

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath MLB
November 30, 2021 at 11

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

Art called the meeting to order at 11:01.

Members read the minutes of the November 23rd MLB meeting. Anne moved to approve the minutes with corrections. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Members read the minutes of the November 23rd WG&E construction meeting with the MLB. Bill moved to approve the minutes with corrections. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheila said that the November 23rd DocuSign HE-SERV- 10001 for Application 009 was revised because David found an item costing \$5,675.41 for which the Town was double billed. The revised amount is \$24,390.88.

11/23 HE-SERV-10001 for Application 009 WG&E \$24,390.88

David moved that the above invoice be approved. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheila reported a second DocuSign dated November 23rd.

11/23 HE CNST – 10001-18 WG&E \$14,562.01

She thinks that over a year ago we may have paid the \$8,080. for pole licensing inspection listed on this invoice.

David moved that we approve paying the \$14,562.01 in the above invoice contingent on Sheila's verifying that the \$8,080 was not previously paid. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Members discussed insurance. Sheila said that we must pay insurance in the first year after which it is WiredWest that pays. For the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Agency (MIIA) to provide coverage for FSA's 1, 2, and 3 Sheila reported that MIIA needs data that includes the miles of underground versus overhead and costs of electronic components in the hut. Bill said

that we cannot be held responsible for obtaining insurance coverage if we are not provided the data that MIIA needs.

Sheila said that the Town has been paying for 2 bonds required for the possible removal of wires, each costing about \$3000. per year. The payments have been in January.

The MIIA coverage will include the network, the hut itself, and the pole near the hut. Sheila has emailed Mitch Garrold of MIIA to ask whether the drops would be covered.

Sheila informed the MLB that she will be unable to attend the Dec. 7th WG&E construction meeting.

Members discussed the contract with Kinsley for maintaining the hut generator. The contract costs \$804. for one year which includes 2 maintenance calls. The telemetry is free.

David moved that Sheila go ahead and negotiate a contract with Kinsley for annual maintenance of the hut generator unless the Town agrees in the next week to a maintenance contract with Kinsley for all the Town's generators. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

David provided an update on redundancy. He said that WG&E is working on the design. Charlemont has led the effort to publish minimum requirements. In each geo-cluster there will be 2 backhaul providers. Crown Castle is the best choice for the North Geo-Cluster. The point of interconnect would be Rowe where the Crown Castle connection is located.

The sharing among the towns of costs could be based on the number of customers. David moved to inform the other towns of the Northern Geo-Cluster (Rowe, Charlemont, Colrain, and Leyden) that Heath is agreeable in principle to sharing the cost of a Crown Castle 10 Gbps circuit whose bandwidth will be shared among the towns. The cost could be shared by participating towns based primarily on the number of customers per town. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Bill suggested revisiting the cost sharing each year. Details remain to be worked out related to such questions as "How will seasonals be accounted for?" "Who does the billing?", "What is the length of the agreement?"

Anne wondered if Rowe's being the interconnect point would make it Rowe's asset.

David said that Rowe has agreed to pay for part of the connection with Crown Castle. There is a question about how to share the cost of a switch that would be part of the rest of the connection.

Bill asked whether a backhaul circuit can be used for overage. David said that the towns are pushing for such things as phone service having priority over streaming. Art suggested that Heath's large number of seasonals be acknowledged in the planning.

The number of PDU's from Chris LaVertu is 598. Jan said that 421 is the total who have signed up including cold drops. 107 is the number of signups out of a potential 212 in Mohawk Estates. The number of people in FSA's 1, 2, and 3 who have said 'No' is 25. David said that the number of activated drops is 273 according to the CRM. Jan asked why in the CRM the number of installs equals the number of signups.

Sheila reported that a customer on Long Hill Road has expressed concern to customer service. This can't be resolved until Betsy Loiko gets back.

The MLB wants to discuss with Bill Ennen on Dec. 7th how letters to particular legislators might help Heath's getting funding from the \$75 million designated in recent legislation to help Mass towns pay off broadband debt.

For the MLB/FinCom meeting on Dec. 1 it was agreed that Art would introduce the MLB and state our intention that the MLB be self-sustaining. David will speak on hut security and redundancy, Sheila on a summary of broadband finances, and Jim Drawe on his spreadsheet for estimating revenue. Between speakers there will be a pause for questions.

Members discussed the 'MLB intentions and considerations' attachment sent by Sheila on Nov. 29th. There was agreement to add 'that the network be reliable' to the initial list of bullets. David guesses that the redundancy plan being worked on may cost Heath \$20K - \$40K. That cost will come out of the construction budget. The project's lead time will be 5 - 6 months.

The MLB has been aware of concern on the FinCom about paying back the \$200K which the town voted at the 2020 ATM to transfer from stabilization into the Drop Subsidy Account to enable installations. There was no language in the warrant article about repayment.

The MLB's priority will be operations. We expect to pay operating expenses out of operating revenue. That does not include repayment of the \$200K or paying down the debt. It does include paying \$1K for Heath's membership in WiredWest. It won't be until sometime in FY23

that we will have had one year of full operations. If at that time we are sure we are self-sustaining, the Depreciation Reserve will come out of operating revenue.

The MLB discussed with Sheila the MLP Manager's salary. David asked whether Sheila is comfortable suggesting that the MLP Manager's salary will end up being less than \$13K. Sheila said that eventually there will be fewer meetings to attend, and she would expect the salary to be less than \$13K. David said that it is possible that in FY24 the operating revenue will cover the MLP Manager's salary, but that has not been approved by the MLB.

Bill moved that the meeting be adjourned at 1:25. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf