

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting

May 30, 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 May 16<sup>th</sup> MLB meeting. Bill moved that the minutes be approved with corrections. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila reported that the customer at 2 Moduc wants an active drop.

The installation for 15 Apache is a 'go' for June 5<sup>th</sup> without a problem.

Jamie Cincotta has replied that WCF is OK with a cold drop that terminates with an NID on a pole.

Sheila said that she has installed the printer that Anne purchased as authorized by the MLB. The cost was \$118. It comes with a color ink cartridge, a black and white ink cartridge, and a backup black and white cartridge.

Sheila said she has received bill 2023 – 04 from WCF for \$1,463.88 for drops to 3 different properties. She has approved its payment.

Members discussed facilitating bill paying without having a meeting.

**Action Taken**     *Bill moved that the MLP Manager may approve any invoice of \$5K or less for installation without prior MLB approval. This supersedes any previous authorization regarding installations. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Sheila said that the MLP's P.O. Box at Sawyer Hall is paid up for another year.

### May 17<sup>th</sup> Wired West Board Meeting

Sheila said that a slight adjustment in the investment policy has been approved.

There is a new Wired West negotiating team with members Jim Drawe, Jeff Piemont, and Sheila Litchfield. They will work on communicating to WCF what Wired West wants changed in the contract in order to agree to it for 10 years.

Sheila said that \$1700 is left through May 23<sup>rd</sup> in the MLP Manager's salary account. David asked Sheila to let the MLB know if there are parts of her job she has to drop in order not to go over the number of funded hours. If there are things she needs to drop, the MLB can pick them up.

### Tree Trimming

Sheila said that Asplundh and WCF have agreed that having a town representative along on a rideout before the work begins is the best way to proceed. Heath's Highway Superintendent Jeff Johnston continues to be involved.

Bill said there is a lengthy stretch of Taylor Brook Road where there is no electric line, and the broadband cable as the top cable is threatened by any higher branches. In some places tree guards could be used.

Sheila said it would be helpful to have the kind of map we've requested that would show the fiber lines we're responsible for. We can ask again at the 1:30 meeting.

### The Process for Transferring Broadband Funds to the Town

Sheila said that the meeting she requested involving Hilma, Robyn, Alice, David Fierro, and herself is scheduled for Wednesday, May 31<sup>st</sup> to make more clear the process for transferring broadband monies to the Town. The goal is to inform the Town about money coming from the MLP to enable inclusion of this money as anticipated money on the Tax Recap Sheet.

Sheila reported that the preliminary information from Verizon about a 2023 pole attachment fee of \$2,777.53 has been sent to Wired West.

There will be a Digital Equity Summit on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 9 am – 3 pm in Worcester, MA as reported in the email that Art forwarded to us from Mary Sumner. Members asked Ned to communicate this to the Select Board the evening of May 30<sup>th</sup>. Ned will ask whether the Selectboard has expressed interest in the state's digital equity program by signing in with the FRCoG.

If no one on the Selectboard will be attending the June 13<sup>th</sup> conference, Anne says that she can attend.

The MLB and Sheila agreed on the following schedule of meetings for June:

June 13    MLB at 11

June 27    MLB at 11

              Installs meeting with WG&E at 1:30

MLB members expressed thanks to David for his reaching out to inform Northeast IT of WCF's plan to change the static IP addresses in Heath.

Sheila said that there was an outage on May 23<sup>rd</sup> that affected 10 homes in Heath: 5 homes were on Number Nine Road, 3 on 8A, and 2 on State Farm Road. The report of the technician who fixed the problem stated that a new SFP was installed. At the 1:30 meeting we will ask Brian about the outage and how WCF was notified.

#### Financial Report

Sheila said that because she has paid one more bill the estimated funds available to apply to MLP priorities is down to approximately \$61K from the approximately \$63K in the finance report of May 30<sup>th</sup>. Members discussed the amount of funds in addition to the \$100K already sent that can be sent to the Town before June 30<sup>th</sup>. David noted that we have set aside \$20K for subsidies for the end of FY23 providing a good cushion for installations. There was a consensus that an additional \$60K be transferred by the MLB to the Town.

Sheila suggested that we as citizens of the Town, who recognize the Selectboard has the say as to how the funds are spent, feel responsible to return stabilization funds and start paying the broadband debt. MLB members suggested the motion be simple and that a letter be used to communicate our thinking.

Anne said that we've told the Selectboard our intentions and don't need to tell them again. There was a consensus that Sheila can inform Hilma, Robyn, Alice, and David Fierro on Wednesday May 31<sup>st</sup> of the additional \$60K. She will draft a letter similar to the letter of September 20, 2022 that accompanied the transfer of the \$100K except that 'return' will be used instead of 'replace.'

**Action Taken** *David moved that the MLB transfer \$60K to the Town. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Sheila noted that the \$3K in the Lifeline Account can become free cash at the end of FY23. In addition she will tell the Accountant that the Broadband Dropline Account is no longer needed.

#### Statement of MLP Priorities

The amended Statement of MLP Priorities appears in the MLB minutes for May 2<sup>nd</sup>. When Sheila sends the letter about the \$60K to the Selectboard, she will add to it the amended Statement of MLP Priorities.

Art said that by mid-July we will get revenue back from Wired West. The amount we estimated in our cash flow projection sheet is \$100K.

#### Drop Policy

Sheila said she will send Anne the Drop Policy as revised in February 2023. Anne said that she will make a list of needed revisions to send to Sheila.

#### Questions for the 1:30 Installs Meeting with WCF

Sheila will send the following questions to WCF:

- ❑ What static IP addresses does Heath have?
- ❑ Heath previously requested a map showing the fiber in Heath- can this please be sent?
- ❑ Regarding the May 23 outage in Heath, how did WCF learn there was a problem and what caused the outage?
- ❑ Regarding tree trimming: we've been discussing a ride out, but things get complicated because of the number of roads to view and the various responsibilities for managing risks to fiber (MBI fiber, Verizon and NationalGrid wires as well as MLP fiber). Our question is how does WCF manage this for your own fiber and is there a difference between how you manage it in the Hilltowns?
- ❑ Who can Sheila speak to at the WCF MLP to learn the process by which your MLP transfers excess revenue to the Town of Westfield?

#### The RRR Project

David said that the Verizon line from Adams to Charlemont may not happen.

WCF and Nokia will move forward with the MBI line out of Leyden and the Crown Castle line in Rowe.

Laura Blascak, Administrative Assistant at WG&E, will be sending out notices to 2 Heath muni-networks of change in their IP addresses.

David will be attending a meeting of Northern Ring representatives the evening of May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Bill moved that the MLB meeting be adjourned at 12:55. David seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf