

Minutes of the Heath MLPAC Meeting  
April 13, 2021 at 11 am

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

Art called the meeting to order at 11:05.

He reported a conversation he had with Caitrin Ferriter of WG&E about cold drops. Caitrin was asking whether underground cold drops in Heath should be on hold. After some discussion the consensus was that we want to decide on whether cold drops get a credit before TriWire leaves but not before we have a clear picture of our construction costs. If people don't want to take the risk of paying for a cold drop, they should take a hot drop. Art will tell Caitrin that the Town won't do underground cold drops until we know they'll get funded.

Bill asked why anyone would hang the fiber to a house as in a cold drop without completing the installation. Art said that having that part of the job done could reduce the cost later, and it could increase the selling price of the house. If there's already a cold drop, completing the installation later wouldn't depend so much on a large truck being available.

Members read the minutes of the April 6 MLPAC meeting at 11. Anne made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Members read the minutes of the April 6 MLPAC meeting with Bill Ennen at 1. Anne made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Members read the minutes of the April 6 MLPAC meeting with WG&E and TriWire at 2. Paul made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Jan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Members read the minutes of the April 6 MLPAC meeting with NEIT at 2:30. Anne made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheila said that she has submitted the narrative of the quarterly report. Hilma will add information from the Treasurer and send the report to bill Ennen tomorrow.

Sheila said that she has made edits to the Amendment to the IGA with WG&E that Bill Ennen spoke of in our meeting on April 6. She has sent the edited version on three occasions to Caitrin who has sent it back without the edits. Finally, Sheila has sent the edited version to the Select Board for their signature. Art will inform Caitrin of this.

Art said that there will be a Wired West Board meeting next Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 pm. Sheila remarked that we are still waiting for the status of the hut monitoring contract. We are also awaiting the revision of the disconnect policy.

Sheila reported an invoice from both Axia and Local Link.

\$1,100. For make-ready work for which we will be reimbursed

Ned made a motion to approve the invoice. Jan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheila said that Charlemont hopes for a decision in the Bassett Rd. edge case by April 19. Will the town pay for connecting the third house? If Charlemont decides 'no', Heath is not obligated to connect the house. We will need to decide whether paying to connect the house would be profitable. If WG&E can convince us it would be cost effective, we might favor it.

The first houses have lit up in Heath and include Sheila's, Paul's, and Ned's.

MLPAC members including Jan have expressed interest in going on the Mohawk Estates walkthrough. Dave asked about the status of WG&E's looking into hardened ONT's for FSA 4. Sheila said that WG&E is pricing them, and the quantity will be determined by the walkthrough.

Jan reported that we have 363 unique locations. The subscription rates for FSA's 1, 2, and 3 are in the high 70's or low 80's. Art will ask Jim Drawe to send all members his interactive spreadsheet for income estimates.

The MLPAC looked ahead to meeting with the MLB on Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup>. Jan asked about stipends for the MLB that is to be elected May 7<sup>th</sup>. The MLB will meet between 12 and 25 times a year. Other committees which meet that frequently have \$500 stipends for member and \$750 for the Chair.

Anne suggested we consider a separate budget line for fire department and emergency operations.

Bill expressed some concern about the municipal buildings having their own network. He said they would share one ONT. Its failure would be uncommon but would mean no internet for all town buildings. He suggested there may be a backup system we can talk about with NEIT.

Dave asked about the presence of MBI following the installation throughout the Town of broadband. Art said that the MBI cable, which went down on Taylor Brook Road, will still be our only connection to the middle mile until redundancy is figured out.

At Thursday's meeting we will supply the MLB with 3 documents related to the transition from the MLPAC to the MLB: Sheila's checklist, Responsibilities and Purview of the MLB from last July, and Art's transition plan from the MLPAC to the MLB.

There was a consensus to add, as Sheila suggested, the following bullet under #3 in the transition plan: interface with Select Board and Town.

Members discussed the proposal to erect a 180' tower. A special permit is needed because the proposed height exceeds the 110' that would be sufficient for first responders and for improving cell service. The Planning Board has scheduled a public hearing for April 29<sup>th</sup>. The committee is concerned about the project's potential to draw customers from Heath Broadband. We are also aware of people in town who might want good cell service and first responder service. Could there be something written into the original agreement that provides a subsidy if the tower drains Heath Broadband customers?

Anne made a motion to adjourn at 1:08. Paul seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ned Wolf