

**MEETING MINUTES**  
Town of Heath  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Community Hall  
November 7, 2017

**Call to Order at 10:35 a.m.** by Sheila Litchfield, Chair with Robyn Provost-Carlson and Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator present. Others present: Joe Parda, Project Engineer, WG&E, Richard Carnall, Senior IT Fiber Architect, WG&E, and Nick Sarnelli, Field Operation and Safety Manager Precision Valley Communications, Art Schwenger, Jan Carr, Ned Wolf, and Diane Broncaccio, Greenfield Recorder.

**Reviewed Agenda:** No changes.

Introductions: Sheila opened the meeting and welcomed today's guests. Mr. Parda started by mentioned the pole survey completed for Heath by Osmose – which proved unhelpful with such a large percentage of red poles. A power point slide show was viewed. Utilities make the final determinations and assign cost to each applicable pole. WG&E can speculate and assist with negotiation but the final word is determined by NGrid or Verizon. The first step to engineering and design is mapping. Field surveyors in marked vehicles from Whip City Fiber with gather data from each and every pole, what is referred to as a “house count.” This will provide the foundation for the base map and then it will be digitized in a package for designers. A daily report during the mapping will be sent to the town indicating which streets will be addressed. Crews may have to access property in order to collect data – a press release will be issued informing residents that crews will be working in town. Precision Valley Communications will be the contractor creating the design and layout. Discussed the ‘hub’ – a central location where a stand-alone structure roughly 8x12 or 9x16 will be constructed somewhere in town, preferably near the town center. This location should be determined soon and then the fiber routes will originate from this point, “hub & spoke” design.

The speaker provided some technical details and shared that the design can include planning for future expansion. Someone asked about whether the fiber is temperature sensitive. The fiber strands are robust and will not be affected by low or high temperatures. Sometimes a peppered, “Cajun” taste is added to a resin encompassing the fiber to deter critters from chewing. Fiber is like a strange of hair encased in a ‘jacket’ to protect it.

Discussed use of existing buildings to serve as the hut but the designer explained that it would need evaluations and may cost more to modify to fit a variety of specifications and requirements. Highways crews may assist in laying out the gravel pad, etc. in an effort to save on cost. All towns so far prefer the ‘hut’ solution rather than existing building. Group procurement will be considered for cost efficiency.

Nick Sarnelli presented an overview of the mapping process. Pole data is documented pen and paper and then translated to digital map software. It is color coded and layered to create a foundation map for decision-making. It is also future-proofed as aforementioned with spare fiber. Discussed fiber service areas and how each home has a unique fiber strand or ‘path’ back to the hub. Touched on Osmose data again and pole applications. They are batched in 200 poles/batch and cost \$54 for NGrid poles and \$10 for Verizon. Eversource customers pay less and an attempt to get cost lowered for Grid customers resulted without success. Verizon will provide independent data as well. When utility data is received, WG&E and PVC will assist in negotiation process – a critical step in helping reduce costs/impact. Someone asked about the municipal agreement regarding space on poles – the response was that these historic agreements may require legal review and delay the process.

Sheila emphasized Heath's concern with cost. We need to look at all ways to reduce cost and make this project affordable to residents. Every town is concerned with overall cost/budget. It's important to move forward cautiously and wait for all numbers and make ready cost for final determination/ price tag.

Bill Ennen, Liaison, is trying to work on extending the 45 day timeframe to 180 days. Reps. from Utilities should participate in these meetings but they do not. There are limited crews available to survey poles – the Utilities need to provide crews to review 25,000 or more poles – a lot of time and labor. The middle mile used outside contractors but this raises the cost.

Discussed areas needing poles or filling gaps – may access with underground feed. Discussed edge case issues. There are roughly four in Heath. Looked at maps and reviewed each case. Judd Road – Warner Hill (Heath); Bassett Rd. – Charlemont (Heath); Rowe Road/Dell Road (Rowe); West Brach/ Adamsville Road (Colrain). A determination for each needs to be made for design purposes. Which town will apply for the edge poles? Dark fiber? Leases? Which town pays for what?

### **Break for lunch. Resume meeting 1 p.m.**

Discussed Mohawk Estates area which includes revenue generating units, easy feed, roughly 200 drops – discussed options for design.

Expanded on discussion for future planning. Can bundle fibers at strategic locations to be used in future. What's next?

- Mapping
- WG&E will host Friday update calls for towns. Not a forum for questions; just updates.
- IGA agreements – platform to include all addendums with specifics for all circumstances. A draft will be forwarded by Caitrin.
- Questions should be directed to WG&E.
- Press Release and getting message out to residents announcing the mapping project.
- Jan and Art will work on mapping areas that are under permanent restriction.
- License agreements / Authorization letters to NGrid and Verizon.
- Upload data to FTP site
- Smartsheet – updates provided by PVC showing step by step process. Caitrin will forward link.

Role of MLP Manager: Board of Selectmen will make decisions. Eventually, Town needs to have some sort of project manager.

PVC will aim to complete mapping mid-December.

The estimated completion is difficult to ascertain as it depends on Verizon. The project that could be completed within 30 days or so is delayed by Verizon so it could be complete by the tail end of 2018 or into 2019.

Guests were thanked for meeting with the Town of Heath today. Art will do site visit with guests on possible location of hub and report back shortly.

### **Presentation group closed at 2:15 p.m.**

**Betty Nichols, Tax Collector/ Community Software Consortium:** Betty attended today to present an agreement to participate in the Community Software Consortium (CSC) program for collectors. The consortium was formed by member towns but DOR is no longer supporting the current solution and recommends replacement. The CSC members are down to 18 towns according to Betty. Quality Data, who provide software to 95% of CT collectors, won a competitive RFP process. The project will proceed but is dependent on the number of towns that will enter into contract. Betty presented the MOU. The CSC members are applying for a Community Compact grant to fund the conversion and licensing costs

for each community that signs up. According to Betty, the conversion will cover 2-3 years of support, the software and thereafter will cost \$3,250 - \$2,825 annually. Mike Quinlivan may be able to assist with conversion. This software will be compatible with Patriot, used by our Assessors. Discussed time-frames for conversion.

***On a motion by Robyn Provost-Carlson and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted unanimously to sign the MOU with the following contingencies:***

***1) there is a bridge to Patriot;***

***2) contract does not exceed three years;***

***3) the insertion of 'price guarantee' replaces the word 'contract' for five years.***

Betty will confirm all with Rebecca Krause-Hardie. Betty called and confirmed that there is no additional charge for parcel conversion and there is a bridge to Patriot but uncertain of timeframe. Betty also assures town that contract may be terminated at any time. Kara will send agreement to Rebecca Krause-Hardie.

**3:03 p.m. Betty Nichols left meeting.**

**Art Schwenger:** Art returned from reviewing possible sites for hub with WG&E personnel. He reported that the space near Verizon boxes back from road is fine. May need ConCom approval. The pole locations are suitable for design. Site on Town Common unsuitable as it would interfere with historical aesthetic. The land near the fairgrounds may be another option. Land in and around transfer station not ideal. Also considered town-owned land on Ledges Road and Rt. 8A. Will discuss at future meeting, 11/14/17.

**Mail/Email:**

- Excess & Deficiency MTRSD
- Shared ACO emails
- Memo from BOH re: Recreational Marijuana
- Letter from Gov. Baker re: CCC
- Email from MassDOT re: Bridge Inspection Sadoga Rd.
- Email from Bill Gran re: Recreational Marijuana and proposed article for ATM
- Email from Brian DeVriese re: tree removal
- News article re: Heath Veterans Memorial Dedication
- Report on PAYT from Jan Ameen
- Town Nurse Monthly Report
- Email from Sheila to neighboring towns re: Efficiency and Regionalization Grant
- Tax Recap and related Forms
- Email from Hilma Sumner
- Notification from DEP re: water testing at Heath School
- Email from Phoebe Walker re: FRCOG workshops
- Email from Mary Sumner re: Heath School Library Books
- Notification of Free Cash Approval \$155,254

**Other Separate Documents for review and/or signatures:**

- 10/17/17 minutes
- TC Report
- Westfield Gas & Electric Agenda for today's meeting
- Community Software Consortium MOU DRAFT
- Clayton Davenport Trucking, Inc. Accepted Proposal for Rt. 8A bridge work
- FY19 Budget Planning Calendar
- Hard Copy CEC Landfill Sampling Analysis

- Municipal Demographic Data (updates from MMA)
- Western MA Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Agreement DRAFT
- Membership Application MA Higher Education Consortium (Purchasing Consortium)
- Mass Cultural Council Standard Contract FY18 Allocation
- Vacation Leave Request
- Treasury and Payroll Warrants
- MA DOT paperwork

**Other Business:**

- Sheila informed Robyn that the Town was working with Linda Dunlavy to apply for an Efficiency & Regionalization grant next week. Seeking letters of support from Hawley and Charlemont.
- Tax Rate: Set at \$21.81. Need to be in touch with Assessors and DOR to discuss reason for drop in EQV.
- Resignation: On a motion by Sheila Litchfield and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to accept Lisa Wexler's resignation from the School Building Transition Team with regrets.
- Planning Board: Requests use of Town Counsel for a PB/ZBA matter.
- MLP Board: BOS will invite Jan Car, Ned Wolf, and Art Schwenger to serve on MLP Board.
- **Signed documents:**

***On a motion by Sheila Litchfield, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to sign:***

- Clayton Davenport Trucking, Inc. Proposal for Rt. 8A bridge work
- Western MA Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Agreement DRAFT
- Membership Application MA Higher Education Consortium (Purchasing Consortium)
- Mass Cultural Council Standard Contract FY18 Allocation, \$4,400
- Vacation Leave Request
- Treasury and Payroll Warrants
- Chap. 90 Requests

**Next meeting scheduled November 14, 2017 at 7 p.m. at Community Hall (All Boards/Committees)**

There being no further business to come before the Board: ***On a motion by Sheila Litchfield, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:31 p.m.***

Respectfully presented,

Kara M. Leistyna  
Town Coordinator