

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath MLB
August 3, 2021 at 11 am

Present: MLB: Art Schwenger, Anne Emmet, Bill Fontes, David Gordan, and Ned Wolf
with Jan Carr visiting , and MLP Manager, Sheila Litchfield

Art called the meeting to order at 11.

Art informed members of a call from Tim Lively in Heath Center reporting that Northeast IT is there waiting for WG&E to let them in the hut.

Members read the minutes of the July 27th MLB meeting at 11. Anne moved that the minutes be approved. Ned seconded the motion. The motion passed with 3 ayes and Bill and David abstaining. Members read the minutes of the July 27th WG&E Construction meeting with TriWire and the MLB. Anne moved that the minutes be approved with corrections. Ned seconded the motion. The motion passed with 3 ayes and Bill and David abstaining.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila said that she has sent the April – June quarterly report to Bill Ennen.

She said that Wired West has informed us that Heath's share of the revenue surplus in FY21 is \$1.278.15. In FY22 all Heath customers will eventually be connected. The full potential income won't be realized until FY23.

Hilma has asked us to designate our Broadband Website Administrator in order that there be a person to whom she gives the password for making changes in the website.

An email has come from Verizon announcing in advance that Heath's pole attachment fees will be \$2,778.96. Sheila will send it to Wired West.

There is a CNST DocuSign.

8/2	CNST	\$508.12
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Anne moved to approve the above DocuSign. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The 072921 BB Finance tracking email on July 30 has attached important parts of the Financial Report, but is awaiting full information from Chris LaVertu.

There was a consensus to wait on our review of the Financial Report.

Art suggested ways of improving a situation where there is not enough time to do the MLP Manager's job because of the Manager's having to be in meetings.

1. At the 11 am MLB meetings on Tuesdays the MLP Manager's Report comes first. After the report the Manager leaves the meeting.
2. The MLB becomes more involved in customer service. Instead of there being an MLB member and Sheila or maybe just Sheila helping a customer whose interaction with Whip City customer service hasn't worked, Art suggests it be just the MLB.
3. The MLB provides answers to questions about broadband coming from the Select Board or the Finance Committee.

Bill suggested that the questions from town boards and committees be communicated during designated times to avoid our being on call throughout the work week. Art said that as Chair he can tell them they can call him. He will serve as a gatekeeper.

Customer Relations

Sheila said that getting the MLB involved in customer service requires getting familiar with the CRM and not relying on Jan for answers.

David said he sees involving the MLB as sort of the escalation of customer service. That could happen if neither the customer nor Sheila gets the response needed. We need to communicate to Whip City Fiber that if they're getting a call from an MLB member, it's serious.

There was a consensus that spending time during the 2 o'clock WG&E construction meeting on customer relations hasn't helped that much. Sheila said that since we're part of the Wired West network, they can advocate for us. If we don't receive the attention we need, we should bring in Jim Drawe.

Art recommended copying Joe Parda on any email, for example to Brian Sullivan.

Anne said she would be glad to keep a log of customer service issues. She recommended setting up a tier of those people to whom one escalates.

Art said that he thinks the MLB could remove some pressure from Sheila. He cautioned that we not interfere with her communication channels to folks at WG&E. If an MLB member is following up on complaints, Sheila needs to know.

Northeast IT and WG&E at Hut

David reported learning that WG&E is sending technicians to Heath's hut where Shawn Weaver of Northeast IT has installed equipment and is waiting for patch cables.

Members looked ahead to the situation when the construction is complete. Bill said that problems like those we've been having should wane. Sheila said that from her conversations with other MLP managers she expects a new layer of issues related to billing. Bill recalled our having discussed getting Crown Castle as an option. That would give us leverage especially with MBI.

Sheila said it will be important to send broadband monthly financial reports to the Select Board and the Finance Committee and to communicate to them our financial priorities such as a depreciation fund, reimbursing the \$200K to stabilization, and helping pay off the debt. Some financial priorities might be done without a town meeting.

Art listed what MLB members and Jan have been doing: David has taken on the third Charlemont edge case, Bill has been coordinating municipal drops, David and Bill have been involved in the redundancy issue and in hut management, Jan has been coordinating drops and the CRM, Anne has been involved in customer service and website review, and Ned with the Finance Committee. Art stressed the importance of following up on each of these as well as how the American Rescue Plan can help Heath's broadband finances.

Sheila expressed appreciation for the help so far. Committee members expressed gratitude for her willingness to continue as MLP Manager.

Sheila suggested we ask at the 2 o'clock meeting for a 'drop dead' date for turning a cold drop into a hot drop. We will need to set a date by which the decision has to be made to convert a cold drop to a hot drop or not. We also need to set a date after which the \$3K credit will go away. Anne said that these dates need to go on the webpage. She noted that the first page of Charlemont's website has a large type broadband message.

Cost of Drops

Jan reported that we have 23 cold drops whose total cost is estimated to be \$20,538. Five of those cold drops are \$1400 or more. The amount the town has spent on drops so far is \$358,004.

Sheila suggested that we require a person taking a cold drop to contribute something, say \$200, to it. Art recommended we have a concrete proposal for next week. Sheila said that she thinks

communicating by phone in the next week is important. Exchanging proposals is OK by the Open Meeting Law.

Jan reported some statistics coming from Chris LaVertu's report on Mohawk Estates. There are just 202 potential drops. Only 188 of those have electricity. From the CRM Jan sees that 85 have signed up. 5 of those are cold drops, and 3 have no electricity. That leaves 77 bona fide signups

Anne moved to adjourn at 12:39. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf.