

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting
February 4, 2025 at 11
Virtual meeting

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

Art called the meeting to order at 11:20.

Bailey said he will send MLB members the Zoom link for an 11 am meeting around 9 am that day. He will also send us his phone number.

Members read the minutes of the January 7th MLB meeting and agreed on edits. Ned has made the edits. Members read the minutes of the January 14th MLB meeting and agreed on edits. Ned has made the edits.

The official vote on approval of the minutes with edits was postponed until our next meeting. That meeting on March 4th will be posted at both the Municipal Building and Sawyer Hall.

Bailey spoke of his orientation as going pretty well. He has asked the HVAC and heating company Pomeroy of Colrain whether they repair electric heating. Their answer is yes. As for their response time, they say that they will come that day if it is a serious emergency. The proposal is for two visits annually, one in summer and one in winter, for cleaning and checking the AC and heating equipment plus replacement of filters for a total of \$279/yr.

Art suggested that Bailey go ahead and sign the contract with Pomeroy. David and the other MLB members noted that the amount of the contract is less than the \$5,000 that we voted is the limit for the MLP Manager to sign without a vote by the MLB.

Update from the MLP Manager

Sheila said that she has attended her last WiredWest Board meeting and her last MLP Managers meeting.

Bailey knows that he needs to get key access to the hub as well as to the Kohler generator. He has the contact number to Cebula.

Sheila has requested that Lee Anne Cloutier at Whip City Fiber send future DocuSigns to HeathBroadband@gmail.com.

She said her next time sheet goes through February 15th. If she and Bailey can confer often enough during that time, it will be her last pay period.

Bailey said he will keep a record of his MLP Manager activities in the next few weeks.

Sheila said that the second CAF II disbursement has arrived and has been deposited into the Town's UniBank Account as of 01/31/25. The amount of this disbursement is \$58,408.05. We can expect a DocuSign from Whip City Fiber that we need a written statement from the Select Board that the money was used strictly for broadband purposes. We received the letter from the Select Board for 2024 stating that the first CAF II disbursement was used for broadband as required. Sheila has scanned the letter and put it in GoogleDrive.

There have been 11 new customers in the past month. It's only the new customers associated with new construction who increase our CAF II catchment number and in turn increase our CAF II disbursement. There have been just 3 of those since Heath Broadband got up and running.

MLP Managers Meeting

Both Sheila and Bailey attended. WCF is monitoring the replacement of UPS batteries in the hub.

David and the other MLB members favor following WiredWest's lead in deciding whether to have a spring rideout this year.

David asked that the invoice for his subscribing for the MLB to Zoom be sent to WiredWest for his reimbursement.

Members agreed on the need for WiredWest to have a plan for backup leadership.

Art encouraged Bailey to contact other WiredWest Board members about broadband related matters.

Update on Operations

Bill said that one upshot of the most recent meeting of the Heath Select Board with National Grid is that 3 phase electric lines will not be coming up Burrington Rd.

Whether the lines come up Avery Brook Rd. depends in part on whether the Charlemont Select Board approves the proposed 3 phase electric lines in Charlemont. A pole hearing is scheduled for Monday, February 10. Bill said he will attend.

David said that if National Grid comes up Avery Brook Road with 3 phase electric, there would be access to electricity for 2 Heath residents not in the original build. The MLB discussed whether or not the MLP should be obligated to pay for a network extension since those houses existed prior to the original fiber construction.

Project Finances

Bailey has seen the financial report we get from the Accountant.

David and Bailey will go over the Cash Flow sheet. Later he can look over the P&L statement from WiredWest.

Sheila can talk with Bailey about the FY 26 MLP Budget. We will need to anticipate the amount of the MLP Manager's FY 26 salary. David reminded us of the need to keep this budget in mind when it comes time to decide how much to transfer to the town at the end of the year.

Sheila noted that the Verizon pole attachment invoice is one of the few that come to the Town instead of to WiredWest.

Website

Anne asked that we please check all references to broadband on the Town website.

Date of Next MLB Meeting: Tuesday, March 4th at 11.

Anne moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:42. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. Respectfully submitted, Ned Wolf

