





Four Towns Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes

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

FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes

A combined in-person and teleconference meeting of the FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee took place on Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 4:30 pm at the Florida, MA Town Hall. (Note: This meeting was recorded.)

MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance:*

Hawley: Lark Thwing,* Rick Kean (via phone)
Florida: Christine Dobbert,* Stephanie Pare
Monroe: David Gagne,* (absent)
Savoy: John Tynan* (via phone)
DesignNine: Jack Maytum (via phone)
WiValley: Brian Foucher
Otelco: Trevor Jones (absent)
Interisle: Steve Harris

Minutes
Approved,
FHMS Four-Towns
Committee.
December 3, 2020

***Voting Members**

Other Teleconference Participants:

Ron Bosley, Florida Eric LeClair, Florida

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

● Quorum, Call to Order

Four Towns Committee Chairman Lark Thwing declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm.

- **Review and approve minutes from Sept 24th**

The Minutes of the September 24 meeting were unanimously approved without discussion by the voting members present.

- **Reporting from Brian Foucher on:**

- Status of MBI payments to WiValley for Phase 2.

Brian said that the final report required for payment had been submitted, and that he was scheduled to meet with MBI by phone the following morning.

- Status of installation of all remaining poles approved for installation

Brian indicated that six of the seven poles have been installed. The last pole needed a bigger rock drill and has been rescheduled for November installation.

- Poles not yet finalized or approved

Brian said that five poles remain to be finalized or approved. 2 in Savoy, 2 in Hawley and 1 in Heath.

- Status of Heath pole (serves northeast Hawley-Dodge Corner)

Brian deferred to Lark on this issue, who said that this pole is separate from Phase IV and will require a time-consuming approval process and procurement of a special permit. The FHMS project had to withdraw its original pole petition and submit a Special Permit Application to the Heath Planning Board; they would then have to answer any citizen complaints – a 40-50-day process.

- Status of utility connections of all upright poles.

Brian responded that Eversource has made some progress – they put one of three poles in Savoy; two more poles in Savoy are waiting for power. HAW-FHO is still waiting for a utility pole replacement.

- Status of antennas on upright poles

Brian said that antennas that have been installed are just waiting for power. The remaining antennas are on order and should arrive next week. Also with battery backup systems. Hawley Town Hall will have additional connections later.

➤ Status of implementation of CBRS

Brian said that the order for antennas has been placed with Telrad, and that delivery is expected by November 15. He also said that the project already has a sector, involving larger antennas, where they can deploy the CBRS equipment and assess its effectiveness.

➤ Status of Phase 3 and expected completion.

Brian stated that completion is projected for November 15. Sidehill is done, and they expect to install flo-nht2, a sister pole, in Florida next week. He added that there are three additional sites to build that include haw-ste, haw,whr and haw-ehr.

➤ Status of Phase 1A, Borden Mountain site. (that connects a LOT of customers.)

Brian said that the project will need to submit a permit application. Lark confirmed that they now have the information they need to do so.

➤ Status of Phase 4 and expected completion.

Brian said that they are working on Phase 4 even as Phase 3 is moved to completion, with expected completion by year's end. "There are six sites included on the Phase 4 list at this time, and we'll install all of them as we are finishing Phase 3." Lark asked about the "Heath" site, and Brian responded that "Heath" is a spare site that will not hold up the work on Phase 3 or 4.

➤ Status of Lawless site.

Lark answered this one. He said that he had been back and forth between Brian and Bill Lawless, and that they now have a draft agreement for the Hawley Ridge Associates. The next step is for Bill to finalize the agreement with the Culvers, who own a large swath of real estate adjoining the Lawless property. Lark said Bill was hoping to have that signed document within a week to ten days from the date of this meeting. The committee approved the FHMS-Lawless lease agreement last month.

➤ Updated Critical Path chart - will we finish infrastructure by year end?
Brian said he expects to complete infrastructure buildout by year end

with the utility connections to be done ASAP afterwards.

He added that 29% of Phase I and IA sites have signed up and are connected, as are 22% of Phase II sites. 9% of Phase III sites have been passed so far. But the chart is still in the queue.

- Updated chart of poles and links and their status

Brian said we're still awaiting the updated chart.

- Update on accidents, COVID effects, staffing in general and inventory levels for forward progress.

Brian said there were some COVID testing delays, but no major issues. He also said that WiValley is continuing to search for another technician, and that he has identified someone in one of the Four Towns who is interested. This would be good if it works out, Brian said, as it means that the person who services the Four Towns would live in one of them.

- **Thursday conference calls with WiValley, MBI, Design 9 and Lark**

- The weekly conference calls continue – The Borden Mountain site is still the #1 priority.

- **Efforts to connect households with school age children**

- Lark reported that two Hawley sites are in operation, the Hawley Grove in East Hawley and the Town Garage in West Hawley. The Savoy Recreation Building on Rt 116 will be live soon, as well as a Monroe site.

- **Comments/feedback from Design Nine**

- Jack Maytum had no comments. He said he would save any input until the next weekly management meeting.

- **Comments/feedback/questions from customers.**

- Brian reported that they had been encountering an intermittent signal that would occasionally interrupt those sites with 900 MHz connectivity in Florida due to interference. It comes and goes, he said,

but when it's there, it's "like a megaphone yelling over a group of whispers." Some of the affected customers will be switched to CBRS.

- **Any other business not anticipated.**

- There was none.

- **Set the next meeting date**

- After some discussion about alternative locations and whether virtual meetings would be sufficient in the future, the voting members present opted to continue with the current meeting format, and Chairman Lark set the next meeting date for Thursday, December 3 at 4:30 pm at the Florida Town Hall.

Adjournment

Lark and the voting members present adjourned the meeting at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Steve Harris



Rick Kean

11/12/2020

To access a recording of this meeting, click here: <https://fccdl.in/1PF2IvksJG>