

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting  
July 26, 2022 at 11  
Virtual meeting

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

Absent: Art Schwenger, Anne Emmet

Members read the minutes of the July 12<sup>th</sup> MLB meeting. Ned reported these edits he received from Art: make the font uniform, in paragraph 3 replace 'pond card' with 'PON card', and in paragraph 4 replace 'Betty' with 'Betsy'. Bill moved that the minutes be approved with corrections. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. Members read the minutes of the July 12<sup>th</sup> WG&E installs meeting. Bill moved that the minutes be approved. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Members read the minutes of the July 19<sup>th</sup> WG&E installs meeting. Ned reported an edit from Art to change the heading from 'Minutes of the WG&E Installs Meeting with the Heath MLB' to 'Minutes of the WG&E Installs Meeting'. Sheila also had an edit: insert as the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph "The customer intended to signup for an active drop and is eligible for the full subsidy". Bill moved that the minutes be approved with edits. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

David asked Bill to report on his speed test of WiFi in the Community Hall. Bill said that he plugged into the switch close to where the fiber enters the building and got a download speed of 70 – 80 mps and an upload speed of 6 -7 mps, speeds so slow as to point to a problem. On Saturday, July 23 Claire and Tom couldn't get onto the internet from the Community Hall. Bill said that if this problem has not occurred at Heath's other Muni network sites, then it must be a Northeast IT problem.

David asked Bill to write up a summary of what he did and send it to Hilma with a request that Hilma ask Northeast IT for another ticket.

Sheila reported receiving Verizon invoice number 1558 for \$2777.53. It is for pole licensing fees 6 months in advance. She has sent the invoice to Wired West. We will also be receiving an invoice for attachment fees from National Grid. Bill Ennen has said that National Grid will not be billing for any previous years attachment fees.

Sheila said that WG&E will hold an August 31 meeting of MLP managers at which there may be better information about the use of ATF-S stamper boxes and how that may relate to CAF II funding.

Sheila said that at their meeting the night of July 20<sup>th</sup> the Wired West Board voted to discontinue withholding retainage from the excess revenue distributions of the member towns. The retainage for FY21 and FY22 will be included with the FY22 payment of excess revenue. The total amount of excess revenue plus retainage for Heath is expected to be \$86,916.74. Heath's excess revenue as reported on the spreadsheet that Art forwarded on July 4<sup>th</sup> is \$78,225.07. Sheila said that Heath's retainage for FY21 was \$1,421.17, and FY22 retainage is \$7,270.50 bringing the total to \$86,916.74.

Sheila said that Heath's projected excess revenue for FY23 is \$131,819.92.

Sheila said that the revised Serv-13 DocuSign is in the amount of \$20,085.50. The invoice includes an item that WG&E will bill the customer for. We will get reimbursed through Wired West. David said he's OK with Heath's paying the invoice. Members agreed that tracking the payment is like tracking the payment of a customer whose bill exceeds the subsidy.

**Action Taken**     *Bill moved to approve the Serv-13 DocuSign in the amount of \$20,085.50 with Sheila to determine what account it comes from. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Sheila said that the Accountant is correcting transferring of \$4,035 mistakenly from the Broadband Drop Subsidy account instead of from the Broadband Dropline account Article 9 as specified in ATM Warrant Article 12.

The 2 most recent payments from the state are not yet appearing in the record of town accounts as they should. The \$214K and the \$2K should go into the Broadband State Grant Account instead of in a revenue account. There is a third amount from the state, \$22K in retainage which Kris has received but which is not yet reported by the Accountant.

The MLB expects questions such as "How much will the remaining installations cost?", "When can we start replenishing stabilization with \$200K?", and "When can surplus revenue be used to help with loan payments?" There was a consensus to be consistent with our priorities list. The depreciation reserve is the first on the list. David said he will look at the installations left and come up with a conservative estimate of how much can go to pay off the \$200K.

Bill asked whether we should consider having a fund for unexpected expenses. David reminded MLB members about the reserve expense fund for all towns that Wired West is holding which should be sufficient.

Sheila recommended that we ask at the 1:30 meeting whether we can expect additional engineering and construction costs.

David expressed surprise that ITG hasn't yet asked for retainage. We will ask Chris at 1:30 when the sign-off of construction is complete.

Sheila said that next Tuesday August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9 am at the hut there will be a Jamrog representative to assess a preventive maintenance program for the hub HVAC.

Sheila said that the July 26<sup>th</sup> generator test run was successful, and the generator is back on standby.

### A Second Backhaul

On July 25<sup>th</sup> David sent us an email in which we learned that the draft of the Appendix for the sharing among the Northern Cluster towns of a second Verizon backhaul has been circulated among the representatives of the Northern Cluster towns. He listed the following points:

- We would sign now, but would not start sharing the recurring monthly cost until February 2024.
- We would agree to use the CCC grant money to pay initial startup costs. (Not sure, yet, if Leyden will agree to this.)
- Estimated recurring monthly costs for Heath (for a minimum of 2 Gbps service) are:
  - Start of contract until February 2024 (Charlemont, Rowe only): \$0 / month
  - February, 2024 until September, 2024 (add Heath): \$647 / month
  - September, 2024 until July, 2025 (add Colrain): \$396 / month
  - After July, 2025 (if Leyden joins): \$356 / month

David asked MLB members whether we agree with this approach.

Sheila and MLB members asked the following questions:

- Is the grant written in such a way that Leyden might not share startup costs?
- Can the grant be used to cover a lawyer's fee?
- Can some of that money be used for Leyden's startup costs?
- How will finances of the grant be tracked?

David said he would inform others of our interest in answers to the above questions. He noted that we would pay for start costs out of our construction cost if funds are not available from the CCC grant.

Colrain has asked for signed copies of the agreement. David will send copies to Sheila. The Heath MLB gave David the provisional go-ahead for the approach he describes in his email of July 25.

The speed at which the process moves matters most to Charlemont and Rowe because their MBI contract ends first. David will bring the Appendix-like document back to go to the Heath Select Board for signatures.

Bill said that the WG&E invoice written to us for the installation of a cabinet on Sadoga Road and other work at the cannabis farm will be for approximately \$3600. Sheila said that we will get reimbursed through Wired West. David said that it would be cleaner for us if WG&E could bill it through the customer. We will try at 1:30 to learn more about the method of billing.

Sheila asked Ned whether the FinCom is aware of a joint Select Board/MLB/FinCom meeting for August 30<sup>th</sup>. Ned said that he is aware of it and thinks the other FinCom members are also aware of it but will check.

In anticipating the 1:30 meeting there was agreement that Whip City Fiber has been making every reasonable effort to contact remaining potential subscribers for installations. We will try to get a better sense of the number of cold drops remaining, more clarity about how Serv-13 money comes back to Heath, and a sense of when to expect a bill from ITG for retainage.

Bill moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:29. Ned seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

