

Town of Hawley
8 Pudding Hollow Road
Hawley, MA 01339
(413) 339-5518

Minutes
Unanimously
Approved,
FHMS Four-Towns
Committee,
August 22, 2019

Town of Florida, MA

Town Hall
379 Mohawk Trail, Drury, MA 01343

FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee Meeting
-and-
Town of Hawley Communications Committee Meeting (if quorum)

A meeting of the FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee took place on
Thursday, July 25, 2019, at 4:30 pm in Florida Town Hall.

MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance:

Florida: Christine Dobbert*, Cindy Bosley
Hawley: Lark Thwing*, Rick Kean, Constance Emmett
Monroe: David Gagne*
Savoy: John Tynan*
WiValley: Brian Foucher
DesignNine: Jack Maytum (via phone)
Interisle: Steve Harris

* Voting Members

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lark Thwing at 4:35 pm.

1. Approve minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the 4/11/19 meeting, which were prepared by Steve Harris, were approved unanimously by the assembled group.

2. Update report from Brian Foucher, WiValley President:

Brian's report focused on eight issues:

✦ **Delays (and cost overruns) caused by pole supply problems throughout the Southeast:**

Poles are just now becoming available again – to meet time frames, Brian has had to deal directly with producers rather than intermediaries. First three poles arrived in E. Mass on 7/25/19. The second order of poles is due to arrive in the latter part of August. The third order was canceled by the vendor and could be reordered with a 90-120 day delivery. Brian can get the remaining poles out west but the cost would be \$18,000 above budget with a 30 day delivery. The \$18,000 could come out of the contingency funds. WiValley's share of that would be \$4500, the 4-towns' share of the extra pole cost would average ~\$850 for each town and MBI would pay the rest. These amounts were agreed to in principle (subject to Selectboard approval by each Town) by the parties.

✦ **Berkshire East (BE) was added to Phase I.**

A temporary pole, which is expected to reach 85 of the 92 customers when the replacement pole goes up, was installed in the meantime. To maximize the customers with currently available poles, the permanent pole at BE will be put off until Phase II. It was agreed to defer to Brian as to how to deploy poles as they become available.

✦ **Brian announced that existing network will go from a 75 MB bandwidth to a 250 MB capacity.**

This will allow the network to continue to expand without compromising existing users.

✦ **Decision about dominant antenna frequency to deploy throughout the network:**

Brian (and Fred Goldstein, Interisle) have decided that 900 MHZ, rather than 3.65 Ghz(CBRS) is the way to go, for now, for most pole positions in the network, with TV White Space being held in reserve for the more challenging sites.

✦ **Free install policies as the network comes on line:**

Brian announced that the policy agreed to between WiValley and Otelco is that installation will be free for all customers until 90 days after the completion of the entire network construction. It is confusing to have different time frames for customers who can be reached at different times, so it was agreed to keep it simple and a free installation until the end of the project.

✦ **The network now has two Internet signal sources at the Chapel location:**

(i) MBI Fiber and (ii) Access Plus via Borden Mountain.

✦ **Engineering Study status at Borden Mountain:**

The best firm to do the study backed away (because of other commitments) from taking it on at first, but at Brian's follow up

request has reengaged; study results should be done shortly. However, Brian said his best guess is that the existing tower will be found lacking and that the eventual solution will be a separate fiber glass monopole – similar to the one at Chapel – also with its own electronics hut.

✦ **Brian announced that 17 users are now up and running:**

15 are in Savoy, and two are in Hawley, all with positive results (see more details in item # 5, below).

3. Review and signing of amendment to the Professional Services Grant changing the date it became effective.

This document(s) was reviewed, discussed and signed by the parties.

4. Discussion and collection of each Town form of compliance indicating WiValley has completed the modified phase 1.

These documents were discussed and signed by all those Selectmen who were present, and arrangements were made by Chairman Lark to gather the remaining signatures.

5. Feedback or testimonials from some of the 17 customers currently connected that Rick Kean is gathering.

Rick reported that at the time of the meeting, eight families had been contacted by email or phone. While a few glitches were reported here and there, the response so far has been overwhelmingly positive. Here is a tally indicating the overall tenor of the responses received so far:

Grade Given	Grade Description	# of Respondents
5	Very Favorable	5
4	Favorable	2
3	Basically Positive	1
2	Unfavorable	0
1	Very Unfavorable	0

Rick agreed to provide WiValley and the Four-Towns Committee with electronic updates as the interaction with Customers progresses.

6. Legate Hill update.

Two Charlemont landowners tried to initiate a suit – however, since no pole petition had been submitted, the judge determined there was nothing to adjudicate.

The same parties also hired a consultant – Isotope – to find an alternative to installing a pole on Legate Hill. That report is under review.

7. Update from Design Nine.

Jack Tatum gave his report via speakerphone. He:

- ✦ Announced that Design Nine would be extending its contract to the end of 2019.
- ✦ Requested a “design count” for each phase of the project.
- ✦ Said Design Nine would be looking for software to implement their part of the network testing program. In answer to this, Brian Foucher responded by offering access to WiValley’s Calix modem testing program, though it would be used in a different way than WiValley would be using it.
- ✦ Requested that the next meeting of the Four Towns Group take place at 4:30 pm, August 22, and that Brian be available earlier that day to show Jack some installations. The Group and Brian agreed to those times and dates.

8. Other business not foreseen. There was none.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 6:05 pm.