

Minutes of the Heath MLPAC Meeting
March 23, 2021 at 11 am

Present: MLPAC: Art Schwenger, Jan Carr, Anne Emmet, Paul Dabrody, and Ned Wolf
MLP Manager, Sheila Litchfield

Art called the meeting to order at 11:08. Members read the minutes of the 11 o'clock MLPAC meeting on March 16th. Anne made a motion to accept the minutes with emendations. Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Members read the minutes of the 2 o'clock MLPAC meeting with WG&E on March 16. Jan made a motion to accept the minutes. Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jan will check after the meeting about 2 adjacent properties on West Branch Road. There is a request for service at a property where there is no house. Sheila cited this as just one example of how people serving on the MLB will need to research properties and their eligibility for service. Jan expressed interest in being available as a consultant.

Art and Sheila reported on the discussion of billing that occurred at the Wired West meeting for the situation where the drop billing exceeds the town subsidy. Wired West has said it can handle the billing. There are towns that are handling it themselves. Sheila suggested that we create a database using the costs of the drops. There are only 11 not counting 2 that were not in the original design. The total of the estimated overages is \$13,418.

Paul volunteered to check with Hilma about handling the overages internally. Ned made a motion that the MLPAC explore having the town handle the billing for overages when the drop subsidy does not cover the cost of the drop. Anne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheila said that WiredWest pays for the operating cost of Lifeline which is handled by WG&E. Broadband subscribers who qualify for Lifeline get a discount. Those who qualify for Lifeline may also be eligible for the Emergency Broadband Benefit of up to \$50 /mo.

Art reported on a dwelling far in the woods off Bassett Road in Charlemont where the owner is now showing interest in subscribing to broadband. The property lacks a 911 number and was not included in Charlemont's original design. In our agreement with Charlemont Heath would build the drop and Charlemont would reimburse us. Sheila said that the estimate for the drop installation is \$947.62, and the estimated cost to get to the house is \$3,945. She said that the Heath MLP will have to pay the pole attachment fees for 11 new poles at approximately \$7 per pole per month. We need to ask WG&E what make ready work was done near this site. There will need to be a meeting where the MLB recommends that the Select Board sign the IRA agreement between Charlemont and Heath.

Sheila reported having received an invoice from WG&E for work done by TriWire:

Feb. 6 – Feb. 27	Weeks 19 -22	work by TriWire	\$11,944.83, amount certified
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to be paid from the broadband borrowing account. Ned made a motion to pay the \$11,944.83 in the above invoice. Jan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Sheila asked Art whether we're OK with repairs to the hut. Art reported that the repainting of a rusted portion of the metal doorframe as well as 2 spots on the air-conditioner looks like a good job. He has taken photographs of the repairs.

Sheila said that last Thursday we shared with the MLB the information that we do not have to change our drop policy for Mohawk Estates. Jenny Hamilton openly supports the walkabout to assess each site. We will be thinking of statements to send to her for the Estates' newsletter with deadline April 17.

Sheila recalled Gloria's asking at the MLB meeting about municipal drops and when the billing would occur. The billing for Sawyer Hall, the Community Hall, and Highway/Fire would occur in FY21. Sheila said that TriWire recently installed a fiber distribution panel in Sawyer Hall, but Heath hasn't necessarily planned for a municipal network. Joe Parada has said that Heath could have one municipal subscription instead of 2 or 3. A municipal network remains a possibility.

Sheila said that we are still waiting on whether or not WiredWest or Westfield will change their policy regarding the suspension of subscriptions.

Art said that according to our drop policy all electronic components in the drop installation including the drop fiber cable remain the property of the Town or of Whip City Fiber. Any rental fee for the router is included in the subscription fee.

Sheila said that once we know the cost of construction we would after November have to make a decision on cold drops. Art said it would be good to have an estimate for the cost of construction by August or September.

Anne made a motion to adjourn at 12:38. Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf