

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting  
April 23, 2024 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.

Members read the minutes of the April 9<sup>th</sup> MLB meeting. Anne moved to approve the minutes with edits. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila and Bill have signed a letter in support of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) extension act. The act would extend ACP through this calendar year.

6 of the 19 broadband customers, who were receiving the ACP subsidy, have opted to continue without the ACP subsidy. The one customer on Lifeline is not affected. For some people the wakeup call may be the May bill. Some of our 19 can go down to 25 gig in their subscription.

The MLB discussed providing a subsidy. It may resume that discussion at a later date.

An update on CAF II has been forwarded to Sheila by Brian Sullivan. The first disbursement is due prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>. It is estimated to be \$168,000 and covers a 3 year period. David has adjusted the Cash Flow Projection.

A memo from the Department of Legal Services (DLS) gives permission for the Town's chief executive officer to use CAF II disbursement funds for broadband purposes.

Sheila, the MLB, and the Accountant are agreed that the CAF II funds should go into a special revenue account.

**Action Taken** *David moved to direct the MLP Manager to write a letter to the Town Accountant to establish a special revenue fund to receive the CAF II money to be used by the Select Board for broadband purposes in accordance with the DLS memo. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Sheila said she will in addition send copies of the letter to the Select Board and the Finance Committee.

A letter about CAF II was expected in the last weeks of May from WCF to the Town.

### Spring Rideout

Sheila said that DocuSigns for the rideout have been signed by Jim Drawe, the Executive Director of WiredWest, and by Tom Flaherty, General Manager of Whip City Fiber.

### WiredWest Agreement with the Towns

Sheila said the agreement has not yet been voted by the towns. Due to some errors in the document it will go back to WiredWest for the Board to vote on at its meeting on May 1, 2024.

Sheila said that Whip City Fiber (WCF) has said they will be picking up our spare fiber and giving us some money back.

Art spoke of an email dated April 22<sup>nd</sup> from a customer on State Farm Road informing us of new utility poles along that road and requesting that we encourage WiredWest to transfer as soon as possible its fiber from the old poles to the new poles. Sheila said that she has written to Brian Sullivan of WCF. Brian has said that WCF is waiting for the road to be less muddy before doing the transfers.

We have to pay for the work of transferring the fiber. It is a shared WiredWest cost and comes out of our WiredWest disbursement.

David asked whether we have sent Jim Drawe our pole attachment agreement with National Grid. National Grid will subcontract to WCF for the transfer of fiber lines to a new pole. It is a shared WiredWest cost and reduces the WiredWest disbursement.

### Preparing for Select Board Meeting on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, then ATM on May 11<sup>th</sup>

The Select Board and the Finance Committee will be sent the April 21<sup>st</sup> version of the Cash Flow Projection. If CAF II funds are discussed, we will remind the Select Board of the DLS memo.

Sheila said that the MLP Manager's salary has been decreasing over the past few years from about \$20K to \$15K to \$11K or \$12K. When benefits are included, it looks as though \$14K will be sufficient for FY25, but we do not actually know the cost of benefits.

Members agreed that the 'P.O. Box' and the 'operating reserve' do not need to appear as expense lines in the Cash Flow Projection we send to the Select Board. There was also agreement that deleting the 2 '39 account' lines for accounts that are now inactive would be helpful in the version of the financial report sent to the Select Board.

We will tell the Select Board that we've done a cost benefit analysis of membership in WiredWest. We're in the process of reviewing a new contract.

Art said that if requests come up we can offer to meet with the Select Board at another meeting.

Members thanked Anne for her April 23<sup>rd</sup> email with attachment that includes Preliminary Suggestions for Annual Meeting 2024 and Possible Questions. Sheila said that quite a few of the answers are in the MLP Manager's entry in the Town Report.

Anne moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:26. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf