

# Town of Heath

## Meeting minutes

### Heath Municipal Light Plant Advisory Board

Date/time: April 2, 2019 at 1:00 pm

Location: Sawyer Hall

Members present: Bob Bourke (Broadband Construction liaison), Jan Carr, Art Schwenger, Ned Wolf, Sheila Litchfield

- Called to order at 1:00 pm
- Minutes from 3/12/19 meeting were approved
- Monthly scheduled conference call with Bill Ennen:
  - Final design nearing completion
  - 3-4 homes in VT request service from Heath; Rich Carnell (WG&E) working on this
  - We are presently negotiating sixty-four poles. There is a definite advantage to being mid-pack – we have the advantage of endorsements. Questionable poles have been surveyed and Heath is awaiting invoices
  - Of 20 make-ready towns half have rec'd invoices and three of those towns (Shutesbury, New Salem and Wendell) estimates exceeded state construction amounts already provided and the towns had already exceeded their borrowing capacity; as a result those towns received an advance on their allotted state funding to ensure projects keep moving forward.
    - If we exceed our cost model Bill Ennen will seek an advance for us and we need to be in touch with Laura Blascak (WGE) who will monitor invoices and payments.
    - We need to be prepared to borrow/tap the 1.45 million voters approved for project
    - We should check to see how much we have left in state funding
- Enterprise Fund Accounting: Bill indicated Enterprise Funding makes sense for small towns because it ensures clarity of the operations of the business within the Town. Of the twenty-one towns, fifteen are using Enterprise. Debby Wagner from DLS in Springfield is an expert in this and offers conference call as needed.
- Edge cases: Bill Ennen maintains dossier of edge cases; DLS will help if we need accounting help; encourages use to accomplish the agreements (IGA's) in a non-monetary method where possible, i.e. where a town "hands over" a group of homes to be services by a neighboring town with no further responsibility or payment.
- Concern regarding subscribers sharing their Wi-Fi passwords – Bill suggests to address this through policies and education to subscribers; we are providing a service and expect cooperation; abuse risks rate hikes due to fewer subscribers; follow-up by reviewing WG&E policies

- CAF II – state is following closely; we'll need a line item in 2020 budgeted to monitor administration of CAFII funds we receive; WGE will use a third party administrator for CFA II fund monitoring; there is requirement for data collection and reporting for administration of federal funds for 10 years;
  - If make-ready costs exceed model this is an allowable/covered cost
  - Invoice for moving the middle mile will be from "KCST"
- National Grid doing great work in pole setting and will continue to work even if invoice is not processed; in contrast Verizon demands payment before work starts. Verizon won't do anything until poles are set. State continues to meet regularly with utilities.
- 3rd installment is \$154,000 and will be sent when we sign construction contract; anticipated that by July 1<sup>st</sup> we'll go to procurement.
- Helpful resources: Bob B commented on Kimberly from Plainfield. Extremely knowledgeable and sits in with six or seven other towns for a monthly meeting. She conservatively frames her information. Kent Lew from Washington and Bob LaBrie are other useful contacts for Bob.
- Obtain monthly broadband finance reports from Tracey (Sheila will follow-up).

Question raised: Does MLP have to follow state RFP rules re lowest bidder (unless they have complaints).  
Yes.

Hut update- BOS signed contract. Rowe used Tom Danek and Jerry Ferguson. We have the choice of positioning the hut so that it is easily plowed and away from wetlands. Also, the generator should be placed to minimize noise for the neighbors.

Do we have to abide with planning board setbacks?

Enterprise fund requires town vote. Another option is shared accounting. Maybe we should seek advice from Kimberly?

Art moved to adjourn at 2:40, Ned seconded. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Next meetings:

- 4/2/19 with MLP Board and Clark Rowell (Unibank and town's Financial Advisor)
- 4/12 MBI Worthington 11:00 – 12:30 meeting and appreciation for Steve Kulik.
- Anticipate need to meet with Conservation Commission regarding sting of Hut
- MLP Advisory Committee meeting April 9 at 3 pm, Sawyer Hall