

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath MLB  
March 8, 2022 at 11  
virtual meeting

Present: MLB: Art Schwenger(Chair), David Gordon, Bill Fontes, and Ned Wolf  
with MLP Manager Sheila Litchfield

Absent: Anne Emmet

Art called the meeting to order at 11:04.

Members read the minutes of the March 1<sup>st</sup> MLB meeting. Bill moved to approve the minutes with corrections. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Members read the minutes of the March 1<sup>st</sup> conference call with Bill Ennen. Bill Fontes moved to approve the minutes. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Members read the minutes of the March 1<sup>st</sup> WG&E Installs meeting. Bill moved to approve the minutes with corrections. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Members read the minutes of the March 1<sup>st</sup> WG&E Construction meeting. Bill moved to approve the minutes with corrections. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Sheila reported having sent a tree trimming list to Wired West for Asplundh.

She said that Heath has received a \$214,682 check for drop subsidy. The check is now in the State Grant Account as indicated in the Broadband Financial Summary of March 7.

Sheila said that customer #817557 has signed up for federal aid for broadband and is approved.

**Action Taken**      *Bill moved that customer #817557 be entitled to the original subsidy of up to \$3000 due to the fact that the customer is approved for federal aid. The customer is responsible for the \$99 installation fee. Previous issues have been resolved. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Bill will notify customer #817557 of the action taken.

Sheila said that an invoice for annual hut monitoring has already arrived. It is for \$220, and she has sent it to Wired West.

Bill and Sheila have met with the people at the Bellor Road cannabis growing business. They want to start with a drop to each of the 4 trailers and see whether the WiFi signal is sufficient to reach the hoop house and the barn.

In listing the project's material needs the MLB agreed on enough fiber for 10 drops. The question of whether a PON card is needed will be asked at the afternoon meetings. Art asked whether we might sell some of our leftover fiber for the project. Bill said that leftover fiber could most likely be used for the stretch from pole #5 on Sadoga Road to the pole on Bellor Road.

Sheila said that the CRM shows that 11 Bellor Road has signed up for a small business account but that no other site nearby has signed up. We will encourage Bellor Road people working on the project to sign the other sites up.

To expedite the sending of invoices Sheila requested MLB prior approval for paying the following:

\$27.35	from Verizon	pole licensing fee
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\$334.06	from National Grid	licensing fee due to having a split cabinet on the pole
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We are waiting to receive the invoices which may through Laura Blascak, an Administrative Assistant at WG&E.

**Action Taken**      *Bill moved to approve payment of the 2 above pole application fees of \$27.35 and \$334.06 . David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Sheila said that \$3,430 appears twice as an expense in the Accountant's Expense Report. Bur Arlene Paton of WG&E says that they received just one payment. The Accountant will be contacted.

#### Heath Herald Article

Members praised Sheila's article for the 'Heath Herald'. There was a consensus to add to the next to final paragraph the sentence, "In addition, the \$250 incentive will be offered for cold drops that signed up after September 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 and convert to active service prior to June 30, 2022."

Art said that while the MLB welcomes questions it is important that the article end with “please contact Whip City Fiber/Wired West Customer Service (1 – 833 – 991 – 9378) for subscription, equipment, or account items.”

Those cold drops that signed up before September 15 are eligible for \$500. David offered to clarify the various scenarios related to cold drops and thereby assist WG&E’s Customer Service in phone conversations with people in Heath.

Sheila said that the generator test run for the week of March 1 was successful.

She encouraged the writing of letters to legislators in support of aid in making Broadband loan payments. Letters and phone calls to legislators from all committees boost the number of contacts, an important number for legislators.

### Resiliency Options

David said that we need to decide which switch to use in the Heath hut so WG&E can finish their plan and send it to Colrain for the grant application. He said that 4 towns favor scenario 2a where there is no dual controller card option. In his email ‘Update on Redundancy project – important decision for the next MLB meeting’ of March 3 (see Appendix 1) he compares the various scenarios. In his email ‘Updated comparison chart for two resiliency scenarios’ of March 8 (see Appendix 2) David compares scenario 2a with scenario 4 which has a dual controller. The difference in the initial cost of the 2 scenarios is \$17K - \$18K. This amount could be covered by the grant. The difference in annual maintenance is \$3213, and the difference in depreciation is \$1781 for a total of \$4994 annually. The towns choosing scenario 2a would want to share the cost of a spare switch.

David pointed out that there are other risks besides switch failure. He said that he is comfortable with scenario 2a due to saving \$5K /yr.

Bill said that with the dual control switch there would be less time out of service in case of failure. The repair would be cheaper because only the controller and not the entire switch would be replaced.

Sheila asked whether one can upgrade to a dual control switch. David said that would likely require a whole new switch and reprogramming.

Art and Ned questioned whether the dual control switch truly eliminates a single point of failure. Ned agreed with David's sense that it is to Heath's advantage to be in sync with the other 4 towns. Art noted that if we went with scenario 4 we would not be sharing the cost of a replacement switch.

David said that for the next 2 years MBI is our backup. Their switch will stay there. If our mesh switch fails during the next 2 years, we have a backup switch. The fact that the hut is climate-controlled improves the longevity of electronic components.

Bill and Sheila said that having encouraged signing up for Ooma phone service they feel a responsibility to offer good service and are concerned about the 6 to 12 hour time needed to install a new switch in case of switch failure in scenario 2a. Sheila mentioned the likely importance to local businesses of having good phone service.

David said that Mike Slowinski of Colrain is writing the grant so that each town will have 2 switches.

**Action Taken**     *David moved that Heath go with scenario 2a, which has no dual controller and is described in Appendix 2. Ned seconded the motion. The motion passed with 3 ayes and 1 nay.*

Sheila said that Cebula has asked her for the 4 digit codes for Art, Bill, and David. The codes are needed in making access cards. Art gave Sheila his number. Bill and David will get theirs to Sheila.

Sheila will send members an updated spreadsheet for the Depreciation Reserve.

Bill moved that the meeting be adjourned at 1:05. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

Appendix 1

## Update on Redundancy project - important decision for the next MLB meeting

Thu, Mar 3, 2022 9:10 pm

David Gordon (djgordon@gmail.com) To: you + 4 more [Details](#)

Please review this information. **It is important that the Heath MLB make a decision in our next meeting (3/8/22) on which Nokia switch to choose so that WGE can finalize a proposal.** This proposal is needed for the five town application for the CCC municipal fiber grant to cover capital costs.

I'm happy to try to respond to questions individually, and we should discuss as a group at the MLP meeting.

Here is what has happened since our last MLB meeting:

- Yesterday WGE sent quotes from Nokia for two network scenarios (dual controller model and single controller model) and three maintenance plans for each scenario.
- Today WGE forwarded quotes from Nokia for professional services for designing and implementing the networks. (same for each scenario)
- The Northern Ring towns met tonight (3/3/22) to discuss options and next steps.
- WGE is waiting for the towns to choose a scenario before WGE completes their proposal for engineering work. Colrain is anxiously waiting for this proposal to put together the CCC municipal fiber grant application. Opening date for grant application is 3/15/22.

**The other four towns in the northern ring have decided on Scenario 2a, which is the less expensive option.** It uses a Nokia 7250 IXR-e BIG network switch, which does not support dual controllers. Each town has concluded that the annual recurring cost of maintenance for the dual controller model is unjustifiable.

The group is suggesting that instead we request a second 7250 switch for each town in the grant proposal. This would reduce the recovery time if a switch failed and would be paid for in the up-front cost by the grant, if approved. We do not pay annual maintenance on spare switches so we save money there. If we don't get full funding from the grant, we could opt for perhaps just one spare 7250 to be shared by the towns.

I asked Chris LaVertu if six hours seemed like a reasonable best case scenario for time to replace a failed switch with an available spare. He indicated that six hours could be tight, but they will try to get a better estimate by next week.

**Given the low probability of switch failure, the significantly more annual recurring cost for maintenance, insurance, and depreciation reserve of the dual controller model, and the desire to keep operating costs as low as possible to help with debt service, I am comfortable recommending that we go with the lower cost option.**

I've attached the six quotes for equipment from Nokia. I've also attached two proposals for Nokia professional services. One will be split by 17 towns. The other by the five Northern Ring towns. We do not yet have a proposal from WGE for their service, only a preliminary estimate.

Here is a quick summary of the costs of the two scenarios with three different maintenance plans. The three plans basically differ in the turnaround time for replacement equipment. 45 days, 10 days or next day, as indicated. (Remember, we will have at least one shared spare available.)

<b>Scenario 2a</b>	<b>Heath Cost</b>
7250 IXR-e BIG	\$23,996
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/RFR/SSP 1 YR - 45 day replacement	\$2,030
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/RFE/SSP 1 YR - 10 day replacement	\$2,394
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/AE/SSP 1 YR - next day replacement	\$2,576
<b>Scenario 4</b>	
7250 IXR-R4 (dual controllers)	\$41,801
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/RFR/SSP 1 YR	\$4,479
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/RFE/SSP 1 YR	\$5,352
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/AE/SSP 1 YR	\$5,789
<b>Cost difference</b>	
Switch	\$17,805
Annual maintenance RFR - 45 day	\$2,449
Annual maintenance RFE - 10 day	\$2,958
Annual maintenance AE - next day	\$3,213

Engineering Professional Services (Nokia and WGE preliminary estimate) \$22,000

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## Appendix 2

**David Gordon** (djgordon@gmail.com) To: you + 4 more [Details](#)

Here is an updated chart showing initial cost of switch, maintenance options, and difference in annual cost of the two options. I have added in the annual depreciation reserve incurred by each switch.

<b>Scenario 2a</b>	<b>Heath Cost</b>
7250 IXR-e BIG	\$23,996
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/RFR/SSP 1 YR - 45 day replacement	\$2,030
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/RFE/SSP 1 YR - 10 day replacement	\$2,394
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/AE/SSP 1 YR - next day replacement	\$2,576
Dep reserve	\$2,400
<b>Annual cost (next day option)</b>	<b>\$4,976</b>
<b>Scenario 4</b>	
7250 IXR-R4 (dual controllers)	\$41,801
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/RFR/SSP 1 YR	\$4,479
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/RFE/SSP 1 YR	\$5,352
Maintenance 7x24 RTS/AE/SSP 1 YR	\$5,789
Dep reserve	\$4,180
<b>Annual cost (next day option)</b>	<b>\$9,969</b>
<b>Cost difference</b>	
Switch	\$17,805
Annual maintenance RFR - 45 day	\$2,449
Annual maintenance RFE - 10 day	\$2,958
Annual maintenance AE - next day	\$3,213
Dep reserve	\$1,781
<b>Annual cost difference (next day option)</b>	<b>\$4,994</b>

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