

			
<b>Florida, MA</b>	<b>Hawley, MA</b>	<b>Monroe, MA</b>	<b>Savoy, MA</b>

## Four Towns Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes - **Draft**

A meeting of the FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee took place on Thursday, February, 17, 2022.

### **In Attendance:**

- Hawley: Lark Thwing\* & Rick Kean
- Florida: Christine Dobbert\* Mike Bedini
- Monroe: David Gagne\*
- Savoy: Melanie Glynn\* Justin Kaczowski
- DesignNine: Jack Maytum
- WiValley: Brian Foucher
- Otelco: Trevor Jones (absent)
- Interisle: Steve Harris & Fred Goldstein

### \*Voting Members

Other participants: Sarah Satterthwaite, Cindy Bosley, Lo Hartnett, David Prum, Joan Wotkowicz. Note: there may have been other participants who did not identify themselves and/or who were physically present at the Florida Town Hall.

### **Quorum, Call to Order**

A quorum was established, and the Meeting called to order at 4:31 pm.

### **Review and approve minutes from the August meeting**

Minutes of the October 21 meeting were approved unanimously as written by the voting members present.

### ➤ **Total homes connected and number in each town**

A total of 339 homes have been connected:

- 82 in Florida
- 110 in Hawley
- 31 in Monroe
- 116 in Savoy

➤ **Review status of Phase IV payment**

Topic skipped.

➤ **Brian Foucher' report**

Brian reported that no new sites were added but numerous improvements were made to existing locations and network streamlining.

Article 97 legislation is now on the MA Governor's desk, and is expected to be signed next week followed by an agreement between DCAMM, DCR and Savoy regarding use of Borden Mountain property to install a permanent pole site. At that point a DCR Construction Access Permit will also be required.

Brian explained the site's importance, in terms of the increased number of users it could serve, as well as the increased performance that could be expected using the full-sized pole over the temporary one that is currently in place.

In the midst of it all, Brian said, the recent severe ice storm caused outages throughout the network, in some cases for several days. The ice affected tree penetration, not equipment.

This was just at a time when Otelco lost a considerable portion of its support staff due to the Pandemic (COVID), requiring recruitment and training of new staff members, causing servicing delays.

In addition, performance of some equipment has been below manufacturers' projections and below what WiValley has experienced with those same types of equipment in New Hampshire.

As a result, Brian said that Otelco has taken some customers off billing because of poor system performance. Lark raised the possibility of establishing a lower tier of billing/service for those customers now receiving consistent but poor service and no bill. That idea was discussed but not acted on during this meeting.

WiValley has put in a great deal more effort and expense in building the network than they've been paid for by MBI.

Lark: WiValley's payment is being held up by lack of Certificates of Completion from Florida and Savoy. Brian will meet with select boards for Florida and Savoy.

It may be possible to receive more funding via the state Infrastructure bill, Brian said, but that's a couple of years out.

During this segment of the meeting, there were several complaints re: extended waits for promised service. Brian and Lark emphasized that progress is still being made, despite the long delay in Borden Mountain approval.

➤ **Are we ready to connect customers outside of four towns?**

Topic skipped.

➤ **Comments, questions, testimonials**

Rick Kean reported that WiValley had substantially increased service to his residence and had set up an effective relay to his sister's residence nearby.

Several customers brought up lack of service or performance issues at various locations. WiValley made detailed note of this feedback and said it will follow up.

➤ **Comments from MBI**

Topic skipped.

➤ **Comments from Design Nine**

Topic skipped.

➤ **Next meeting date**

Topic skipped.

➤ **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

