

## Minutes of the Meeting of the MLP Advisory Committee

February 18, 2020

Sawyer Hall

Present: Art Schwenger, Ned Wolf, Sheila Litchfield, and Margo Newton

Absent: Jan Carr

Art called the meeting to order at 9:43 am. Members reviewed the minutes of February 11. Sheila made a motion seconded by Margo to approve the minutes with emendations. The vote was 3 ayes with Art, who was absent, abstaining.

Sheila has asked WG&E why on a recent DocuSign the cost for the hut active and passive is \$135K whereas Rich Carnall on his spreadsheet of 12/3/19 of Heath's broadband costs has \$118K. Chris LaVertue explained that the estimate of 12/3/19 did not include a 16X1 dual splitter module nor a \$1K piece of electronic equipment. Sheila said that during the February 14 conference call she asked why the number of PDU's on the DocuSign was 380. We think it was 380 without including FSA 4. Sheila asked that the 380 be corrected to include FSA 4. She also provided copies for the committee of 'WG&E Heath costs summary as of 2/11/20' which uses the cost estimates of Rich's 12/3/19 spreadsheet with corrections and additions.

An annual report for 2019 is needed for the Town Report by March 5. Art will write it. Bob Bourke also writes a report on broadband. Committee members received copies of Bob's report last year.

The committee discussed how Heath could use funds from General Stabilization to help fund the Town's drop policy. The MLP Advisory Committee recommends transferring \$200,000 from General Stabilization into a fund to be used for broadband drops. Sheila sent by email to the Selectboard several 'urgent questions' including: Can such a transfer be done at a Special Town Meeting?; If it were done, would the transferred funds be available before July 1?; Should the transfer be into a new broadband stabilization fund or into an existing broadband fund?; and Do we have permission to reach out to town counsel Mark Reich if you don't have the answers?

The committee prepared an agenda for the MLP Board meeting February 25 and sent it to the Town Coordinator:

1. Updated Heath telecommunications cost summary
2. Charlemont edge case agreement
3. Recommendation about Network Operator
4. Schedule for next couple of months leading to going online
5. Use funds from General Stabilization to help fund a drop policy

Sheila has sent Doug White of the Charlemont Broadband Committee a draft IGA for the 3 houses on Bassett Road in Charlemont. She said in the letter that we have learned in talking with WG&E that there is a cleaner way to manage pole responsibilities and ownership for poles associated edge cases. Joe Parda will research legal process to transfer pole ownership. The draft agreement says that after Heath

has been billed by TriWire for the drops it will be reimbursed by Charlemont. Sheila will inform us when she receives feedback from Charlemont.

The committee examined an Axia bill for \$4,621.39. The bill is for Phoenix middle-mile work plus a 10% administrative fee. Ned made a motion seconded by Margo to approve the bill. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee reviewed Art's draft recommendation for Heath's choosing WiredWest to be its Network Operator. Sheila thinks that the third bullet is one of the most important. As a member of WiredWest Heath will be able to appoint a Heath telecommunications department manager who will be a liaison to the WiredWest Board and will benefit from the experience of other WiredWest towns. This will save the town money. The committee recommended a few additional edits to the handout.

Sheila made a motion seconded by Margo to approve the recommendation as emended to join the WiredWest Network. The motion passed unanimously. Sheila said that Jan also is in favor of the motion.

Art invited by phone WiredWest's Executive Director Jim Drawe to come visit the MLP Advisory Committee meeting the morning of February 25. We will go over the spreadsheet with him. Art requested that Jim send a copy of the WiredWest contract. We will tell the BOS on February 25 that we can arrange for Jim to come to a BOS meeting at some future time.

The marketing campaign and web portal are expected to go online in April. Art said that we probably will not know the exact cost of each drop until there are built and billed.

The committee discussed work in the coming months and role of the broadband liaison and the committee.

The committee discussed fiber throughout town and determined to discontinue exploration of a wireless solution to reach some parts of Mohawk Estates.

Work continues to resolve the PDU count.

The next conference call with WG&E will be on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 12:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

