

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting

April 18, 2023 at 11

Virtual meeting

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

Art called the meeting to order at 11:02.

Members read the minutes of the April 4th MLB meeting. Bill moved that the minutes be approved with the following corrections:

p. 1 under 'Manager's Report' replace the last sentence of paragraph 4 with "Customers eligible for a subsidy must schedule by June 30th to receive a subsidy."

p. 2 replace paragraph 8 with "Money transferred from the MLP to the Town will be available the following fiscal year."

p. 3 replace paragraph 3 with "David said that other than the Depreciation Reserve all other transfers are comingled with Town funds in separate accounts tracked by the Accountant. The Depreciation Reserve is a separate bank account."

p. 3 replace the second sentence of paragraph 5 with "Jim recommended adding to the \$14,000 for the MLP Manager's salary 20% for benefits to get \$16,800."

Sheila has been working with the Accountant on the correct amount to be added to the \$14,000. From her pay stubs she thinks it should be closer to 13% than 20%.

p. 4 replace paragraph 2 with "David reported that the RRR Project is on time and on budget according to John Leary."

David seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila said that our office space at 18 Jacobs Road needs a phone. Hilma has said that there is a plan to get different phone service for all of the building.

Sheila asked Bill to report on his proposal for getting 3 sites on Shawnee to qualify for CAFII funding. Bill said he proposes putting an MST on the last pole which is at 69. If the properties at 63 and 67 want service they would fund their own underground conduit along the road to their home. The house opposite the last pole could receive an aerial drop.

Bill asked Rich Carnall whether the 3 sites would qualify for CAFII funding. Bill said that Rich has replied 'yes' in writing. The CAFII amount we would receive for each property would be \$4500.

Sheila said that Brian Sullivan has said that the next step is for us to accept a quote. Whip City Fiber's plan to bring broadband access to 63, 67, and 69 Shawnee has an estimate of \$4513.49. David suggested that we get an updated quote. Sheila said that she would ask at the 1:30 meeting for a quote for Bill's proposal.

Sheila reminded us that SERV-17, which has a refund of \$26,703.76, includes a charge of \$209.05 for renting the POD. She has sent in \$209.05 for payment.

David recommended we check previous invoices before asking whether we've been charged for rent beyond the date that we were told would mark the end of our rental obligation.

At the 1:30 meeting we will ask why WCF appears to use so many more drop cables than customers. We can also ask about two separate increases in the cost of installations, one increase being in the percent for the project manager.

Sheila said she would draft a letter to send to the Select Board accompanying the muni network trouble shooting protocol. The protocol has come back from WCF with no changes. David said it is a protocol we put together for the Town to use.

Sheila listed 3 changes she will make in the Cash Flow sheet:

1. Include when the check arrives the refund of \$26,703.76 mentioned above;
2. Remove any lines indicating what we're sending to the Town;
3. Make any needed FICA, Medicare change.

Sheila said she has received from Alina Ashlaban an edited On-Boarding Policy. Jim Drawe is OK with it. Sheila is OK with signing it.

David and Bill asked for more information about 'temporary drops.' Bill will ask at the 1:30 meeting.

Sheila said that we received a quote from Kinsley for \$336.07 to remove and replace a battery for the hub's generator. This is the amount that David and Ned heard quoted by the Kinsley technician who last visited the hut for routine maintenance. David recommended that Sheila provide the needed signature.

Sheila said that Jim Drawe has requested our scoring on the 2 ISP/NO RFPs sent to WiredWest. One is from Whip City Fiber (WCF) and one is from the South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHELD). Members discussed the items to be scored; for the actual scoring see Appendix 1 of these minutes.

David said that we would depend on Shutesbury and Leverett to ask how the transition went and ask about the quality of their customer service.

David noted that while Colrain is locked in for 10 years at an internet rate a couple dollars less than Heath's, Heath does not appear to qualify for such a contract; no contract longer than 3 years is offered.

Art said that he plans to attend the WiredWest meeting tomorrow April 19th.

Sheila reported on her conversation with the Accountant. The MLP Manager remains a town employee having an MLP line item. The MLP Manager's pay check still comes from the Town.

David said that we've already transferred \$100K to the Town and expect to transfer another \$30K - \$65K by June 30th. It's looking like we will return approximately \$160K to the Town by June 30th. By our next meeting, which is on May 2nd, we may know what we can announce at the May 6th Annual Town Meeting.

Members discussed sending out a week or two before Memorial Day a reminder to those people in Mohawk Estates who are eligible for a subsidy to schedule an install by June 30th. Bill suggested using the Association's FaceBook page for that. Sheila will reach out to Jenny.

The May MLB meetings will be on the 2nd, 16th, and 30th. Art will be posting them.

Sheila will send to Brian prior to the 1:30 meeting the following list of questions:

1. Can you please confirm that credit refund check of \$26, 703.76 is "in the mail"?
2. Recent direct billing invoice shows an increase in the cost of installations and a higher management fee cost. We do not recall a change to agreement?

3. Regarding proposal for service to CAF II properties in Heath on Shawnee Drive, can you send a second proposal that shows the cost to provide an additional MST on the nearest pole?
4. The reconciliation of materials returned that had been in the POD itemized # drop cables used and it appears there were about 100 more cables used than Heath has customers for. Why?
5. On Alina's "Heath Town Onboarding Policy" the temporary drop fee of \$150 raises a question for us about who would be charged if a temporary drop was needed to restore service following storm damage?

Bill moved and Anne seconded that the meeting be adjourned at 12:50. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

Note: Appendix 1 has the scoring for the 2 ISP/NO RFPs received by WiredWest