

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, October 24th, at 4:32 pm.

MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance (*voting member):

Hawley: Lark Thwing*

Florida: Christine Dobbert,* Cindy Bosley, Jim Spofford

Monroe: David Gagne*

Savoy: John Tynan*

DesignNine: Jack Maytum (On Phone)

WiValley: Brian Foucher

OTELCO: Trevor Jones (Absent)

Interisle: Steve Harris (Absent)

Minutes
Approved,
FHMS Four-Towns
Committee,
11/21/19

Call to Order:

A quorum was declared and the meeting was called to order, with participant introductions by Chairman Lark Thwing, at 4:32 pm.

1. Review and acceptance of minutes:

The minutes of the September 26, 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.

2. Review of project status:

Aided by queries from Chairman Lark and other Committee participants, Brian Foucher gave the following report:

a) Poles installed: Brian reported that no new poles have been installed since the prior meeting.

- b) Most of the time** during the past month was devoted to prepping all the new poles to accept electronics once installed. Some of the already-raised poles had electronics installed.
- c) Brian also said that 28** poles were now in the project's possession, and that 8-13 would be installed in the next three weeks, weather permitting.
- d) One major drawback** to rapid implementation of pole sites has been a slow response by the electric utilities (NationalGrid and EverSource) to requests for companion poles and electrified power sources for the project. On the plus side, Brian did state that one of the two utilities had been very responsive of late and that OTELCO and MBI were both exerting influence the other utility to get the companion poles installed.
- e) New poles are scheduled** for implementation in Savoy, Florida, Hawley and Monroe, as well as a relay pole in Rowe (that allows signal to be transmitted to two sides of Monroe). In addition, the Four Towns have agreed to service two households in Rowe which cannot be viably reached via Rowe's Broadband program.
- f) Brian indicated that WiValley/OTELCO would continue to sign** new customers as the network paths become available. Current customer count is 12 in Savoy and four in the other towns, with the exception of Monroe.

3. Review of financial status:

Brian stated that the requirement of many equipment vendors that all orders be prepaid had caused some cash flow issues and that he had been working with MBI and his Board of Directors to resolve them. As soon as Brian can work out with MBI what payments can be made to him by MBI, the four towns will need to sign certificates of completion.

4. Review of press release:

After some minor changes, the Press Release was approved by all parties, then was released to the local press and posted on the MBI and Town of Hawley websites. At this October 24 meeting the participants concluded that the release did not get much "pickup," perhaps, in part, because of staff turnover at one of the local newspapers.

5. Edge Customer Request:

Lark Thwing brought up the fact that, largely due to an accommodation the Town of Hawley made to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) by consenting to allow coverage of their West Hawley

AmeriCorps Camp to be provided by the Town of Plainfield, another request had come through of a similar nature. This second request was turned down, on the basis that the FHMS Four Towns would be providing “excellent coverage” to that area, which was not the case with the DCR request.

6. Borden Mountain Update:

Brian reported that the civil engineering firm that was conducting the Borden Mountain telecommunications tower structural load study was in the process of finalizing its work. The result, Brian believed, was that his recommendation of a separate, guyed, wooden pole would be the way to go. A separate electronics shack would also be a part of the configuration.

7. Road Permits:

Brian alerted the group that a few of the poles next in the implementation queue would involve getting Road Permits and providing flagmen.

8. Adjourn to Executive Session:

The Four Towns Committee adjourned to Executive Session to discuss litigation. Brian, Jack Maytum and Rick Kean were asked to join the executive session at 5:02 pm.

9. Reconvene After Conclusion of Executive Session:

The FHMS Four Towns Committee reconvened at 5:18 pm.

10. Any Other Business Not Anticipated:

There was none.

11. Set Next 4-Town Meeting Date:

Thursday, November 21 at 4:30 pm. Jack will attend to present some info.

12. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:34 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rick Kean

11/29/2019.