

Minutes of the Meeting of the Heath MLPAC with Bill Ennen
April 6, 2021 at 1 pm

Present: Last Mile Liaison, Bill Ennen
MLPAC: Art Schwenger, Jan Carr, Anne Emmet, Paul Dabrody, and Ned Wolf with Bill Fontes
and Dave Gordon visiting
MLP Manager, Sheila Litchfield

Sheila informed Bill of Heath's May 7th election and the names of the 5 candidates for seats on the MLB. She also reported that technicians were in her house installing broadband and that both Ned and Paul have appointments for their installations on April 14.

Sheila said that Hilma has sent Bill the updated version of the quarterly report.

Sheila spoke of the amendment on which Bill worked to the IGA with WG&E. The amendment says that the state will reimburse WG&E for underground work in the hill towns.

Bill confirmed Sheila's account and added that last summer he began discussions with WG&E on speeding up the pace of installations. The amendment to the IGA affords tactics that enable WG&E and TriWire to take advantage of a software upgrade to a call center shared by 6 towns including Heath. WG&E has told Bill that the tactics will make it easier for Heath to provide Bill the documentation needed in getting its drop subsidy. The goal is to keep a bevy of installers in the region all the time. This is made possible by minimizing the likelihood that in a team of 5 installers one ends up with nothing to do. That would be an extra cost not covered by the state. Bill expressed confidence that there would be sufficient funds for the cost saving tactics to be applied to Heath.

The discussion turned to last week's outage and what could be done about it. Bill is refraining from weighing in until he has more knowledge of what engineers think the solution is. Art spoke of how profoundly Heath was affected. Bill said he thinks that the legislators are aware. He said that as 10,000 subscribers light up we'll become more vulnerable. He said he knows that there were cost limitations on MBI in its using a federal grant to construct the middle mile. Who should be responsible for the costs? Bill will urge scrutinizing any outages in the last 2 years.

Bill said that in responding to the outage, Tom Flaherty, General Manager of WG&E, was on the scene immediately, but WG&E was dependent on information that they could not obtain. Bill is pleased that Tom Flaherty has joined his weekly Monday morning call with WG&E.

The next 2 meetings with Bill and the Heath MLPAC will be as follows: May 4 at 1 pm
June 1 at 1 pm

Sheila furnished Bill with email addresses for Bill Fontes and David Gordon as he requested.

Bill said that every month he's had a phone call with the Lieutenant Governor and the utilities. He raised concerns in February about TriWire's performance. He is looking forward to hearing next week that TriWire is on the mark.

Bill reported on continuing efforts to remediate a bad decision by the FCC to award the Charter company census blocks around Massachusetts where other companies are building networks. A team is trying to get Charter to return any financial gain from their award. Charter will have to pay a small fine.

Bill said that it is not known whether Heath can use any funds it receives from the American Rescue Plan to pay down debt from broadband. He said that writing Representatives Neal and McGovern would help. The DLS is crucial in understanding how funds like those in the American Rescue Plan or the CARES Act can be used.

The meeting adjourned at 1:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf