

Town of Heath

Meeting minutes

Heath Municipal Light Plant Advisory Committee

Date/time: 8/13/19 at 1:00 pm

Location: Sawyer Hall

Called to order at 1:00 pm by Art with Jan, Ned, Jan and Sheila present.

Agenda was reviewed to include 1:00 with Bill Ennen and 1:30 with Jim Drawe.

Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve minutes of 8/6/19 as submitted.

1:00 pm scheduled call with Bill Ennen commenced with Bob Bourke reporting on site visit by WG&E to site a new pole by hut and to site the field split cabinet in Mohawk Estates. Discussed that WG&E will steer the work process to ensure most revenue –generating FSA’s will be build first. Anticipate construction procurement will be complete by mid-Oct 2019. Construction contractor will establish timeline and milestones. Discussed police detail and Sheila’s concern that costs of detail could generate additional invoices at true-up; Bill confirmed that NGrid does not send true-up invoice and factored costs of detail into invoices Town already paid; VZ does send true up invoice so actual cost of M-R remains unknown.

NOTE: Details of Bill Ennen meeting are captured in his report.

Discussed marketing and “fiber-ready” education campaign to make the connection between broadband and resale value or property; “cold-drop” and leave unused but have it built at time of the primary buildout. Bill reported Windsor is seeing home sales increase and relates it to having the broadband network; also Windsor is experiencing an increase in families with young children buying properties. Bill indicated that even with hard dates established for subscriptions some residences are hesitating and he suggested limiting new building to an annual roll-out of trucks to achieve a more cost-effective solution to manage late subscribers. Bill also said WG&E doesn’t like to do marketing too early because their call center gets bogged down with premature calls. Sixty days prior to the first subscriber going live is when marketing campaign needs to be rolled out, but no sooner. Heath may need to do some publicity in Mohawk Estates at their September 1 annual meeting because the Estates won’t reopen until May 2020.

Other items discussed with Bill Ennen:

- IGA between Rowe-Heath for edge case has been signed
- Sept 10th at 1:00 next call with B. Ennen
- Contact Deb at DLS for guidance in billing another Town for edge case agreements
- Cape Cod tornado damage cleanup & recovery will take VZ crews away and is expected to delay VZ M-R work in Heath
- Gov. and Lt. Gov. are closely monitoring broadband buildout status
- Utilities continue to own all the poles with exception to poles an MLP installs.
- Federal CAF II award – FCC has no material issue with WGE application and is processing through all the awards; anticipate getting to the WGE application in September at the earliest.
- Next quarterly report is due 9/15/19
- Next distribution of state money to Heath occurs upon signing of construction contract
- Bill want to be informed when hut is to be delivered

Bill Ennen meeting ended.

Ned and Jan provided summary notes from WG&E call-in earlier today:

Jim Drawe from WiredWest (WW) joined meeting by telephone at 2:00. Confirmed 4 towns have signed on to remain in WW (Rowe, Washington, Windsor, New Salem).

Reviewed WiredWest proposed cost to Heath on line-by-line basis.

Jim reported WW marketing studies are showing DSL customers won't move to new network unless offered a value proposition therefore WW feel it's important to offer the lower rate/lower speed service option.

In WW they would pay any Heath bills out of our receipts and what's left comes back to our MLP.

Broadband accounting methods: MLP/ Business Accounting is recommended by WW; books are separate from Town books and audited separately; we pay a portion of the WW audit. WW MLP manager files annual financial reports.

As a WW member:

- risk of costs of repairs from weather events are shared across all participating towns.
- WW takes care of marketing campaign expenses including mailings to residents

- Costs of audit are shared
- WW will set up Heath webpage
- WG&E would be ISP
- WW does our billing, administration, operations. Deals with WG&E on a daily basis as needed
- Share liabilities across all participating towns
- Contracts are negotiated as a larger group of towns together

Jim indicated the WW model still works with a small number of Towns as members; with five member Towns signed on (including Heath) his model projects \$161,000 annually to split among the members towns; Heath's share would be \$23,000 annually; with 4 member towns the share would be \$29,000 .

Discussed ME; plan to meet with ME Board on Aug 25th at 1 pm and plan to have informational flyer for handout at ME annual meeting Sept. 1st.

Discussed postponing meeting with Carly Nartowicz about marketing until a later date.

Next meetings:

- 8/20/19 at 9:30 AM at Sawyer Hall; Bob Ryan (Leyden)
- 8/25 at 10:00 w/ ME Board (Sheila and Bob Bourke to attend - no need to post)
- 8/27/19 at 9:30 and then at 10:00 w/ WGE

Jan moved to adjourn; Ned seconded; motion carried.

Adjourned at 4:00 PM