

DRAFT

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting

March 12, 2024 at 11

Virtual meeting

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

Visitor: Chris Hanecak from Solar Winds until 7:40, Jim Drawe

Art called the meeting to order at 11.

He introduced Chris Hanecak, who is employed by SolarWinds, and who interprets graphs of bandwidth data. Chris pointed out that the completion of the Resilient, Reliable, Redundant Project has meant that Heath will have more than 2 gigabytes available under normal operating circumstances.

He explained graphs under the heading 'Heath Average Bandwidth, Last 7 Days, 2-Hour Intervals.' The graphs corresponded to the uplinks to Rowe, Charlemont, and Colrain.

Chris left at 11:40 with our thanks for his answering our questions and his enabling MLB members, who so choose, to receive Heath Bandwidth reports.

Members read the minutes of the February 13th MLB meeting. Bill moved that the minutes be accepted with edits. David seconded the motion. The motion passed with 4 ayes and 1 abstention.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila said that Northeast IT informed Hilma that the battery backup was beeping. She will contact Whip City Fiber and Northeast IT. Whip City Fiber might have installed the backup during Covid to provide wireless. Bill said he would check the beeping.

On March 8th Kinsley did preventive maintenance at the hut. All work was done externally. Sheila asked Kinsley for an invoice separate from the bills for other towns. The invoice will be sent to WiredWest. This should indicate generator service.

Sheila said she has spoken twice with Jamrog about HVAC.

She expressed thanks to David for his edits of the 'hub sensor guidance' document that she sent to the MLB as an email attachment on March 8th.

Sheila mentioned the CAF II update that she sent to the MLB on March 7th as an attachment. Bill H3545 was passed with the Governor's Supplemental Budget. The bill, which applies to grants in general, says in the case of CAF II distributions that they do not have to go through the Free Cash process as long as they are used for broadband purposes. Those purposes can include helping to pay the financial debt incurred by the Town to build the broadband network.

Sheila has asked Kris in her role as Treasurer whether she would want to receive the first CAF II distribution, reported to be \$168,800.96, electronically or by check. Both the Treasurer and the Accountant are on board in terms of having set up an account to receive any CAF II distribution.

Ned mentioned a possible scenario in the FY25 Budget process and asked how it would be affected by the Town's receiving its first CAF II distribution in the summer of FY25. Sheila said that she would talk with Hilma following the meeting and ask about the process of receiving CAF II money that could be used to offset the effect of FY25 broadband debt service on the FY25 tax rate.

Sheila referred to the redlined Network Operations and Services Agreement that she sent the MLB on March 7th and that is the most recent version to be sent to KP Law. Jim Drawe said that at the WiredWest meeting on March 20th the Board members can agree or disagree with the lawyers' changes prior to voting. The document can then be sent to the MLBs.

There was a consensus to have a special meeting on April 9th at 11 to study the contract. There was a discussion about the length of the term of the contract.

Action Taken *David moved that assuming that all terms of the contract between WiredWest and its member towns are favorable to the Heath MLB, we would favor pursuing a 10 year term of the contract. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Sheila said that she has not yet heard whether Heath's 19 broadband subscribers who are each receiving \$30 a month from the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) will continue to receive those payments after April. If the MLP were to compensate for those payments, it would amount to \$570 per month. Jim Drawe said that if we want to subsidize, we would have to qualify customers. That would entail paying a third party to gather information about those people to receive the subsidies.

MLB members expressed misgivings about managing subsidies if it includes gathering information about peoples' finances. Bill asked whether being eligible for Lifeline would make a person eligible for us?

Jim said that WiredWest got billed in FY24 for the big snowstorm in FY23 which means that estimates for WiredWest's excess revenue distributions in FY25 will be too high.

David suggested that the MLP cash flow sheet be upgraded for the Finance Committee.

Bill asked about the service protection plan discussed in the February 13th MLB meeting. Sheila said it's a proposal from WCF that hasn't been finalized.

There was some discussion of the 'Cost Benefit Analysis of Heath MLP Membership in WiredWest' which David sent to us as an attachment on March 7th.

Action Taken *Bill moved that the MLB endorses the 'Cost Benefit Analysis of Heath's Membership in WiredWest' in its March 11th form and favors making it public. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Dates of Coming Meetings

April 9th, Tuesday, at 11 am, cash flow spreadsheet, contract between WiredWest and the Heath MLP

April 23rd, Tuesday, at 11 am, regular MLB meeting

Bill moved that the meeting be adjourned at 1:33. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

