

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting
May 28, 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.

Art and the MLB agreed to move consideration of the Operations and Services Agreement between Heath and the WiredWest Cooperative up to the top of the agenda in order that all members could be present for the discussion and vote.

Action Taken *Bill moved that the MLB approves the Operations and Services Agreement between the Heath MLP and the WiredWest Cooperative and gives Sheila authorization to sign it as the MLP Manager. Ned seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

The agreement is for a 10 year period ending June 30, 2034.

Sheila said that she will send copies of page 1 and the signature page to Jim Drawe.

As a courtesy to the Select Board, she will draft a letter from the MLB to the Select Board with the Finance Committee included informing them that the MLB has voted to authorize the contract. Art will sign the letter.

Sheila said that we need an additional appropriation of \$950 to the salary account of the MLP Manager to cover through June 2024.

Action Taken *David moved to appropriate \$950 to the salary account of the MLP Manager to cover the salary to the end of FY 24. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

This appropriation covers only salary and not FICA. We may need to make an additional appropriation. What if at the end of FY 24 the salary account has a positive balance? It is a fund 50 account which so far has rolled over.

Members read the minutes of the MLB meeting on April 23rd. Anne moved that the minutes be approved with corrections. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila said that the aerial license agreement states that National Grid does not pay for transfers of attachments from an existing pole to a new pole. It is a benefit of belonging to WiredWest that the Cooperative will share the pole attachment transfer expense. As of the last conversation Sheila had with National Grid, there is the potential for 88 pole replacements and 3 or 4 new poles.. National Grid is working on the design of this project and hopes to complete the design by the end of May. Whip City Fiber (WCF) will do the pole attachment transfers. Putting in a new pole will require a pole hearing with the Selectboard, but replacing the existing pole does not if the replacement pole is within 3 feet of the pole it is replacing.

The project will extend from Heath into Charlemont. Sheila has communicated with Bob Handsaker of the Charlemont MLB about this project.

We did not have a signed copy of the February 2, 2018 aerial license agreement, but now we do. Sheila will upload it to the Heath Broadband Google Drive.

There are 4 new poles on Lakeview Drive paid for by WiredWest. At the May 29th MLP Managers' meeting towns will be looking for an update on CAF II. Jim Drawe has heard nothing recently about CAF II.

WCF has removed from the grounds of 18 Jacobs Road all but 3 of the leftover spools of fiber. We are awaiting information on the reimbursement amount and process. Fiber not taken back is not long enough to be useful.

Action Taken *David moved that the MLP Manager is authorized to dispose of the 2 remaining spools of fiber. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Jim Drawe will contact WCF about the method of reimbursement for the unused fiber they took away. Bill noted that if WCF insists on credit, we will have an opportunity to use the credit when we make needed additions to the hut within the coming year.

Tree Trimming

Dave Loiko has asked that we name any problem areas. Jeff Johnston, Heath's Highway Superintendent, said that any gravel road is a problem area. Bill recommended that attention be given to the 3 feeder lines coming into Heath from Rowe, Charlemont, and Colrain.

US Mail for the MLP

Sheila said that the MLP Post Office box is now closed. Any mail for the Heath MLP will go into our slot at 18 Jacobs Road. David recommended we delete from the website any MLP mailing address with the P.O. Box number that might still be there.

Insurance

We are presently insured by the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA). It appears that another option will become available through the Public Utilities Risk Management Association, Inc. (PURMA). Jim Drawe is investigating this further.

Accountant

A reorganization at Hill-Town Municipal Accounting Services, L.L.C., has resulted in Accountant David Fierro moving to other towns. The Select Board has appointed Ben Gelb, who is also a Hill-Town Municipal Accounting Services employee as Heath's new Town Accountant.

Sheila confirmed that there are now a "Special Revenue and a "Special Expense" accounts set up for CAF II funds.

Dates of Next Meetings: Tuesday, June 18th at 11

Tuesday, July 9th at 11

Tuesday, August 27th at 11

Bill moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:11. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

