

DRAFT

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting
May 18, 2021 at 11 am

Present: MLB: Art Schwenger, Anne Emmet, Dave Gordon, Bill Fontes, Ned Wolf, with
Jan Carr and Wired West Executive Director Jim Drawe visiting
MLP Manager, Sheila Litchfield

Art called the meeting to order at 11.

Jim Drawe put on the screen his spreadsheet for calculating a Wired West town’s income from broadband as customers begin to light up. Jim said that from Jan’s updated numbers he’s looking at 540 premises. Art said that could change. It includes 205 from Mohawk Estates where there are 30 who are year round. There was a consensus to use 205 for the number of seasonals. These 205 are assumed to spend at worst 3 months of the year in Heath. Jim took the number of adjusted premises to be 386 at full time equivalence. The number of pre signups is no longer relevant. According to the CRM the number who have signed up for service is 348. Jim entered the following numbers in the spreadsheet:

Effective paying premises	231
No. of municipal buildings charged	2
No. of phone subscriptions	189
Phone only	1
No. of 1 Gb subscriptions	256
No. of 25 meg “	92
Poles	1650
Miles of fiber	51

Sheila noted that we might acquire 7 or 8 additional poles from Charlemont. Jim used \$950, which is what Rowe is paying, for Heath’s insurance. The hut will be insured under the Town’s policy for buildings. The outside physical plant will be insured by Marine Midland with the town paying for the first bill and Wired West the next ones. The construction contract spells out whether the Town becomes responsible for insuring an FSA upon its completion or not until the end of construction when all FSA’s are complete. Heath must pay for bonds until the system is taken down.

Jim’s estimate for electricity is \$3000. which may be conservative. Rowe has been paying about \$200. a month.

In estimating ACH fees Jim assumed that 65% will pay by credit card.

Jim estimates the amount per year for accounting will be \$4500 to \$5000. An auditor has been found at an expected cost of \$15,000 per year.

The estimated maintenance cost per year for Heath is \$10,000.

The ISP cost is currently \$34.50 per customer. As the number of customers increases, the cost per customer decreases. West Springfield and North Adams are the sites of potential new ISP customers for WG&E.

The amount Heath will have to pay for backhaul is approximately \$14,000 a year.

Jim said that if the number of customers exceeds a certain number, we'll have to add 1 Gb. Sheila said that usage reports are reviewed at Wired West meetings. Jim said Wired West plans to form loops of towns such as Heath, Charlemont, and Rowe. Once a loop or ring is set up, Wired West can just feed the ring with more capacity to carry data. According to a recent contract between Wired West and WG&E, John Leary owes Wired West plans on when the rings get implemented.

Total Expenses: \$193 K where \$32K is covered by Wired West for such things as accounting, audit, legal, and backhaul.

Revenue: \$196 K from those receiving 1 Gb

38 K " " " 25 meg

45 K from phone customers

\$179 K

Wired West takes out 10%. This retainer is for such things as buying dark fiber to be used in "the rings" over a 20 year basis.

Jim displayed the Service Agreement which at the end has a simple formula for calculating the revenue that a town can expect. The revenue projected for Heath is \$55 K per year assuming that Beckett, Windsor, and Heath are fully built out.

Sheila asked for an estimate of Heath's income from broadband in FY21. Jim said it would be \$1854.13

In the 3rd Charlemont edge case Heath might acquire poles from Charlemont. Heath can provide service to a Charlemont customer.

Art in speaking of Wired West's new disconnect/connect policy noted that "cancel" is used instead of "suspend" or "temporarily halt" a subscription. In a cancelled condition the phone rate goes from \$24. To \$49. Also, "cancel" could suggest that equipment must be turned in. Jim said that the ONT is owned

by the town, and there should be no reason to incur the expense of turning it in. The wireless router is owned by WG&E. If a customer is leaving town, it should be mailed in.

Bill asked whether the number of cancellings can be limited. Jim said that's why they're charging for the whole month in which the customer cancels.

Anne said that you can use your cellphone through the internet. Jim acknowledged that is correct.

Jim said that if a customer has internet and VOIP service and is about to be cut off, he will send the MLP Manager a list of those about to be canceled for nonpayment. Dave asked if there is a policy for disconnection due to nonpayment. Jim said yes, and it's #5 in the Service Agreement. Dave suggested that it be written into the FAQ's on the Whip City Fiber website.

Jim suggested we be aware of to whom messages from sensors in the hub are going.

In processing invoices for electricity and propane Jim said that we can set up a billing agent. We should scan and send invoices to

28 Wilder Road
Cummington, MA 11026

Jim said that because of its frequency the 5G signal travels in a straight line with a range of a quarter mile. It works well only in urban areas.

Jim left the meeting temporarily at 12:45 pm.

Members read the minutes of the 11 am MLB meeting on May 11. Bill made a motion to approve the minutes with emendations. Dave seconded the motion. The motion passed. Members read the minutes of the 2 pm MLB meeting with WG&E and TriWire on May 11. Anne made a motion to approve with emendations the minutes. Dave seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Invoices:

Sheila said that once Heath Broadband is operational Osterman and National Grid are the only invoices to be forwarded to Wired West.

Art asked what 'out of scope' items would get paid for using the \$55K that Jim's spreadsheet projects as yearly revenue assuming Becket, Windsor, and Heath are fully built out.

Sheila said that she is watching to see if the Mohawk Estates walkthrough isn't charged.

Ned made a motion to approve the 7 invoices Sheila listed in her email of May 17th. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Bill made a motion that the invoices go to Sheila. Sheila will give us a complete monthly listing of the invoices. Dave seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Members discussed how there is Town business and MLB business. Invoices do not go through the Town Coordinator. The MLB could have its own P.O. Box. Jim said the money to cover the first bill can come from the Broadband Borrowing Account. Anne made a motion that Sheila go get a Heath P.O. Box. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Sheila will talk with the Accountant about the reimbursement.

The Town Coordinator says that the cost of an email address for the MLB would be \$20. /mo. We already have the address HeathBroadband@gmail.com. There was a consensus to stick with that.

Jim offered us the address MLP@WiredWest.net. Dave recommended that the mail go to Sheila. Sheila said that if anything comes for the whole Board, she will notify us. Bill made a motion that we accept the MLP@WiredWest.net address with forwarding to Sheila. Ned seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheila suggested that Anne might take a look at the Drop Policy with a focus on 2 things:

1. Is there enough flexibility in the policy to accommodate the type of judgement the MLB has brought to discussions of recent cases?
2. What is the best way to incorporate Wired West's recent disconnect/connect changes?

We need to have someone read the Drop Policy and do the edits sending the marked up version back to the Board.

Ned will follow up with Hilma on webpage changes to allow for posting of minutes, etc.

Sheila said that Bill, Jan, and she will talk with Paul Mark about the proposed 180' monopole and report back next week. She suggested that Art send an email to Doug Mason saying that the MLB may send him something about the pole. What the MLB sends will not necessarily be pro or con.

Art reminded us of the need to correct the phone charges in WG&E's May 13th marketing session. The next MLB meeting will be at 11 am on Tuesday, May 25.

Anne made a motion to adjourn at 1:46 pm. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

