

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting
November 14, 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 11:06.

Members read the minutes of the October 17th MLB meeting. Bill moved that the minutes be accepted with corrections. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila said she has received a check for \$159.61, which is a pass-through for work done at 186 Sumner Stetson Road.

An MLB member asked whether anyone had recently seen the hut light on. Some members said they had seen it on as they drove by during the past week. Sheila wondered whether the light is triggered by motion. She cautioned about trying to adjust the light without first checking the warranty. Art recalled a neighbor having once complained about the light. He will check whether the neighbor has been bothered by it.

Sheila spoke of the WiredWest contract 'Network Operations and Service Agreement' that she sent to the MLB on October 17th. All WiredWest towns have the same agreement. The agreement expires for all towns on June 30th, 2024. Sheila will look for the version of the contract sent to us on March 10, 2020.

Kris has sent us the UniBank statement which reports interest on MLP accounts. Sheila said she has updated the interest in the MLP records.

Sheila said that on November 13th she received from WCF an invoice for \$2,100 for work done at 69 Shawnee. She soon sent back to WCF an email addressed to Brian saying that we should not have received a bill for this amount. A member pointed out that no installation on Shawnee costs that much. Sheila said that the person has service and may not know that they have to pay.

The WiredWest Board meets on November 15th at 6:30.

Tree Trimming

Sheila mentioned 4 tree service companies we might contact: M.D. in Montague, Burdick in Lee, Nylie in Colrain, and Nartowicz in Colrain.

She referred to an email she had received from New Salem's MLP Manager Kathy Soule-Regine explaining how in New Salem the tree trimming responsibilities are coordinated by various town officials and committees. If such a team is created in Heath, Heath MLB members agreed that the highway crew, the tree warden, and an MLB member should be involved. Sheila will follow up on this.

Bill volunteered to represent the MLB. The MLB agreed that as preventive maintenance having a rideout assessment of the fiber early each spring should be sufficient. Sheila will reach out to WCF to see if an annual rideout in early spring is still offered, and, if so, get an estimate. Heath would give WCF a list of sites where trimming is needed. WCF said at one time they would take the list and reach out to Asplundh.

Members agreed that in light of National Grid's extensive tree trimming this past summer, those fiber sites where there is also an electric cable should be OK for a few years.

Drop Policy

Members reviewed the current Drop Policy and agreed on changes which will appear in a revised version to be voted on at our MLB meeting on December 19th.

Heath Broadband Website

Members agreed that in stating the subscription rates we should acknowledge that there are taxes and fees that WiredWest doesn't cover.

David said that he went to the Town of Heath's website, clicked on the link to sign up for Broadband, and went to a page labeled 'WiredWest' although the link had gone directly to Whip City Fiber.

Members noted that the WiredWest website is very dated. For example, in the news on the Home page it says "Heath joins WiredWest charter members. " Sheila advised that we send any changes to davidd@wiredwest.net.

Anne cited positive features of Colrain's broadband website. Members recommended that she adopt some of those features for Heath's broadband website.

Financial Report

On November 13th Sheila emailed to the MLB the 'MLP account reconciliation report FY24'. She and the MLB discussed this report and various questions customers had about service. Sometimes the customer may not know what has to be paid.

In replying to Sheila's questions the Town Accountant says that he is requesting that all his towns that have Broadband/MLP Funds build into their F25 budgets 15% of his annual accounting fee in the Broadband budget. In Heath would amount to \$3,915 to be paid by the MLP.

David suggested that any fee should be based on the percentage of the warrants paid to the MLP. The matter may come up at the WiredWest Board meeting. Jim Drawe said that there would be very few checks paid by the member towns.

When we meet with the Select Board, we will come with a cash flow projection sheet.

Date of Next Meeting: a virtual meeting on Tuesday, December 19th at 11 .

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

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf