

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, September 26th, at 4:40 pm.

In Attendance (*voting member):

Hawley: Lark Thwing*
Florida: Christine Dobbert,* Cindy Bosley and Ron Bosley
Monroe: David Gagne* (absent)
Savoy: John Tynan*
DesignNine: Jack Maytum (on phone)
WiValley: Brian Foucher,
Interisle: Steve Harris



Call to Order:

A quorum was declared and the meeting was called to order, with participant introductions by Chairman Lark Thwing, at 4:40 pm.

1. Review and acceptance of minutes:

The minutes of the August 22, 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.

2. Review of project status:

WiValley was notified that the original order of 28 Southern Yellow Pine poles (enough to complete the entire project not counting possible poles at "reserved" sites) had finally arrived outside of Boston and would be delivered to three locations from which they will be installed. This is good news as it will permit a more timely and efficient installation, and at the original cost.

WiValley is moving to install an 80' guyed wooden pole on Borden Mountain. Access to the existing fire tower had been unlikely, and a pole should prove less costly than a monopole alternative. It should also entail a simpler approval process and more timely installation. MBI is on board with the 80' pole and accompanying shed, and WiValley is doing a plan map for DCR review & approval.

Some poles will be taller than originally planned, which will be particularly helpful in challenging Hawley locations.

WiValley continues to work in close cooperation with MBI, for example, in coordinating power installation with National Grid and Eversource to assure an efficient rollout. They are both giving our project high priority.

WiValley has a crew of four doing site work plus two outside electrical contractors. They will be running conduit to all sites, which will entail some additional work.

Several poles have already been set. The goal will be to always have 10 new poles set ahead of when the WiValley crews arrive. On Friday Sept 27, Brian will be doing Dig Safe contacts for the next 10 poles that will go in.

Additional testing is required before determining optimal locations for the remaining poles.

WiValley is prioritizing 900 MHz installations over 3.65 GHz because of a higher than anticipated \$5 monthly licensing fee for the latter (no license is required for 900 MHz). 900 MHz performance also is turning out to be better than anticipated.

Provided there is timely provision of power, WiValley expects to have installed double the number of poles by our October meeting and have double the number of customers on board.

3. Review of financial status:

Phase I of the project is complete. Phase Ia should be complete and ready for sign-off for payment to WiValley by the next 4-town meeting in October.

WiValley is working with MBI on an alternate payment breakdown since, for example, they have already laid out monies for poles for all four phases, while under the current reimbursement process they will only recoup these costs as the poles are installed and lit. One solution is to break out the pole cost for reimbursement apart from phase completions.

The unanticipated pole delivery has enabled WiValley to cancel orders for more expensive Douglas Fir poles from the West Coast.

Because of the unanticipated high monthly licensing fee, WiValley and OTELCO have determined that the most equitable solution would be to attach a \$5 fee, much like a tax, to the monthly bills of 3.65 GHz customers. Wherever possible, potential 3.65 customers would be offered a 900 MHz alternative.

4. Review of press release:

The press release was discussed and approved with two minor changes. Brian will send to OTELCO for their review and approval. Pending OTELCO approval, Lark will then send to Michael Baldino for MassTech review, approval, and issuance.

5. Any other business not anticipated:

There was none.

6. Set next 4-Town meeting date:

Thursday, October 24th at 4:30 pm.

7. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Harris

10/3/2019