

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting
July 9, 2026 at 10 am
Virtual meeting

Present: Art Schwenger (MLB Chair), David Gordon, Dave Peterson,
Bill Fontes, and MLP Manager Bailey Cole

Absent: Ned Wolf

Art called the meeting to order at 10:07.

Members read the minutes of the meeting on June 6. Dave Peterson moved that the minutes be accepted as edited. Bill Fontes seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

MLP Manager's Report

Bailey reported that other WiredWest (WW) MLP Managers are also not getting alerts from Kohler for the weekly generator test. Bailey is getting a "generator temperature rising" alert and a "generator temperature falling" alert coinciding with the generator test. The MLB concluded that this was sufficient notification that the weekly generator test occurs.

The MLB discussed whether there was a way to verify that the hut temperature sensor and alert system is working. Bailey will contact Hackworth to ask if there is a way of testing this. Bailey will also ask other WW MLP Managers if they know of a way to test this alert.

Bailey has approved the Whip City Fiber (WCF) quote for repairs on issues noted on the spring ride-out. Work has not yet been scheduled by WCF.

Dave P. let Bailey know about a downed tree on the line on South Rd. and a sagging Verizon line and provided photos. Bailey contacted WCF. WCF will take care of the tree problem and notified Verizon.

Bailey has been in touch with David Dvore (Rowe MLP Manager.) David D. said that National Grid (Ngrid) plans to schedule a meeting with Rowe, Heath and Charlemont about pole transfers related to the three phase projects. MLB members expressed concern about secrecy around these discussions and whether the MLB will have enough information to vote on any proposals or NDAs. David G. reviewed terms of the MLP's contract with NGrid related to pole licensing and responsibility for transfers of MLP attachments. The contract requires MLPs to transfer attachments at the MLPs expense. Ngrid's current policy is that municipalities are allowed to have one attachment per pole without paying an annual pole license fee. The MLB also discussed concerns about future pole replacement projects and whether the MLP can afford the cost of future transferring of attachments. David G. believes that the MLP will be able to cover the expense of likely future pole replacements,

but he stated that it could significantly reduce the net revenue available for transfer to the town. Art noted that costs of pole attachment transfers are shared by WW members.

Bailey reported that WCF says that Ooma is the top rated VOIP product for affordability and ease of use. WCF intends to continue deploying Ooma as its VOIP product. David G. suggested that Bailey ask the other WW MLP Managers if they have concerns or have had customer complaints about Ooma.

Bailey reported seven terminations for late payment. All seven paid and service was reinstated. He received no customer complaints about service.

WW is preparing to advertise for a new Executive Director. The plan is for a new Executive Director to serve as assistant to Jim Drawe for a period of time. Bailey sent the approved job description to the MLB.

Dave P. reported that WW has a draft budget for FY 2027. There are small changes in the budget for legal fees (related to possible DPU filings) and repair.

Some WW towns are concerned about backhaul bandwidth due to increased usage. Heath MLP shares 30 GB of bandwidth with four neighboring towns from three redundant backhauls. Bandwidth usage is monitored through the weekly SolarWinds reports. Heath bandwidth usage has been steady with weekly peaks at 1.5 Gbps to 2.0 Gbps. Bandwidth for Heath MLP should be adequate for the foreseeable future.

The WW Board has discussed whether MLPs should be submitting insurance claims for repairs. It is not clear whether the deductible is an annual deductible or an event deductible.

There is still no word on the status of the 2026 CAF II check that WCF sent to the Town of Heath in January. Bailey will send an email to the Select Board to ask for confirmation that the check was received, deposited and credited to an appropriate account. He will also ask what the amount was.

Financial

Dave P. reported that he has not received confirmation from the town Treasurer that Depreciation Reserve funds have been transferred to MMDT. As it is the end of the fiscal year, he will check back again in August. He will also ask for a June 30 MMDT account statement.

Art said that the town coordinator (Mia) called to ask whether the pay rate of the MLP Manager should be adjusted for cost of living (COLA). Town employees received a COLA as of July 1. This led to an MLB discussion about the COLA and the timing of the annual review

of the MLP Manager. The MLB discussed how these affect the planning for transfer of revenue to the town.

- David P. reviewed the timeline for receiving shared revenue from WW. The money is expected around August 10.
- The tax recap sheet is prepared in October. The MLB intends to make a decision on transfer to the town in September.
- The last review for the MLP Manager was the three month review done by Art and David G. (and presented to the MLB) in June 2025.
- The MLB consensus was that an annual review is appropriate.

The MLB decided that the next MLB meeting will be August 13. The MLB should know the amount of shared WW revenue by that date and can prepare a cash flow / budget for FY 2027. After the August meeting, The MLB can inform the Select Board that the shared revenue check from WW has been sent. The MLB will remind them that the MLB needs to verify receipt before making a decision on transferring funds to the town. The MLB vote on the town transfer and set aside for Depreciation Reserve can occur at the September meeting.

Action Taken *David Gordon made a motion to make it MLB policy to apply the same cost of living adjustments for town employees to the MLP Manager's compensation effective July 1 each year.*

Bill Fontes seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dave P. volunteered to join Art for an annual review of the MLP Manager. Art will schedule the review to occur prior to the September MLB meeting.

Drop Policy

David G. did not receive comments on the Drop Policy from previous Board member Anne Emmet. He asked MLB members to send comments to him before next meeting. He will consolidate comments to be discussed at the August MLB meeting. Bill mentioned concerns about the "99% of households" language in the Drop Policy. He pointed out that with the new Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations, Heath may experience growth in residences and possibly in customers.

Records

Dave P. has uploaded letters from the MLB to the Google drive.

Web Site Review

Dave G. said he responded to Ned's email about the Broadband page on the Town of Heath website. David G. recalled that the MLB had decided that all information below the line

“See the Municipal Light Board page for MLB minutes and meeting information” should be removed or hidden. The MLB agreed. Other than that, the MLB agreed that the Broadband page is fine.

The MLB page needs to have the members of the MLB updated. David G. will contact Ned about this and will follow up with the town coordinator if Ned is unable to make the changes.

The Whip City Fiber page that customers reach from a link on the Town of Heath page appears fine.

The WiredWest website, which is not linked to from the Town of Heath page as far as is known, has outdated information. Bailey will bring this to the attention of the WiredWest Board.

Other Business

David G. asked Dave P. and Bailey to send him the end of year WiredWest P&L and revenue sharing calculation when it is available.

There has been no response to David G. or the MLB from Dena Briggs or FinCom regarding the information that was sent to Dena last month regarding WiredWest costs.

Date of Next Meeting Thursday, August 13 at 10 AM

Bill Fontes moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:06. Dave P. seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf