

Minutes of the Heath MLP Advisory Committee Conference Call

April 28, 2020

Time: 11:00 am

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

Art called the meeting to order at 11:12 am. Sheila said that on April 24 Rich Carnall of WG&E sent an email update of the color-coded spreadsheet giving estimates of construction costs. He had first sent us this in early December of last year. Rich says that the Axia bills should not be added there but added instead to the make-ready. Also, he assumed at first a take rate of 100% leading to an estimated construction cost of \$2.01 million whereas assuming a 75% take rate leads to a construction cost estimate of \$1.82 million.

Art said that Kent Lew would be happy to review our finance sheets with us. Jan noted that Kent would likely have worked with sheets having the format used by WG&E. Regarding a drop policy, Art asked Kent about the difference between using a percent versus a fixed amount. Kent said he had not heard of a town having a drop policy that uses a percent. He said it could be valid. People with standard drops who would have paid nothing end up paying something and thereby help some people having long driveways. Jan said that not all people who live at the end of long driveways have financial resources.

The discussion turned to Joe Parda's construction schedule. Joe's projected start date is July 6. The completion dates for the 4 FSA's are November 21, January 31, May 31, and finishing at Mohawk Estates on July 31, 2021.

Art asked Sheila a question about the DocuSign process. When a DocuSign comes in and gets approved, an invoice comes in later. Do we need to see and approve the invoice again? The MLPAC recommends Hilma get verbal approval at least from Sheila before any Broadband invoice is paid.

Sheila asked whether we want the Heath Network to pay for the MLP manager. There was a consensus that for the first year at least the compensation will be included in Article 3. It is our goal to have compensation covered by Heath network surplus.

Members read the minutes of April 21. Sheila made a motion seconded by Margo to approve the April 21 minutes with emendations. The motion passed unanimously. Members read the minutes of April 24. Sheila made a motion seconded by Jan to approve the minutes with emendations.

The schedule of May meetings is as follows:

12:00 pm May 13 and May 27 for WG&E conference call with all the towns

2:00 pm May 8 and May 22 with WG&E

May 5 9:30 am

“ 12 9:30

“ 19 11:00

1:00 pm with Bill Ennen

“ 26 9:30 am

On May 20 at 7 pm there will be a Wired West Board meeting.

Sheila reported that in the town's salary scale system the job of MLP Manager comes out at grade 11, the same grade as for the Town Nurse and Library Director. In this grade the minimum hourly wage is \$18.63 and the maximum is \$24.87. After some discussion members agreed to recommend a place holder of \$10,000 on Art 3 for compensation to MLP Manager

Sheila introduced 2 new invoices:

National Grid \$238.34

Verizon, make-ready \$11,427.00

Sheila made a motion seconded by Jan to approve the invoices. The motion passed unanimously.

At 12:54 the committee recessed to reconvene at 1:00.

Meeting reconvened at 1:00 pm

Present: Sheila, Jan, Art, and Ned, joined by Bill Ennen on a conference call.

Sheila reported several items to Bill. We have another refund check from Verizon dated April 24 for \$11,060.17. We are still waiting for the completion of the licensing of one pole application. National Grid has been charging sales tax for bills for power at the hut. Bill said he will follow-up on the charging of the sales tax as an action item. Sheila told Bill that our latest PDU count is 557. Jan told Bill that WG&E has that number now. Most of the change is due to Mohawk Estates where our new number is 217.

Bill explained the meaning of 'service pole reduction'. Any town getting additional make-ready state aid did not receive it for service poles, as these are on private property and not eligible for Make Ready.

Bill said that he would send us a revised version of the Heath cost worksheet to calculate the final payment of funds to Heath for make-ready. In answering a question about the timing of additional make-ready funds from the state, Bill said that based on the experience of a town that has recently received its funds it takes 2 weeks to turn the contract and 2 weeks for the disbursement. The application for extra funds has 3 parts:

1. A letter from the Select Board
2. The worksheet
3. A word document that provides a narrative of special circumstances.

Bill said that the vast majority of Heath's costs are standard. Jan asked whether the poles in Mohawk Estates on private roads are a special circumstance that need to be included on Part 3 on the form/narrative describing special circumstances. Bill answered no. There appears to be very little that would appear in part 3 for Heath.

Jan asked about percent versus a fixed amount in a drop policy. Bill said he had not ever heard of a percent being used. He did not give any reason for not having a drop policy using a percent. He said that to help homeowners stretch payment for drops over time 3 or 4 towns are talking with Berkshire Bank.

Bill said that there is one pole license yet to be issued. A problem on Burrington Road requires a mixing of crews which can't be done due to Covid-19 restrictions. As an action step Bill will try to get a temporary pass allowing work around this in construction.

Bill said that ride-out has taken place, work orders are in the queue, and 26 issues, all of them Verizon's, remain. Art asked about the 140 issues that turned up in ride-out. Bill said that although ride-out usually cannot occur before licensing is complete, Heath was fortunate to have ride-out completed before that, and National Grid has resolved all those 140 issues.

Sheila asked, "How do we know when make-ready is done?" Bill said that once the 2 companies indicate they're done, we turn to MBI who finishes within 30 days. Then WG&E orchestrates the construction kickoff.

Bill said that he has not received Heath's March quarterly report.

Bill said that additional bandwidth will be installed on Friday, May 1 at Sawyer Hall by WG&E. He said that at Goshen's website there is guidance regarding safety at extra bandwidth sites.

The next 2 conference calls with Bill will be at 1 pm on May 19 and at 1 pm on June 16.

Bill said that his notes tell him that Phoenix middle mile work is basically finished in Heath. He reminded us of Deb Wagner's advice that any refund should go to the account from which it was originally paid.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45,

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf

