

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting
February 13, 2024 at 11
Virtual meeting

Present: MLB: Art Schwenger (Chair), Anne Emmet, David Gordon, Bill Fontes, Ned Wolf (who arrived at 11:55), and MLP Manager Sheila Litchfield

Art called the meeting to order at 11.

Members read the minutes of the January 23rd MLB meeting. Anne moved that the minutes be accepted with edits. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed with 4 ayes and 0 nays.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila reported that there's been no update on whether the Affordable Care Program (ACP) will be continued beyond May of 2024.

She said that there is a significant delay in the distribution of CAF II funds on the part of the Universal Service Alternative Company (USAC). The review of documents has taken longer than expected. It is hoped that Heath's first CAF II distribution occurs in FY24.

WCF is considering a service protection plan. Instead of charging a customer for repair service that is the customer's responsibility, WCF would charge a \$2 or \$3 fee on every monthly bill. The repair would be for the drop wire and would be external to the structure. WiredWest has asked that WCF's proposal be discussed at a WiredWest Board meeting.

In the MLB discussion of WCF's proposal 4 points were made. We have a contract with WiredWest, and they can't arbitrarily impose fees. If there's to be an increase in fees, we're the ones who should decide. There are people in town who could not afford to pay a repair bill of \$500 - \$800. Collecting fees could provide help for these people. What are the economics of the town's keeping money that is not spent?

Sheila said that there is a new format for bandwidth reports. She invited anyone interested in receiving bandwidth reports to add their name to the list. MLB members expressed interest in having Chris Hanecak attend an MLB meeting to assist us in interpreting the reports. Sheila will arrange that with Chris.

MLB members also expressed interest in training with Google Drive and document storage.

Sheila said that on February 26 a technician will come to Heath's hut from Cebula to do alarm testing. Sheila will meet the technician at the hut; Bill said he will serve as backup.

The agreement between WiredWest and all the member towns is to be voted on at the February 21st board meeting. On January 23rd Sheila sent to the MLB as an email attachment 'Network Operations and Services Agreement between the Heath MLP and Wired West.' The presumption is that this is the same agreement as the one each town will sign with WiredWest. MLB members should get any questions to Sheila before Feb. 21st.

The MLB will consider the agreement after it has been reviewed by K&P Law.

The Town Accountant

The Accountant says that the MLB Stipend account has been made operative. He has set up a new business account for the MLP Manager's salary. Rather than transfer money to the town general account we should be transferring it to this new salary account. Currently, the amount spent on the MLP Manager's salary is \$6,180.87 or \$883 /mo. In the expense report beside 'MLP Manager's Salary' there's -6,180. The estimate of the total that will be needed for FY24 is \$10,595.25.

Sheila requested a vote to transfer \$10,000 to the account for the MLP Manager's salary from 'other funds sources'.

Action Taken *David moved to transfer \$10,000 from the other funds sources account to the Account for the MLP Manager's salary. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Sheila said that a \$3,130.95 Verizon pole attachment fee arrived. Verizon sends this invoice twice a year. She has forwarded it to WiredWest.

Sheila's Zoom account is used for MLB meetings and meetings of the Board of Health. The price for one year is going up to \$159.90. Members said that since it is necessary for MLB meetings, the MLP should pay for it.

Action Taken *David moved that we authorize Sheila to submit the expense for Zoom as we do for a Post Office box. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Date of Next Meeting: 11 am March 12th

Anne said that she has reviewed the WiredWest and the Whip City Fiber webpages making 2 pages of suggestions.

Wired West Membership Review

The MLB discussed the 'Cost Benefit Analysis of Heath MLP Membership in Wired West' that David sent as an email attachment on 02-01-24. He wrote it for the MLB and assumes an understanding of how the MLB operates. He thanks Sheila for help in making it more clear.

All towns have an MLP Manager. Some are paid, some are not. The position has evolved and is evolving according to local expertise. Sheila said she plans to use WiredWest to the fullest to minimize what the MLP Manager has to do.

Anne said it would be helpful if we had a better feel for how the MLP Manager spends her/his hours. Sheila said that she tracks hours daily.

Bill suggested that before there's a public release of a report, the MLB should agree on it. There was a consensus to wait until March 12th. Sheila said that before a report is released it must be made clear that it does not include the total cost. David said that he will write an introductory paragraph to the report as to what it is and what it isn't. Art suggested giving the report to Jim Drawe for comments on its accuracy. MLB members can ask David questions one-to-one.

Ned agreed that the Finance Committee's greatest concern in looking at cash flow projections should be how to keep our operating costs as low as possible.

In the section of the report on caveats David points out that the report is based on 2023. A number of things could change in a year. Becket was not fully operational in 2023.

Bill said that he has talked with electrician Clint Dodge who has made modifications at the hut. He has put in a motion sensor outside the hut. If a person goes near the hut, a light goes on for 5 minutes. A switch guard that Clint has installed inside the hut should keep people from turning the light on or off. Art said he will inform Jordan Lively of the work done.

Ned thanked Sheila for having made a digital recording of the meeting which she will send to him by email.

Anne said that Pat has ordered chronologically all minutes posted on the MLB's webpage.

Bill moved that the meeting be adjourned at 1:07. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

