

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting
August 27, 2024 at 11
Virtual meeting

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

Absent: Bill Fontes

Art called the meeting to order at 11.

Members read the minutes of the July 9th MLB meeting with edits sent by Sheila. Anne moved that the minutes be approved with edits by committee members. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

MLP Manager's Report

Sheila sent MLB members an email update on August 3rd It appears as Appendix 1. National Grid's 'Heath to Charlemont Improvement Plan' appears as Appendix 2.

The final distribution check for FY 24 has arrived from Wired West. It is for \$99,412.24 and goes into the WiredWest Distributions account.

Sheila said that there are 1,559 pole attachments billed by Verizon. 1,320 of those poles are jointly owned with National Grid. We receive a bill twice annually from Verizon for our attachments but have never been billed by National Grid for our attachments.

Members asked what the relationship is between National Grid and Verizon regarding responsibilities for poles. Eversource has replaced poles in other towns without any charge.

Members agreed that burying the electric cables in National Grid's Heath to Charlemont Project would force the town to bury our broadband fiber at a cost that the town could not afford.

A Customer's Request for a Subsidy

Sheila said that the owners of 26 State Farm Road have requested a subsidy from the MLP for the \$4,315.72 cost of the network extension and the additional \$2000 cost for the installation.

Members agreed that anyone planning new construction should take all costs into account.

Action Taken *David moved that the MLB adheres to the current policy of not paying for the expansion or extension of new construction. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Rideout

Sheila said that she has Dave Loiko's report of the Whip City Fiber (WCF) rideout in Heath. The estimated cost of fixing the rideout problems is \$9,192.66. Those problems were broken lashings and sagging strand. Dave said that among the WW towns having rideouts Heath had fewest problems.

The cost of the rideout is \$1,876. which was expected. As for whether or not to have an annual rideout, there was a consensus to consult with the other Wired West towns.

Partial Subscriptions

Sheila reported the complaint of a customer who wants his service only during the time in summer when he is in Heath. The complaint is that he must pay for the full month during which the service is turned on and the full month during which the service is turned off.

The committee recalled the time and effort it took to get WCF to agree to partial subscriptions. The alternative to having partial subscriptions is not to allow seasonal subscriptions.

Insurance

Sheila said that Wired West is seeking bids for group insurance for our fiber plants and has requested data on wants the value of the distribution networks for each town plus the cost of all drops because to insure 80% of the afore mentioned total. The cost of insurance may have to go up because previously we weren't insuring drops

\$2,702.92 Check for Fiber

Sheila said that we received a check for \$2,702.92 for unused and returned fiber. The check was sent to the Police Department where John found it. The check has since been deposited into the MLP account 'Other Funding Sources'.

The question was asked whether the \$2,702.92 is what we originally paid for the fiber

The next Wired West meeting is on September 4th.

Projected Cash Flow

Sheila and the MLB turned their attention to the spreadsheets 'Available Funds' and 'Projected Cash Flow' that David sent us on 08/27/24. He has noted the following mistakes or omissions:

- Account 29 – 4 – 650 – 001 CAF II Revenue should have \$169,257.76 as of June 20, 2024, but it is not in the 06/30/24 Accountant's report.
- Account 50 – 4 – 971 – 000 Depreciation Reserve Transfer from shows \$35,743 which is an incorrect transfer into this account on 04/09/2024.
- Account 50 – 5 650 -000 Depreciation Reserves should have \$109,112 . It appears that \$35,743 was incorrectly transferred to account 50 – 4 – 971 – 000. In addition there should be \$35,743 that the MLB directed be added in FY 24.
- Account 50 – 4 – 971 – 000 MLP Manager Salary does not include the \$950 approved for transfer on 05/28/24.

On the Projected Cash Flow Sheet the \$136,204 (Fund Balance + Revenue – Expenses) already takes costs into account. At the September MLB meeting the MLB needs to decide how much of that to send to the Town.

We need to check with Alice whether a Sept. 24th MLB meeting will be early enough so that the amount directed by the MLB at that meeting to be sent to the Town can be entered on the tax recap sheet.

David asked Sheila for the July Accountant's report. He also requested that she forward to the Accountant the corrections regarding transfers involving the Depreciation Reserve.

Date of Next MLB Meeting: Tuesday, September 24 pending a check with Alice as to whether that's early enough for relevant data to be included on the tax recap sheet.

Anne moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:54. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

Appendix 1

Heath Broadband <heathbroadband@gmail.com>

Aug 3, 2024,
2:47 PM

to Ned, me, Art, Anne, Bill, David

- Generator preventive maintenance service was conducted by Kinsley on 7/25/24. For reasons I cannot explain, Kinsley cancelled ours (and New Salem's) PM agreement. I called Kinsley to inquire when they were coming in July and learned the contract had been cancelled. All is back on track now.
- The HUB smoke detector was replaced by Cebula/Alarm works on 7/29/24
- WCF's proposal to establish a service protection plan is moving forward slowly and will continue to be discussed. This is an "all-in" proposal from WCF where each MLP is expected to budget and pay between \$2.50 to \$3.00 per subscriber per month to cover the cost of customer repairs. Currently WiredWest does not charge customers unless the customer caused/created the problem. I'm expecting a draft legal agreement from WCF on this that WW and Heath MLB can review and discuss. WCF may hold a special meeting dedicated to this topic.
- Heath's Spring ride-out was completed but WCF has not yet contacted me to discuss next steps.
- Brian Sullivan has retired but is remaining in place one or two days/week and is still Heath's contact person.
- NGrid has reached out to me and to Hilma regarding the pole replacement project they are calling "Heath to Charlemont Improvement Project. I've attached a fact sheet they sent. NGrid will arrange a meeting with Heath Selectboard, MLP and others, that may occur on either Aug . 27 or Sept 10. NGrid offered a special meeting with just the MLP but I declined saying that our primary concern is the NGrid policy requiring us to pay pole reattachments because of this project. I requested NGrid to make an exception given that Heath installed new poles for our fiber service only recently. This is still up for discussion with them. Once I receive it, I plan to send the NGrid project design to WCF so we can obtain a cost estimate for WCF to move our equipment to the new NGrid poles. Based on conversations with Jim Drawe and Kent Lew, where Eversource did a similar project recently in Washington), the cost might be between \$10,000 to \$20,000.
- The check for spare fiber we sold back to WCF was sent to Heath PD not to Heath MLP, I am working with Kris to ensure the sum is credited to the MLP "other revenue" fund.
- MBI's BEAD project is in the rebuttal phase. WCF's Rich Carnall is working diligently to correct all the errors in the MBI map that the MLP Managers provided to him, and that caused us all a lot of "heartburn" over the MBI project.

- "A Hub Alarm indicating "24 HR ZONE BYPASS,sensor Point: 15 - GENERATOR RELAY 4: NOT IN AUTO" was received repeatedly during the last week in July, and has since been remotely reset by Cebula/Alarm Works; there may be a censor problem that they we (and we are watching). The generator is operating as expected.

Thank you,
Sheila

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Sheila M. Litchfield

Heath MLP Manager

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413-337-4957

413-522-8216

Appendix 2

National Grid's Heath to Charlemont Improvement Plan.

file:///C:/Users/newba/Downloads/Heath%20to%20Charlemont%202024-25%20project_Fact%20Sheet_7-2022.docx%20(1)%20(3).pdf