

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath Select Board, Finance Committee, and MLB  
February 21, 2023 at 6:38 pm  
18 Jacobs Road, Cafeteria

Select Board: Robyn Provost-Carlson (Chair), Brian DeVriese, and Sue Lively

Town Coordinator: Hilma Sumner

Finance Committee: Tom Lively (Chair), Ned Wolf, Alice Wozniak, Will Emmet,  
and Bob McGahan

MLP Manager: Sheila Litchfield

MLB: Art Schwenger (Chair), Anne Emmet, David Gordon, Bill Fontes, and Ned Wolf

Art called the MLB meeting to order at 6:39

Art recommended level funding for the MLB Budget for FY 24 as voted by the MLB.

Alice Wozniak of the FinCom asked whether the construction is done. Sheila said that network construction is complete. She said that we have about 30 who have signed up for broadband but who haven't yet set an appointment for an installation. We have June 30<sup>th</sup> as incentive date. Not getting installed by June 30<sup>th</sup> means not receiving any drop credit.

Alice recalled our saying that we expected the hours of the MLP Manager would decrease. Art said that that's what probably will happen. We cannot predict what the time demands on the MLP Manager will be. There may be considerable time in closing out grants. We would rather let unused funds be returned to the town than to go back to the town for more funds later.

Sheila explained the entries in the Cash Flow Projection sheet which she had emailed to Town Coordinator Hilma Sumner and FinCom Chair Tom Lively on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Hilma recommended \$2000 instead of \$600 for a legal review of the Wired West agreement with Heath if such a review is warranted.

Will Emmet of the FinCom asked whether there is any kind of insurance for an event like a lightning strike? Sheila said that would be a shared expense for Wired West.

Sheila reviewed and provided a copy of projected WiredWest expenses as of February 2023 which indicated that Heath's expenses will be \$271,453 and gross income will be \$390,984.

David reported on the progress of the Redundancy Resiliency Reliability Project. He said that the maintenance of new equipment such as the Nokia switch mentioned on line 18 of the Cash Flow Projection sheet will be covered for the first 3 years by the CCC grant.

David mentioned the cost sharing appendix for Verizon backhaul which the MLB had recommended in their meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup> that the MLP Manager and the Select Board sign.

Alice asked about the contract with Wired West. David said that recently WiredWest and Whip City Fiber agreed to a 2 year contract with Wired West sending out an RFP for an ISP. Alice asked whether the rates for phone and internet are the same? David said internet expenses have gone up due to the shortened contract period between WCF and WiredWest. Phone costs remain the same.

Ned reported that the CAF II payments which Sheila had mentioned in presenting the cash flow projection sheet must be used for broadband costs. The welcome news is that they can be used to help pay both the interest and principal of the broadband loan. There is a note of caution regarding the timing. The CAF II funds may have to go through the free cash certification process which could delay our access to the funds until early in 2025.

There was some discussion as to whether or not the \$100K, which the MLB recommended on September 19, 2022 to the Select Board be transferred from an MLB account to a town account, has to be certified as though it were free cash. Alice said that during the meeting she received an email from the Town Accountant asserting that the \$100K must go back into stabilization. There was agreement that we need clarity on whether the \$100K needs to go through the free cash certification process.

There was some discussion of how best to cope with a scheduled outage such as Wired West had announced by email for the morning of Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup> between 12:00 – 6:00 am due to Local Linx having to perform maintenance. Brian said that there should be a designated site in town for dealing with possible emergencies during the crisis. MLB members and David in particular said they see the RRR Project as a means of protecting broadband customers against outages. How best to be prepared for an outage during the time before the completion of the RRR Project is a matter for further discussion.

Anne made a motion that the MLB meeting be adjourned at 7:44. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted, Ned Wolf

