

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

Four Towns Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes

A virtual meeting of the FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee took place on Thursday, October, 21, 2021.

In Attendance:

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

Minutes
 Approved,
 FHMS Four-Towns
 Committee,
 February 17, 2022

Goldstein

*Voting Members

Other participants: Larry Parness, Berkshire Eagle, and Jason Burdick.

Note: there may have been other callers who did not identify themselves.

Quorum, Call to Order

A quorum was established, and the Meeting called to order at 4:33 pm.

Review and approve minutes from the August meeting

Minutes of the August 19 meeting were approved unanimously as written by the voting members present.

➤ Total homes connected and number in each town

A total of 316 homes have been connected:

- 79 in Florida
- 98 in Hawley
- 31 in Monroe
- 108 in Savoy

➤ Number of equipped CBRS access points and homes with CBRS service

~~We now have four sites live with CBRS, with 10 access points and 32 customers connected.~~
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➤ **Borden Mountain update-portable equipment and permanent installation**

All environmental surveys have been approved with letter of acceptance to go ahead. Now waiting for legislative Article 97 approval – on agenda so want to make sure our legislators keep that moving. In the short term we've asked DCR for approval for a temporary installation. We've got an 8' x 8' building with a 40-foot collapsible tower. We're concerned about the weather coming and timing for a full permit from DCR following passage of Article 97 legislation.

Article 97 is now in House subcommittee. Lark spoke with Paul Mark who is trying to get it expedited out of the subcommittee so that it can go to the full house and senate. Rep. Mark believes that it will be passed by the middle of November and believes that if it doesn't happen by Thanksgiving it won't happen until next year. For us, that would mean that we probably can't get up there until April or May. The other part is that we have MEPA approval – we have the certification and we're waiting for a Construction Access Permit that will let us put the temporary facility up this fall. DCR says they have all the information they need and are waiting for final approval from DCR legal – Michael Baldino will be pursuing that. Lark is also emailing representatives Mark, Hines, and Barrett to move the process and legislation forward.

Lark: We've been told that once we have full approval, we can apply for a construction access permit to begin the permanent installation. We'll have to go to DCR for an easement with the Town of Savoy for ongoing access – though we won't have to wait on the easement process to begin with the permanent installation.

Brian: Until then, we can't hang all of our equipment on the temporary structure, but it will allow us to get started deploying CBRS on at least two of the sectors – though it won't have the height, so we won't get the full coverage, but we'll still be able to do a number of home installations. There's a lot of high wind and we don't want to overload the temporary structure.

➤ **Status of possible new poles-Tilton Rd., Savoy, Hawley Grove, Hawley and Moores Rd, Florida**

There is a Tilton Road pole hearing scheduled for Savoy. and we'll work to get that done as quickly as possible this fall. We're waiting on CBRS deployment to decide other needed sites.

➤ **Need for more customers on South County Rd area and western Savoy near Cheshire line**

We now have four customers connected with two more scheduled – we're getting more and more calls to get connected.

➤ **Status of Phase 4 payments and next steps**

We have connected 40 of the 50 customers required for final phase 4 payment. Connections should proceed more quickly now that South County Road is connected. We will submit for final payment following all Phase 4 testing.

➤ **Network problems and customer complaints**

Brian and Lark said that we're hearing a lot less since the last meeting. We're still switching more customers from 900 to CBRS and adding new customers where we can in that area. A contributing factor was the fiber hookup at Florida Town Hall, which was not active and now has been resolved.

Lark: last weekend most everyone had relatively slow service and we learned today that the reason was that the MBI link to Chapel was totally down for about 16 hours.

➤ **Any other business**

There are added customer complaints in Savoy regarding service speed and lack of response. These seem to be due to the fact that an installation has not been completed – Brian will follow up. This customer understands that better overall service is pending Borden installation.

Christine Dobbert reports that Florida has been quiet.

Jason Burdick reports that his cousin's service has been good – Brian will upgrade to 5 GHz.

The general consensus was that Verizon DSL service is worse than ever.

Melanie stated she had met with Rep. Mark, who asked her about the state of Internet service. Someone had asked Rep. Mark if he could get Verizon DSL fixed and he had responded that that will never happen. Melanie said she impressed him with the importance of Borden Mountain. He also inquired about the 4% of Four Towns customers who would not be connected via this project, and asked that he be given a "number" when it came time to seek more funding in that regard.

Brian responded that there are other sources of funding that might be tapped when that time comes.

➤ **Next meeting date**

The next meeting was slated for Xxxx, date and time TBD.

➤ **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

