

# DRAFT

## Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting

July 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 11:04.

Members read the minutes of the June 27<sup>th</sup> MLB meeting. Recommended edits included the following:

Under MLP Manager's Report,

-Replace the first paragraph with 'Sheila said that WG&E now has a standard drop cost table that can be used for planning. They are offering a lower cost for drops up to 500' in length. The new standard overhead installation cost for installations up to 250' is \$1,100 including materials.'

-Replace the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph with 'Around 1 pm on 06/29/23 there will be an RRR outage lasting up to half an hour, the purpose of which is to connect Heath to the broadband network.'

-In paragraph 6 replace 'will be changed' with 'will be changed on 06/29/23.'

At the top of p. 3 replace 'may be 25% less' with 'will be 25% less'.

On p. 2 under 'RRR Project' replace the second sentence of the third paragraph with 'The cost sharing agreement will be between WCF and each town'.

Anne moved that the June 27<sup>th</sup> MLB minutes be approved with the recommended edits. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

### MLP Manager's Report

Sheila said that the most recent report of excess revenue for Heath from Wired West is \$78,051.27. The Wired West Board will meet to vote on the distribution of excess revenue at 6:30 on July 19<sup>th</sup>.

There was a consensus that in addition to meeting on August 29<sup>th</sup> the MLB should meet on August 8<sup>th</sup>. In that way we can have a budget proposal to discuss on August 8<sup>th</sup> and get information to the Town as soon as possible. Art will prepare postings for August 8<sup>th</sup> and August 29<sup>th</sup>.

Sheila said that she has asked WCF to cancel the Local Linx contract which we no longer need because we now have 2 10 Gb backhaul circuits with neighboring towns.

-She said that on July 6<sup>th</sup> the Kinsley technician came to do preventative maintenance and to install a new battery. The technician did come, but he forgot the battery. The MLB joined Sheila in expressing concern about waiting another 6 months for a new battery to be installed. The MLB supported her in saying we don't want to pay for another service visit.

On July 8<sup>th</sup> there was a power outage in parts of Heath that resulted in the generator coming on for 44 minutes.

David and Sheila occasionally get email messages saying "Generator relay is not in auto." Kinsley has indicated they can come and check.

Sheila recalled the MLB's having authorized her to pay invoices that do not exceed \$5K without first seeking MLB approval. She received from WCF an invoice for \$5,204.83 for May and June installations.

**Action Taken** *David moved to approve paying the \$5,204.83 invoice from WCF for May and June installations. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Sheila said she's OK leaving the limit at \$5K for installations. Matters to be discussed further include the following: Should we have another vote for invoices for things other than installations? Should the limit for such invoices be raised from \$5K to \$10K? When should an unscheduled meeting be called on approving an invoice?

The Heath MLP office phone was installed in our space at 18 Jacobs Road.

All 'Town of Heath' numbers at 18 Jacobs Road have a 3 digit extension. The Broadband Office can be contacted through the Town of Heath phone number followed by extension 064. A call from one of these numbers appears as 'Town of Heath' on caller ID.

#### Wired West Board Meeting July 19<sup>th</sup>

The agenda will include the following: the FY24 budget, a bylaw change, voting on the distribution of excess revenue, and negotiations with WCF which will be in executive session.

Revised draft IGA for the Leyden MBI 123 shared backhaul

David sent Sheila and the MLB this document as an email attachment on July 17<sup>th</sup>. The monthly recurring charge to the 5 towns is \$1700/mo for the 10 Gb. Heath is paying 20% of the \$1700, or \$340/mo for at least 2 Gb. This is paid by Wired West.

We had been paying \$2600/mo for 2 Gb plus \$600/mo for a 1 Gb backup circuit.

We also pay 20% of the \$2800 cost of the 10 Gb Crown Castle circuit out of Rowe, or \$560/mo for at least 2 Gb. This is also paid by Wired West.

We have been told that if we share a third circuit (MBI) out of Charlemont, it will also cost 20% of \$1700/mo, or \$340/mo.

### Affordable Connectivity Program

Sheila said she has inquired of Tom Flaherty whether a recent change in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) calls for a change in the publicity about ACP. Anne said she would get back to Sheila about it.

### RRR Project

Five towns have given a green light for a second MBI circuit terminating in Charlemont. The switches that have been distributed in these towns were programmed for Verizon in Charlemont and will have to be reprogrammed for MBI in Charlemont. We do not yet know when the reprogramming will take place.

Charlemont would like to hold the contract over MBI in Charlemont as Rowe does over Crown Castle in Rowe. Colrain would prefer that WCF hold the contract over MBI in Charlemont.

### Digital Equity

Art said he has spoken with Jessica Atwood at the FRCoG about digital equity opportunities. She said that the FRCoG is involved in planning, where towns have grouped to discuss their needs, and in the actual provision of services where another RFP is anticipated.

Sheila and MLB members expressed interest in connecting with the second RFP about provision of services that include providing training so that residents can enjoy the features available to them through their subscription and make full use of digital devices for broadband. The Heath Select Board needs to appoint a coordinator to participate in planning for a second RFP.

### Heath Hut

There was a consensus that we are interested in Brian Sullivan's suggested sealant to help keep mice out of the hut.

Help may be needed from Cebula to reprogram phones David and Sheila use for remote control. Since the change of the IP address on 06/29/23, remote access doesn't work for either Sheila or David. WCF sent Cebula the hut's new IP address.

Anne said that the 800 customer service number should be more visible on Heath's home page.

Art told Sheila and the MLB that he is having surgery the week of July 18<sup>th</sup> and will be recovering at home in the coming month. Sheila and the MLB wished him well.

Bill made a motion to adjourn at 12:32. David seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf