometimes you win, sometimes you lose but there is no excuse for not trying.
- He is conscience of his surroundings, the team dynamics, and the ever-changing complexity of the business.
- Empathy, leaders learn this skill through a commitment to examining issues from other people's perspective, not only my way or the highway.

In summary, I think Greg would make a great GM for RMLD because he has the hard-to-find mix of strong technical and equally important, people skills, understanding that without the team there is no RMLD.

From: [Tyler Abegg](#)
To: [Erica Morse](#)
Subject: Public Comment for BOC
Date: Thursday, November 3, 2022 2:31:22 PM

To the RMLD Board of Commissioners

I would like to submit public comment to the RMLD Board of Commissioners regarding the hiring of the General Manager. My name is Tyler Abegg, and I am a Senior System Administrator for the RMLD. I have been working for the RMLD since the summer of 2016. In my time here I have gained a broad understanding of the RMLD, our communities we support, and the goals and values of our business. Based on this I would like to voice my support for Greg Phipps for the position of General Manager. Greg has provided a seamless transition during his time as Interim GM and has masterfully taken the reins from Coleen O'Brien and has continued to push us forward to being a reliable utility who provides low rates for our ratepayers and provides non-carbon energy options for the betterment of our future. Greg excels as a manager and is someone I enjoy working under. Simply put Greg's passion and energy is contagious and he has not only motivated myself but many of my colleagues to become more passionate in our own roles and invigorated us to provide the best service possible for our communities.

Based on last night's interviews, while I believe each candidate is uniquely qualified and would excel in the role of General Manager, I now believe more than ever that Greg continues to be the perfect person for the role of General Manager at RMLD. In his short time as Interim General Manager, he has reinvigorated the work force and provided a path for success for all of us that work under him. Greg has provided a great working environment and has gained my support in his vision of the future of this utility, and I believe he has done the same for many of my colleagues. Many of us would like to continue what we have started under Greg and see through his vision of the future of RMLD for the betterment of all the rate payers, town officials of the communities we support, and the employees of the RMLD.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Tyler Abegg

Senior Systems Administrator

Reading Municipal Light Department