

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting  
February 28, 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 11:00.

Members read the minutes of the February 21<sup>st</sup> MLB meeting. Anne moved that the minutes with corrections be approved. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. Members read the minutes of the February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Heath Select Board, Finance Committee, and MLB. Anne moved that the minutes with corrections be approved. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila said that the scheduled transfer to a new pole at 199 South Road has yet to take place.

She will prepare a 2022 report on Heath Broadband for the Heath Annual Report. Hilma says the report is due March 17<sup>th</sup>.

The customer at 15 Apache Drive has requested an install appointment. We don't yet know whether the necessary electrical work has been done. Per WCF request Sheila has sent an email to the customer.

Sheila said that police chief John McDonough has told her that he hasn't yet been contacted by Asplundh. She and John have agreed to keep each other informed about any planned or actual tree work by Asplundh in Heath.

Sheila said that she has asked Chris that DocuSigns please be sent to our email address. Members asked why the changes in billing as reported by Chris seem to have some items going to Heath and others going to WiredWest. We will ask for an explanation at the 1:30 meeting.

Sheila said that on March 1<sup>st</sup> she would bring the cost sharing appendix for Verizon backhaul to Hilma so that the Select Board can sign it at their March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Sheila said that she received on February 21<sup>st</sup> an email from Michael Baldino in which he says that Carolyn Kirk has shared with him the recent letter regarding the Redundancy, Reliability, and Resiliency Project. He says that Local Linx should work with the towns on binding pricing.

David said he would like to know if John Leary has followed up by saying that we need new pricing. David said he may learn more about that at a meeting the afternoon of February 28<sup>th</sup> when Whip City Fiber will present the Low Level Design. MLB members agreed that MBI should be able to honor the better price regardless of who is awarded the contract.

Sheila suggested that David call Michael Baldino. Art said he thinks that's a good idea. David said he would call Michael Baldino and say that we need more information than MBI has provided so far. He will say that we are resolved to go with Crown Castle and Verizon and we might include MBI but we need to know the price.

#### Partnership Managers Meeting on February 22

Sheila said that the number of Heath clients in the Affordable Connectivity Program is 21.

There was a discussion of terminations. For Heath during the months Oct – Dec of 2022 there were 17 terminations, or 5.04% which was not the highest rate among the towns but was among the highest.

Sheila said that Betsy Loiko has sent a more detailed report. It includes a termination list with 53 names. 33 customers were lost due either to nonpayment or a decision to discontinue. Bill asked whether we know how many paid the bill after actually being cut off. It's a question to ask at the 1:30 installs meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Sheila said that we have received 3 addresses from Rich Carnall of homes that are within Heath's CAF II area but are not homes to which the network has been built. We can ask Alice whether there is a dwelling at any of the addresses 59 Shawnee, 61 Shawnee, or 65 Shawnee. They aren't addresses we have to build to if the addresses has changed or if there are no structures. Bill will check out the sites.

Sheila asked at the Monthly Partnership Meeting if it has been determined whether or not CAF II funds have to go through the free cash certification process before being used. She was told that it is still undetermined.

There was discussion about whether or not there is a backup for the generator transfer switch.

Bill said there should be a way to switch manually to the generator. We will add this to our questions for the 1:30 meeting.

Sheila said that the generator test on February 28 was OK.

The number of customer support calls from Heath in 2022 was 285. There were 25 in January of 2023. These are referred to as 'trouble calls'. David said he would like to know how many of the 285 calls were for technical assistance. We will ask at the 1:30 meeting.

#### Review of the Joint Select Board, FinCom, MLB Meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup>

Sheila said that there was interest in the MLP Manager's salary among members of the Select Board and the Finance Committee. The MLP Manager's salary is a line item in Article 3. At some future time we could decide that this person won't be salaried but will instead receive a stipend, however, we're not there yet.

David reminded everyone that the town can use the money transferred to the town in any way necessary.

Anne said that if we want the \$14,066 for the MLP Manager's salary to come out of our budget, we need to find a way to pay the salary that won't show up on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. David said that the \$38,322 that we're projected to have at the end of FY 23 will likely be transferred to the town at the end of FY 23. Anne suggested that there would be sufficient funds there to cover Sheila's salary in FY 24.

David suggested that we think about ways in which we could reduce the number of hours of the MLP Manager job such as possibly meeting every other week. If we can find other ways to reduce the hours, we can possibly return to the Select Board and suggest reducing the MLP Manager's salary.

Sheila said that she did not bring up the draft protocol for Muni-network problems with the Select Board because WCF hasn't yet responded

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David said he would let us know how the afternoon meeting with John Leary and the representatives from towns involved in the RRR project goes.

Art said he will post MLB meetings for March 7<sup>th</sup>, March 21<sup>st</sup>, and March 28<sup>th</sup> when we may also have a 1:30 installs meeting with WCF. We will ask WCF whether March 21<sup>st</sup> instead of March 28<sup>th</sup> would work for them.

List of Items for the 1:30 Installs Meeting with WCF.

1. The draft protocol from Heath on the management of Muni network problems needs a statement from WCF giving the actions WCF will do to closeout a ticket or other actions with NEIT.
2. We are still waiting for a cost estimate for a new port in the hub.
3. Regarding Chris' statement about changes in billing, we would like to understand better why some items will go to Heath and others will go to WiredWest.
4. At the monthly partnership meeting there was information about "trouble calls". Are these calls to tech support only?
5. Also, at the monthly partnership meeting there was a town that mentioned a problem with their generator transfer switch; we wonder how long the battery backup would work in lieu of the generator kicking in . Do you suggest we work with Kinsley to have a supply of generator transfer switches readily available?
6. This relates to meeting frequency. If WCF can be more timely responding to questions sent by the Heath MLP Manager, then we could consider ending monthly meetings in March.
7. We would like to propose that the March meeting with WCF be moved to March 21<sup>st</sup> from the 28<sup>th</sup>, if that works for WCF?

Anne moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:55. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf