

Town of Florida, MA

Town Hall

379 Mohawk Trail, Drury, MA 01343

FHMS Four-Town Broadband Committee Meeting

A meeting of the FHMS 4-Town Broadband Committee was held at the Florida Town Hall on Thursday, January 9th, 2020 at 4:30 pm.

MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance (*voting member):

Hawley: Lark Thwing,* Rick Kean
Florida: Christine Dobbert,*
Monroe: David Gagne* (Absent)
Savoy: John Tynan*
DesignNine: Jack Maytum (Via Phone)
WiValley: Brian Foucher
OTELCO: Trevor Jones (Absent)
Interisle: Steve Harris
Others: Laury Wills, Charlemont; Tommy Lewis, Florida; Cindy Bosley, Florida Selectboard; Ronald Bosley, Florida; Don Alvarado, Florida; Judith Arigoni, Florida; Mike Bedini, Florida Selectboard; Kevin Poirot, Florida; Neil Oleson, Florida Selectboard; Doug Decoigne, Florida

Minutes
Approved,
FHMS Four-Towns
Committee,
March 5, 2020

Call to Order:

A quorum was declared and the meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm.

- 1. Review and acceptance of minutes:** The minutes of the November 21 and December 5, 2019 meetings were reviewed and unanimously approved by the voting members present.
- 2. Update on OML complaint:** Lark reported that a meeting was held on December 9, 2019 to develop a response to the Open Meeting Law complaint filed by Laury Wills and that a written reply was sent within

the required time frames to the Division of Open Government, Office of the Attorney General (Commonwealth of Massachusetts).

3. **Open Discussion:** During the 35 minute period between the time the meeting was convened and when WiValley President Brian Foucher arrived to give his report, an open discussion ensued between most of the meeting "audience" (signified by "Others" in the attendance list at the beginning of this document) and project members. Florida Selectboard members expressed concern about the moving target for project completion, and Florida residents were concerned about when they could expect to get connected to the network.

While some of these questions were fielded by Lark Thwing and other project members, most were reserved for Brian Foucher.

4. **Initial Discussion:** Brian spent the first 10 minutes or so fielding questions about the status of the network construction project and why more residences were not already up and live. He answered by stating that earlier delays in supplies, changes brought about by test results, etc., made it **imperative that WiValley concentrate on building out the infrastructure first, and connecting customers to existing network apparatus second.**

Having said that, Brian made two points:

- a) Even when weather is so severe that no progress can be made planting poles, a crew is working to pre-assemble and configure the hardware that goes on the poles; and,
 - b) WiValley has two crews working all the time, but they also handle WiValley's other telecomm networks.
5. **Steps Needed to get WiValley Paid** – Both Brian and Lark mentioned that WiValley had not yet been paid for work already accomplished and purchases made. When asked how the rest of the Four Towns committee could help, Brian and Lark indicated that they felt the process was under control, and that Brian is completing a revised, phased implementation plan (see # 6, just below) that should help release the funds.
 6. **Update on Brian Foucher's Report for MBI and OTELCO** Brian related that he is working on a detailed Critical Path Analysis with MBI -- a "Review of Phase I, IAA, Pole Stand-up and Future Phases" -- which

would affect project priorities, funding and construction timing. While that document was not ready for distribution in full at the time of this meeting (1/9/2020) because of pending revisions, the following two charts were included which detail project status as of the January 9 meeting date (see below):

- 7. Status of Borden Mountain Pole:** Given other changes in the network, Borden Mountain is now spec'd out as an 80' tall wooden utility pole with guy wires. A meeting is needed with DCR and the affected electrical utility(ies) to finalize permitting prior to installation. Meanwhile, WiValley has secured a 10' X 12' metal shed to handle ground level electronics. Finalization expected by end of January, 2020.
- 8. Publicity and Website Presence:** A gentleman named Simon Zelaso who has been following the FHMS project on the web, contacted Lark and expressed a desire to help. He did help during the conversation by pointing out that a lot could be done with the various entries on the Hawley website, the Florida Facebook Kiosk and the OTELCO dedicated webpage to keep the public better informed about the progress of the project. Lark brought Mr. Zelaso's concerns to the project meeting.

Several meeting participants indicated a desire for a more current way to keep community members updated on the progress of the project. Currently information about the project is being displayed via:

- a) A Florida Facebook Kiosk put up by Cindy Bosley (progress in FL) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1689044774752231/>
- b) A dedicated page on the OTELCO Website (pricing, signup) <https://www.otelco.com/fhms/>
- c) A dedicated page on the Town of Hawley Website (FHMS Four Town meeting minutes, other official documents): <http://www.townofhawley.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/Broadband/Four-Towns/four-towns-documents-page.html>

It was decided after discussing the various options that since the Hawley site currently carries the most information, that a "Reports and Summaries" section would be added to provide information on a more current basis.

- 9. Customer Feedback to OTELCO, WiValley or Anyone Else:** Rick reported that the feedback from signed up and connected customers had not changed from the positive report given earlier. Three new customers had been added to the list – two more in Hawley –bringing the total number to 27. These three have not been queried yet. Rick said he would continue the process of polling new customers as soon as time allowed.
- 10. Any other items of Business Not Known at the Time of This Posting:** There were none.
- 11. Set Next Meeting Date:** The date for the next meeting of the FHMS Four Towns Broadband Project was set for Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 4:30 pm the Florida Town Hall.

Meeting Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Lark Thwing at 5:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Kean
1/26/2020