

Minutes of the Heath MLB Meeting
January 7, 2025 at 11
Virtual meeting

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

Visitors: Bailey Cole, and Thuy Le who are candidates for the position MLP Manager

Art called the meeting to order at 11:05.

Members read the minutes of the December 10, 2024 MLB meeting. Anne moved that the minutes be accepted with edits. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Updates from MLP Manager

Sheila reported that she has learned from Jessica Drawe that her father Jim Drawe, Executive Director of WiredWest, has been in the hospital at Baystate. We wish him a speedy recovery.

We are still seeking information as to whether the UPS components that failed in the hut can be refurbished.

Sheila has renewed our insurance policy to January 14, 2026.. We can cancel the policy if we want something better. There was a consensus to let the WiredWest towns work on getting a better policy.

She said that we have received 2 Hanover surety bonds, each \$3,000, and sent them on to WiredWest.

During the months of November and December there was an increase of 11 customers.

Two weeks ago 5 customers were disconnected; all but 1 have since then paid up and have been reconnected.

The administrators of CAF II funds are asking for the MLP Manager to sign a document attesting that we recommended that all CAF II money be used for broadband purposes. Members recalled the motion approved by the MLB at the April 23, 2024 meeting: 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.

David asked that Sheila request we get a statement from the Select Board stating that the CAF II money has been used strictly for broadband purposes.

Sheila said that the estimated arrival time for 2025 CAF II funds is January 31. The amount at this time is expected to be \$58,403. She has sent to WCF information about new buildings in Heath which could change the percent of properties in Heath's CAF II catchment area. That could lead to a small change the amount of the CAF II distribution.

The \$719 pole survey bill has been paid. The pole survey was done in a case where a new property required an extension for both electricity and broadband. We were not informed that a pole survey would be needed to put broadband on the new National Grid pole.

There was a consensus to discuss a pole survey policy at an MLB meeting in the near future.

Brian Sullivan, our customer service representative at WCF, seems to answer emails once a week.

The MLP Manager meetings take place once a month with up to 30 attendees coming from communities all over western Mass served by WCF. WiredWest Board meetings occur twice a month, the next one being Wednesday January 8.

Bill commented that along Taylor Brook Rd. there are stakes in the ground marking the site of future utility poles farther than 3 ft. from existing poles. Pole hearings appear to be needed.

Police Details

Anne reported that Police Chief John McDonough says that a police detail is not necessary for all pole work by WCF but that he needs to be told in advance of the work. 'Chief of Police needs to be notified of coming work' is something to bring up at a WiredWest Board meeting or an MLP Managers meeting.

Hiring an MLP Manager

In order that a new MLP Manager be hired it will be necessary that Art recommend both a person and a salary. Then the Select Board votes on both.

Date of Next MLB Meeting: Tuesday, January 14, 9:00 am, in person, at the MLP Manager's Office, 18 Jacob's Rd. Two interviews are on the agenda:

9:00 Bailey Cole

10:00 Thuy Le

MLB Zoom Account

David has found that we can have our own Zoom account for \$160 /yr. We can assign it to our gmail account, HeathBroadband@gmail. One of us can pay with a credit card and get reimbursed.

Action Taken *Bill moved that the MLB open up its own Zoom account with a member to be determined to pay the bill and be reimbursed. David seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

David volunteered to open the account. After paying by credit card he will be reimbursed.

List of Duties of the MLP Manager

Sheila said that she will make a list of what has to be done and will share it with the MLB and the job candidates.

Items to Correct on Website

Anne will make a list of things to be corrected and will specify whether they are on the WCF website, the WW website, or the Town website.

Bill moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:31. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Wolf