



**SUBJECT: Hydro business plan**

**TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.**

**FROM: Finance Department**

Report Number: F-01-21

Wards Affected: not applicable

File Numbers: 125-01

Date to Committee: February 3, 2021

Date to Council: February 16, 2021

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**Recommendation:**

Receive and file finance department report F-01-21 regarding the Hydro 2021 business plan.

**PURPOSE:**

This report is intended to provide committee with an overview of the 10-year Hydro business plan on the following key areas:

- 10-Year Forecast of net income
- capital expenditures
- balance sheet
- dividend flow
- shareholder risks

**Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment

**Background and Discussion:**

The shareholder direction to BEC (Burlington Enterprises Corporation) is a document that sets out the accountability, responsibility and relationship between the Board and the Shareholder. Article 6 of the direction details reporting requirements to the shareholder. Specifically, section 6.1 requires that “not later than 45 days prior to the

end of each fiscal year, the Board will approve and submit to the Chief Financial Officer of the shareholder a business plan for the next five fiscal years.”

The business plan is to include:

- a) the strategic direction and any new business initiatives which Burlington Hydro or its subsidiaries will undertake;
- b) an operating and capital expenditure budget for the next fiscal year and an operating and capital expenditure projection for each fiscal year thereafter, including the resources necessary to implement the Business Plan;
- c) pro forma unconsolidated Financial Statements for each fiscal year, including projected dividend payments to the shareholder;
- d) an acquisition budget setting forth the nature and type of capital expenditures proposed to be made in the following fiscal year, supported by explanations, notes and information upon which the budget was based;
- e) energy conservation programs and environmental plans; and
- f) any material variances from the Business Plan then in effect.

This information is important to the City as it assists the City, as shareholder to understand the financial and operational aspects of the distribution business and other businesses of the corporation. The City is in receipt of the following financial information, including 10-year forecasts, with regards to BHI (Burlington Hydro Inc.) and BESI (Burlington Electricity Services Inc):

- Business Assumptions
- Balance Sheet
- Statement of Changes in Cash Flow
- Profit & Loss Statement
- Capital Forecast

The general requirements of the shareholder direction have been addressed. Report CM-10-19 presented to Committee of the Whole on May 13, 2019 recommended governance changes to Burlington Hydro. As a result, Burlington Hydro Electric Inc (BHEI) is now Burlington Enterprises Corporation (BEC). Its subsidiaries remain BHI and BESI.

Each year the Board of Directors conducts a strategic planning process which helps formulate company objectives and strategic goals for the coming year. Understanding that as a shareholder the City of Burlington has a low tolerance for risk, the BHEI Board has directed management towards a risk-adverse strategy. The following strategies have been developed to support achievement of key objectives in 2021:

- Responsible Financial Management – LDC profitability and revenue growth
- Community commitment – customer satisfaction, corporate communications campaigns, customer focus performance metrics

- Operational effectiveness – information technology, improve organizational design
- Employer of choice – strengthen employee culture, meet safety metrics, strengthen customer/contractor communications

The strategic principles that support the objectives are:

- Optimize revenue considering capital requirements
- Institute a culture of continuous improvement identifying areas where effectiveness of the organization can be improved
- Refine and develop tools and training for customers and staff to help with education on prevailing issues
- Identify and pursue opportunities to grow revenues through non-regulated activities
- Evaluation of M&A proposals using key principles that include adding value for the City and positioning the utility strategically for the future
- Survey and consult staff on the level of job engagement

BEC remains focused on the needs and priorities of the community into the future. In alignment with the City's 25-year vision, the key strategic directions were identified for the future state 25 years out. Elements of the vision include:

- Strong shareholder relationship
- Unsurpassed reliability
- Excellent shareholder value
- Customers engaged and satisfied
- Unmatched safety record
- GREEN leader
- Top employer

The corporation is well positioned in the context of the City of Burlington's 25-year vision and its companion document From Vision to Focus which details more specific action plans for the next four years. Specifically, Burlington Hydro can contribute to supporting sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment.

## BURLINGTON HYDRO INC.

### BHI Net Income Forecast 2021-2030

Forecasted net income ('000 millions) before tax for the next ten years is presented as follows:

2020 Update	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	2022 Fcst	2023 Fcst	2024 Fcst	2025 Fcst	2026 Fcst	2027 Fcst	2028 Fcst	2029 Fcst	2030 Fcst
3.711	2.926	4.701	5.209	4.900	5.023	5.364	6.208	6.449	6.690	7.165	7.700

The 2020 update of \$3.711 million presents a positive variance of approximately \$785,000 from the 2020 budget of earnings before tax of \$2.926 million.

Factors affecting the 2020 forecast are as follows:

- Distribution revenue is forecast to drop below budget by (\$948K). The distribution revenue drop illustrates the impact of Covid 19. Although energy and demand approached budgeted levels it is the impact of the rate classes that affected the distribution revenue. Consumption by the small commercial class had the biggest impact due to the imposed closures from Covid 19. Peak demand from the large commercial and industrial class also had an impact due to closures.
- Other Operating revenue is forecast to exceed budget by \$938K. With the start of the Metrolinx Go Transit electrification project a handling charge was put in place to assist in recovery of BHI staff time and resources deployed to the project. In addition, a site mobilization charge was introduced as the Metrolinx project uses the BHI yard to coordinate resources and materials. Also contributing to this favourable variance is the decision by the OEB to permit LDCs to record collection fees as if they were charged for eventual recovery through rebasing. The OEB has prohibited the charging of these fees to customers at this time.
- Operating expenses are forecast to be under budget by \$772K. A favourable variance in operations and maintenance costs of \$887K or partially offset by an unfavourable variance in Billing and Collection in the form of an increase in bad debt allowance to reflect the impact of Covid 19.
- Net finance costs are forecast to exceed budget by (71K) due to lower cash balances and higher use of operating line of credit as Covid 19 negatively impacted collection of receivables.

The results achieved by BHI are of importance to the shareholder as the dividends flowing to the shareholder from BEC are composed of earnings from BHI and BESL.

## **TEN-YEAR CAPITAL BUDGET AND FORECAST**

In keeping with BHI's Asset Management strategy the capital budget and forecast identifies projects that are part of its sustaining capital budget as well as ensuring that Burlington has an adequate supply of electricity. These include:

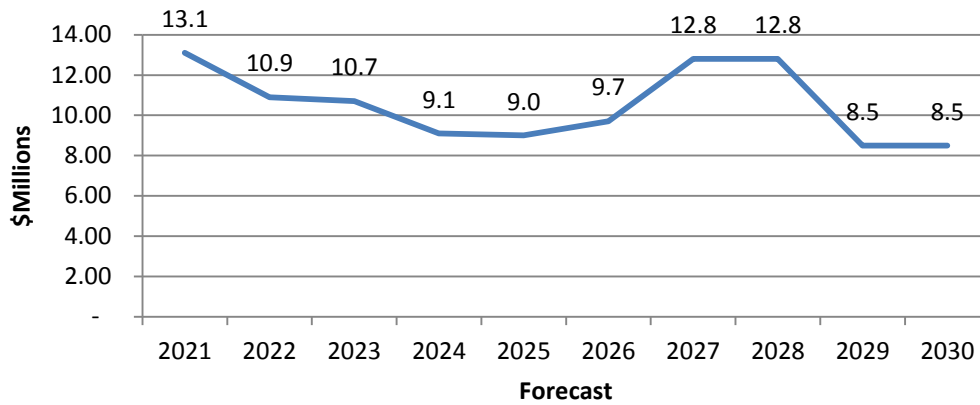
- Customer demand projects including connecting new customers, building new subdivisions and relocating system plant for roadway construction work.
- Renewal which focuses on replacement of assets that have reached end of useful life. New assets require less maintenance, deliver better reliability and reduce safety risks to the public.
- Security which could include adding switching devices or creating a backup feeder supply to reduce the risk to typical restoration times.
- Reliability which supports maintenance of or improvement to the Service Quality indices measured and submitted to the OEB each year.
- Substations which are invested in to improve or maintain reliability to large numbers of customers and to maintain security and safety at the substation sites. The renewal or retirement of Burlington Hydro's 4.16 kV substations is part of the annual review undertaken as part of the Asset Management strategy.
- Customer Connections and metering include meter installations, meter upgrades and the capital components of wholesale and retail meter verification activities.

There are also special projects which are outside the sustaining capital program. These are:

- Capacity improvements for new customer connections and increased demand of existing customers.
- Developer Buybacks which involves BHI purchasing new subdivision assets as they are put in place by developers.
- Regulatory Requirements which are system capital investments driven by regulatory requirements. These directions may come from the OEB, IESO, the Ministry of Energy or the Ministry of the Environment.
- The Metrolinx Go Transit electrification project is a cost recovery project which will allow BHI to recover costs of staff and resources deployed to the project.

Forecasted capital expenditures from the Business Plan are presented as follows:

### BHI Forecasted Capital Expenditures (2021-2030)



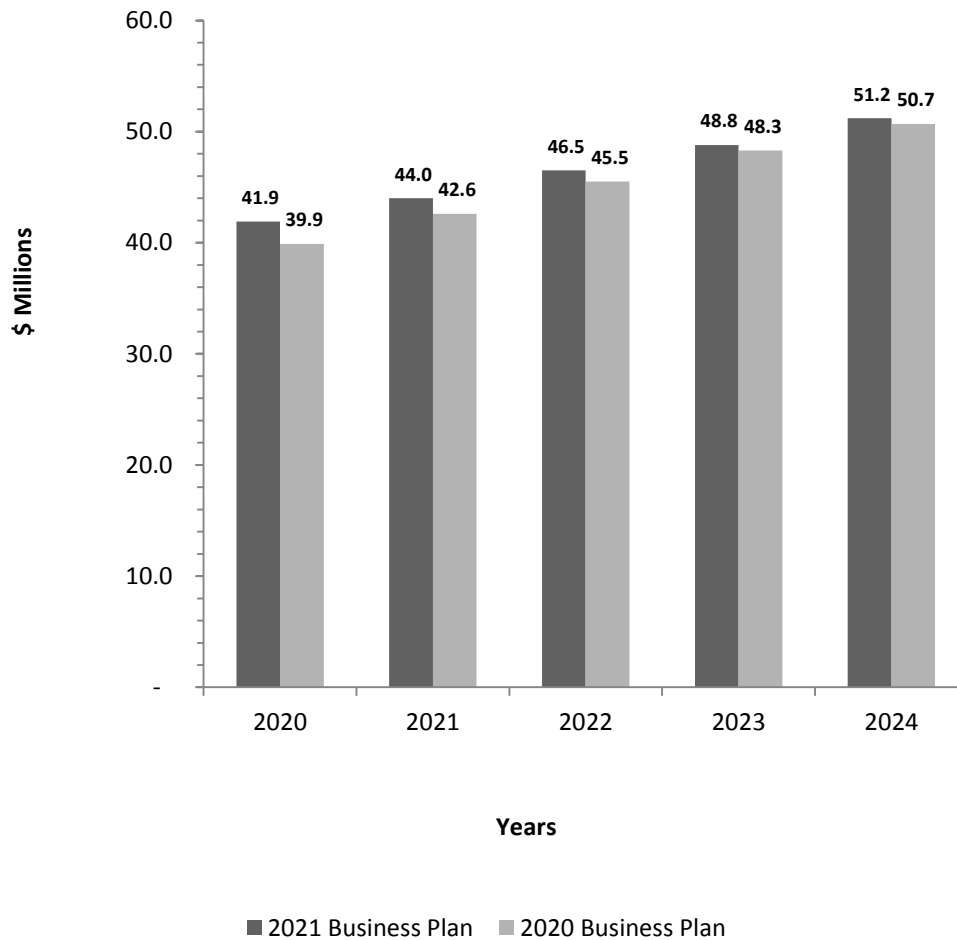
The 2021 capital budget has been developed using data from the asset management plan. The focus on maintaining the distribution system remains.

#### BALANCE SHEET

(i) Retained Earnings

BHI continues to forecast retained earnings growth that represents value of increased ownership in a larger company. The following chart illustrates retained earnings growth forecast in the first five years of the 2021 business plan:

## Projected Retained Earnings



### (ii) Long Term Debt

Funding has been in place with Infrastructure Ontario since 2010 for financing the Smart Meter program. This loan has a 15-year amortization period at a fixed rate of 4.51%. Outstanding at year end 2021 will be \$3.5 million. A second loan that assisted with financing the Hydro One Transformer Station capital contributions has a 25-year amortization period at a fixed rate of 4.02%. Outstanding at year end 2021 will be \$6.1 million.

A third loan has a 15-year amortization period at a fixed rate of 3.63%. The loan matches long-term funding against BHI capital expenditures including the true-up

payment for the Tremaine transformer station and the two Tremaine breakers. Outstanding balance at year end 2021 will be \$5.9 million.

The 10-year time horizon forecasts additional borrowings of \$56 million over the forecast time horizon with the new debt funding the capital program. The company's capacity to borrow for capital projects is sound with a debt/capital structure within lender covenants.

The forecast also includes the costs of maintaining a \$20m operating line of credit for working capital needs and an \$18 million letter of credit facility to cover prudential requirements related to the monthly power will with the IESO.

## **BURLINGTON ELECTRICITY SERVICES INC. (BESI)**

BESI is the sister company to the distribution company BHI. Unlike BHI, which is closely regulated by the OEB, BESI operates as an unregulated business. Its divisions include:

**Festival of Lights Division:** This division contains the annual costs of operating the Festival of Lights net of any sponsor donations.

**Region Billing Division:** provides water billing services for the Region of Halton. The contract continues to contribute net income to the company.

**Solar Array Division:** Its revenues are derived from a solar array which was connected in 2012 to the City's Fire hall 8. General maintenance of the array is the division's operating costs.

**Vehicle Charging Station Division:** installs charging stations for electric vehicles. Revenue is rental revenue from the stations. The program paves the way for key information on homeowner interaction with EV's and the electricity grid.

**Mobile Turbine Co-Generator Division:** This division holds the Mobile Turbine Co-Generator situated in the South Parking Lot of the Brant Street Office.

**Control Room Division:** This division provides control room monitoring for Milton Hydro.

**Suite Metering Division:** Provides suite metering services.

Operating expenses for BESI cover salaries and benefits, consulting services, legal services, promotion and marketing costs. These are forecast to be unfavourable by (\$12K).

Overall net income after tax is forecast to have a negative variance of (\$9K).

Favourable variances in the Electrical Vehicle Charging Stations, Water Billing and Control Room Services are offset by unfavourable variances in the other divisions.



The 2021 business plan includes interest costs for a new term facility forecast to be drawn down in Q4 2020.

## Dividends

Annual dividends paid to the shareholder are composed of dividends from BHI operations, BHI working capital and BESI net income.

\$ Millions

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
	Budget	Fcst	Fcst	Fcst	Fcst	Fcst	Fcst	Fcst	Fcst	Fcst
Dividends - BHI	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Dividends - BESI	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total Dividends to Shareholder	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4

The dividend forecast is reduced by \$200,000 starting in 2021 over the previous business plan. This is required capital for BESI to consider a new value stream related to suite meters and EV chargers. While they were able to access a capital loan facility equity is needed to secure the loan. The impact to the City of Burlington is discussed below in the Financial Matter section of this report,

## Shareholder Risks and Opportunities

(I) Regulatory/Political Risk

As a regulated business, BHI is subject to the direction of Government legislated boards and committees. The 2018 provincial election saw a change in government that has impacted the utilities particularly in conservation demand management programs which have been centralized under the IESO. Incentives related to the demand management program are no longer paid to the local utilities. Issues related to electricity are expected to remain in the public view.

(II) Cost of Service Review

The OEB has established a five-year cycle in which the local distribution companies must undergo a full “cost of service” review. BHI has prepared a cost of service application in 2020 for 2021 rates. As a result of the 2014 cost of service review, the City was impacted by having the interest rate on the promissory note dropped from 5.87% to 4.88%. The current Hydro business plan projects the rate at 3.21% resulting in a decrease of (\$536K) interest income to the city beginning in 2021. The actual rate will be set at the rebase

application and will be effective May 1, 2021. As of November 9, 2020, the posted rate for 2021 is 2.85 %. The original interest rate on the note was 7.25%. The following outlines actual cash flow received by the City from BEC:

\$ Millions	2001-2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Dividends	40.9	3.3	2.5	2.5	3.6	2.6	3.4	2.6	2.6
Interest	37.0	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Interest on RESF	4.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4
Total	82.8	6.9	5.7	5.5	6.6	5.6	6.2	5.4	5.3

### (III) Opportunities

It is through BESI, the unregulated company that the shareholder has opportunities for strategic initiatives. BESI has set out as part of its overall business strategy to pursue in-scope services and new business ventures. Services that might be pursued would be intended to minimize risk to the taxpayers while representing an opportunity to establish and/or enhance existing common or shared services. Working strategically with Hydro management presents the City with an opportunity to find creative solutions that will ensure fiscal sustainability.

### (IV) ERM (Enterprise Risk Management)

In 2015 the Hydro Board gained an appreciation of ERM. A high-level risk management review identified the wide range of risks to which the BHI organization may be exposed. These were narrowed down to a list which was analyzed in more detail. They were examined for the risk profile, current state and future considerations. This list; show below provides the framework for a Risk Management Plan. The 2021 business plan includes a full analysis of each of the identified risk areas.

- Safety
- Public Safety
- Aging Infrastructure
- Reliability-Systems issues
- Head Office Building
- Workforce Sustainability
- Reputational
- Financial
- Regulatory/Political

Execution of the plan will be important to the City as shareholder as it allows the Hydro Board and Management to manage risk for the organization.

### **Financial Matters:**

As per the Hydro Business Plan as presented above the following are notable areas that will have an impact to the city's Hydro reserve fund.

First, is the decline in the dividend by \$200,000 annually beginning in 2021. The city currently receives an annual dividend of \$2.6 million and this will reduce to \$2.4 million. It is likely that this reduction will continue with no planned increases to the dividend in the future. It should be noted that from time to time BEC has declared special dividends to the City when circumstances allow.

Secondly, is the interest that the city receives on its promissory note. Since 2014 the city has received an annual rate of 4.88% equating to an annual cash flow of \$2.3 million. As mentioned above the rate on the promissory note has reduced to 2.85%. This equates to an annual reduction of \$970,000 going forward. This rate is set by the OEB.

The city's Hydro reserve fund is an integral part of the city's capital infrastructure program. It provides \$2.1 million annually to support the annual capital renewal program. Furthermore, it is anticipated over the next five years to be providing for the annual average repayment of \$2.5 million in debt charges on special circumstances debt towards major capital projects of varying types throughout the city. As well the reserve fund is relied on for city's storm allocation program until 2024 and direct cash contributions towards capital projects as well.

The Hydro reserve fund is being closely monitored and adjustments will be made as required to ensure a sustainable reserve fund balance.

### **Climate Implications**

BEC has identified areas in the City's 25-year strategic plan where it has a role to play in aiding the City to realize the strategic vision. These are:

#### **Economic Growth**

- Energy-efficient buildings and other onsite sustainable features are the norm, thereby improving Burlington's environmental footprint. Existing buildings are being renovated to improve efficiency.
- Create employment lands vision to unite the community, developers and industry
- 15,000 new knowledge-based jobs by 2025

#### **Environmental Leadership**

- The city's operations are net carbon neutral.
- The city achieves its major goals outlined in the Climate Action Plan
- Better environmental outcomes to improve quality of life, economic competitiveness and foster civic pride.

### **Engagement Matters:**

Burlington Hydro has engaged in a Customer Value Proposition Campaign over the period of 2017-2020. The goals of the campaign are to deliver on four priorities:

1. Bring together various elements the company makes with customers/stakeholders to ensure a consistent "value proposition" message
2. Engender trust and confidence across all stakeholder and customer audiences
3. Extol the virtues of the value of electricity in our everyday lives.
4. Engage all classes of customers and provide practical examples and success stories of how they deliver value back to the customer and through to the community.

### **Conclusion:**

As shareholder, the City has noted the commitment to risk management evidenced in this business plan. The City is appreciative of the efforts of the Board of Directors and Hydro Staff in continuing to manage this valuable City asset in a highly effective manner as reflected by the continued strong results forecast in the business plan and realized in the current year. The City's 10-year Capital Financing Strategy is heavily dependent on both annual dividends and interest on the note receivable

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Respectfully submitted,

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### **Notifications:**

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### **Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.