





FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee Meeting

			
Florida, MA	Hawley, MA	Monroe, MA	Savoy, MA

There was a teleconference meeting of the FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee on Thursday, April 30, 2020 at 4:45 pm. (Note: This meeting was recorded.)

MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance (All via phone):

Florida:	Christine Dobbert*
Hawley:	Lark Thwing*, Rick Kean, Hussain Hamdan, Pam Shrimpton
Monroe:	David Gagne* - (Absent)
Savoy:	John Tynan*
Project Manager:	Jack Maytum, DesignNine
WiValley:	Brian Foucher
InterIsle:	Steve Harris

Minutes
Approved,
FHMS Four-Towns
Committee,
June 4, 2020

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*Voting Members

**Some more additional, unidentified, people may have been on this call.

Call to Order

Chairman Lark Thwing declared a quorum and called the teleconference meeting to order @ 4:48 pm.

- **Minutes from the March 5, 2020 meeting:**

These minutes were unanimously approved as written by the voting members present on the call.

- **Status of Phase 1AA and 1B payments to WiValley.**

Lark said he had sent in the paperwork to MBI; Brian said he'd already received the money.

- **Report from Brian Foucher on:**

- **Status of free hotspots provided by MBI (state) for the four towns**

- Brian said that he was working with ACCESS+ and Axia. By the end of next week, sites should be up and running. He said that additional hotspots were being created, beyond what was being done for the Four Towns by MBI, well. Case in point: there is now a hot spot down near the Hoosick Tunnel. When asked, Brian indicated that the hotspots were being set for 20 mbps service.
- Queried by John, Brian stated that the hotspots were all being provided as free services by the providers until September 1. Beyond that, a decision about continuation would have to be made. He indicated that even after September 1, WiValley would make certain locations free as a concession if the situation warranted.
- John then focused on the proper location for hot spots in his town, Savoy, given the closeness of traffic to the parking areas on Route 116, and the necessity of keeping the lanes clear at the Firehouse for emergencies. Steve then brought up the school, and the area near Chapel Road, and John said he thought that might be better.
- John pointed out that the problem with Rte. 116 at the Savoy Town Hall is that it would appeal primarily to the people driving by. Lark commented that the purpose of the network was to serve the Community, not people using the road to get somewhere else.

- **Poles fully operational and providing service to customers.**

- Brian: We've got another pole up and operational near Hoosick Tunnel – "MHT"

- **Total number of customers being served now.**

- Brian: 84 total -- 47 in Florida, 29 in Savoy, 8 in Hawley.

- Lark asked about Monroe; Brian answered that there would be nothing in Monroe until they get the relay link in place.
- Lark asked about a customer list for Rick. Brian said he would take care of it. Lark added that he would like Rick to “walk through” a speed test to see what customers are actually getting as compared to what the plan says they should be getting.
- Lark used the West Hawley highway garage as a case in point. Brian explained that at the moment, the signal to the garage is coming off the back side of the fixture on the pole on West Hill Road, which is actually aimed at Savoy. That will change when the CBRS is installed there rather than the 900 mhz. Steve added that this planned upgrade should be explained to/by Rick when he goes out to the customers so as to avoid confusion. Brian said that at the moment, this was the only instance of such a hookup,

➤ **Poles fully set up but waiting for electrical hookup by utilities.**

- Monroe Town hall, is all built – waiting for Rowe and Thayer to come on-line
- Whitcomb Hill Extension
- Florida-Whitcomb Hill Summit (Millers Road)
- Monroe Hill Road - Rowe
- Main East of Loop – Savoy
- Main Loop West – Savoy
- Forge Hill Road -- Hawley
- Lark asked about the pole on Forget Road next to Doane Cemetery and was reminded that that was a Phase III site, and not part of this discussion (however, it is set up and is waiting for power, pending a National Grid pole hearing).

➤ **Brian summarized by saying: “So by the 15th (of May) we hope to have everything completed for Phase II.”**

➤ **Brian went on to list the poles that were up but not configured yet:**

- Side Hill Farm, Hawley Town Hall, Haskins & Bannis, Savoy Town Hall, Windsor Road (just south of the Savoy Town Hall), South Haskins

- **Poles waiting for pole hearings**
 - West Hawley Road near Savoy Road (Lark added that the Town of Hawley had to file a notice of intent for this one), Stetson Road, Forget Road near Doane Cemetery (National Grid), East Hawley Road near Sisum property.

- **Poles where locations are not yet confirmed.**
 - Brian said, "The rest of them."

- **Status of getting the (East) Hawley Fire Dept set up as a customer with a hotspot.**
 - As a result of what's needed to set up hot spots in Towns other than Hawley, Brian said that that item had taken a bit of a back seat – perhaps the firehouse could be done after the hotspot in Savoy, week after next.

- **Status of Borden Mountain site.**
 - Brian said that WiValley's Consultant, Counterpoint, can start working up the drawings now that the payments are flowing, so they can get their applications in and start meetings and hearings.

When asked by Lark for a timeframe, Brian said he expected all the permits to be in place by the end of summer. He said he couldn't hazard a guess at the time for when the Borden Mountain tower would be up and operating, except to reemphasize the tower's importance as more of the other sites come up and continue to add customers.

- **Expected completion of Phase 2**
 - Brian said that by the 15th of May, phase two should be complete.

- **Expected completion of Phase 3**
 - Brian said he felt "pretty confident" about the end of June.

- **Expected completion of Phase 4**
 - Brian noted that some additional pole hearings and location testing would be involved in Savoy, so his best estimate for

completion was late August or early September – but “before the leaves come off the trees.”

➤ **Effect of Covid-19 on progress.**

- Brian: It has had some effect on our technicians’ availability because of family issues. Not much impact as far as construction is concerned.

➤ **Problems or delays, i.e., finances, availability of parts, subcontractors, etc.**

- Brian: Weather – **mud and high-wind** days have been a problem, limiting work using the bucket truck.
- WiValley has had to do a lot **more three-topping**, with land-owner permission, north of Hoosick Tunnel than originally thought, in order to get the signal over to Whitcomb Hill Summit.
- **Financing** has been a major factor in **ordering materials** – Brian thinks they’ve got most things ordered now, except for the CBRS systems, which we’ll be ordering soon.

● **Comments from Design Nine**

- Jack Maytum said he did not have much to add at this point. He said it sounds like Brian is making progress and that this is a tough time of the year, based on all the schedules he’s trying to meet.
- Brian responded that this is the best time of year **to** be building; that’s why he was out in the field today.

● **Feedback from customers or towns.**

- John reported that Jerry Bergeron in Savoy has some issues. Brian responded that he is having user experience problems that WiValley can’t reproduce. Brian said that there will be some of those situations.
- Brian stated that there are some oversubscription problems off of Bliss Hill in Florida because the 900’s have not been replaced by CBRS, yet. In the meantime, only one of the two sectors was carrying the traffic, so WiValley replaced the radio on the other

sector today. There was no feedback on that adjustment, yet.

- Rick commented that he had just received a revised spreadsheet from Kate at WiValley that would allow him to start the process of calling again. He also mentioned that one of his neighbors, who had never been much interested in the Internet before, had a chance, because of COVID-19, to speak with his little grandson in England from the Boston area via Face Time and now wants to know when Hawley's system will be up and running.
- Lark reported that he gets at least one call a week asking when the network will be up and running.
- Hussain commented that he has some clients in the Town of Florida who are very impressed with the system's capabilities.
- **Need for another press release?**
 - The consensus of the group was that a press release is not needed at this time.
- **Any other business not anticipated.**
 - Pam praised Lark for his presentation on the status of Hawley poles on the Hawley website:
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1lquEh0c5O0TqXhYefqAIOVhm4mR5qkbXzxMSxYxFr0/edit?usp=sharing>
- **Set next meeting date.**
 - Thursday June 4 at 4:45 pm. It will be a teleconference call.

Adjournment: Chairman Lark Thwing adjourned the teleconference meeting at 5:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Rick Kean