

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting
February 14, 2023 at 11
Virtual meeting

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

Art called the meeting to order at 11.

Members read the minutes of the February 7th MLB meeting. Anne moved that the minutes be approved with corrections. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila said she is still waiting for comments from WCF on the draft of a protocol for managing problems with the muni-network. The network location ID and information on how to close out a ticket are still needed. She emailed a reminder Chris and Brian about this the morning of February 14th.

We are also awaiting the list of houses in Heath's CAF II area that are close enough to the broadband cable but have yet to be installed. We are also waiting for a cost estimate for new a new port at the hub.

Sheila referred to an email of Feb. 11th, which she forwarded to the MLB, in which Brian Sullivan of WCF informs Jim Drawe of Asplundh's work scheduled for the week of February 13th in Heath. The work will be on Taylor Road trimming trees identified by Brian as a problem for the fiber. Asplundh provided the following cost estimate for remaining work on our list on Taylor Brook Rd.

Estimated 40 -45 Hours + Police Detail + Project Management = \$14,328.60

Sheila has more information about the use of Stamper boxes to measure the internet speeds in the fiber outside Heath houses with broadband installations to insure minimum standards are met per CAFII requirements. Whenever the quarterly testing shows speeds below expectations, there is a reduction in the CAF II funding that Heath receives until WDF corrects the problem. Then Heath can receive the percent of funding that was held back.

MLB members spoke of the need when estimating receipts of CAF II funds in our cash flow projection to consider a range of amounts due to the unpredictability of when funds can be held back. The “notes” included with our cash flow projection will call attention to this.

Humidity Sensor

Sheila said that Joe Cibula has said that the humidity set points are 5% and 70%. We have not been informed whether the December 13th alarm was responding to a level below 5% or above 70%. These values as well as the critical temperature levels of 40 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit were agreed to in the design process. David suggested that we ask WCF tech people whether these parameters are acceptable.

Sheila said that there has not been an installation since the drop on January 23.

Sheila said she has sent the letter approved by the MLB on February 7th to Carolyn Kirk.

David asked Art whether he has given Linda Dunlavy a call about our interest in learning as soon as possible when MBI has awarded the ISP contract due to the impact on the RRR Project. Art said he would make that call.

She will add a note to the cash flow projection about our not yet knowing whether the CAF II funds have to go through the process of free cash certification.

Review of MLP Cash Flow Projection Sheet

Sheila explained that the \$37,013 for Broadband Borrowing for FY 23 assumes there has been a transfer of \$35,743 to Depreciation Reserve and payment of SERV- 16.

The \$13,327 in the State Broadband Grant Construction Account for FY 23 assumes that \$100K has been transferred to a Town account from which it can be spent according to Select Board actions.

The Total Assets Line 8, which now has \$57,889, will be boosted by \$35,743 for the Depreciation Reserve.

On Line 24, the Fund Reserve/Operating Account, we show \$50K for next year. The MLB can decide each year whether to move funds to this line. \$50K is our budgeted annual target for reserves, but if we don't have \$50K, we can vote to send another amount.

The \$87,059 for Account 50-4-655-000 is Revenue from Wired West. It is for FY 22 and has been received in FY 23. Sheila will write to the Town Accountant asking for Fund 50 (Broadband Revenue) reports. We anticipate seeing Fund 50s appear in the Town Accountant's Expense Reports.

Sharing Backhauls

David said that we have received an updated agreement with Verizon and still do not know when MBI will award the ISP contract.. We agreed that we would go with 3 backhauls with Heath paying nothing for Verizon. There is a \$12K startup cost for Verizon's backhaul line to North Adams. Since then it's been determined that the \$12K is covered by the CCC grant so Charlemont is going ahead to schedule Verizon work. Charlemont and Rowe would go with Verizon no matter what MBI might offer. We are considering going with 2 backhauls.

We could authorize the signing of the agreement with Verizon on February 21st. It is not urgent that the Select Board sign it. Both the Select Board and the MLP Manager have to sign it sometime.

Meeting with Select Board February 21st

Art will address the MLP Budget.

Sheila will address the MLP Financial Update to the Cash Flow Worksheet.

The discussion of MLP operations will include an update on the project status and future procedural change involving DocuSigns; Sheila will address this.

David will provide an update on the RRR project and the upcoming request for Select Board signature on the Verizon agreement.

Ned will announce that CAF II funds that Heath is expected to receive must be used for Broadband and can be used not just for debt service but to help pay off the principal. This information comes from Rich Carnall who administers CAF II for WCF. There is a word of caution about the timing. We do not yet know whether CAF II funds first need to go through the process of free cash certification.

Bill moved that the meeting be adjourned at 1:05. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous. WCF is following up on that question.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

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