

Minutes  
Unanimously  
Approved,  
FHMS Four-Towns  
Committee,  
March 7, 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 at the Florida Town Hall on Monday, December 10, 2018, at 4:30 pm.

## MINUTES

- **In Attendance:**

Florida: Christine Dobbert  
Hawley: Lark Thwing, Chair, Rick Kean, Hussain Hamdan  
Monroe: David Gagne  
Savoy: John Tynan  
WiValley: Brian Foucher and Tom Buttrick  
Design Nine: Jack Maytum and Sid Boswell

- **Minutes:** The committee approved the minutes of the November 29 meeting with no changes.

- **Status of Action Plan:**

Lark reported that all four towns have signed the Action Plan. The ball is now in MBI's & WiValley's court to complete the process.

- **Handout Signed Amendment to Inter-Municipal Agreement:**

Lark handed out final documentation of the Amendment, which had been agreed to and signed by all parties.

- **Discuss Possible Cost Overrun at DCR Fire Tower:**

Lark and Brian explained that there are two issues that may well drive a cost overrun in making use of the existing communications tower at Borden Mountain: (1) State Police reluctance to allow access to the existing telecoms hut at the base of the tower or to the inside of the fenced-in area outside the hut; and, (2) the possibility that the tower itself is overloaded and cannot structurally handle any additional weight or wind loads.

There is thus a strong possibility that a new and separate tower will have to be erected at the Borden Mountain site.

In order to overcome these obstacles, Mass Tech has agreed to fund an overrun of \$250,000 in cooperation with WiValley and the Four Towns to handle these contingencies, with \$50,000 to be borne by WiValley, a total of \$50,000 to be borne by the Towns proportionately per their original grant allocations, and the balance of approximately \$150,000 to be borne by the State. This agreement was secured largely by Brian's efforts, and did not include a last-minute, not-to-exceed cost estimate for constructing a new electronics shed to be located outside of the perimeter of the State Police installation. This latter estimate of \$90,000+ was needed by MBI for presentation at a board meeting that was scheduled to take place the next day, on December 11.

- **Update from Brian Foucher on Where the Project Stands:**

Through his answers to questions, Brian made it clear that he and Interisle's Fred Goldstein have been working on alternate strategies for all of the problematic sites. But the sites outlined in the current plan remain the most effective and least expensive. In addition, WiValley has been preparing to begin construction, perhaps as early as December 14. They have already loaded the tower they'll be using at the Savoy "Chapel" site, and are ready to go.

- **Update from Jack Maytum on Where the Project Stands:**

Both Jack Maytum and Sid Boswell gave reports.

**Jack:** Said a big part of his job is "keeping an eye on Brian," and since most of the work has been "political" so far, he hasn't had much to do except monitor and comment on the paperwork that has been circulating around. With construction about to begin, that is about to change, when there is construction activity to track; and,

**SID:** Said that he and Jack appreciated the opportunity to inspect some of the pole sites, as this would help them visualize the work

moving forward. He confirmed that he had reviewed Brian's estimates of the Borden Mountain cost overruns and found them to be sufficiently "conservative."

- **Other Business Not Anticipated Prior to Posting:**

Six items were discussed that had not been included on the Agenda.

- 1) Status of the Network Services Agreement is still a work in progress. Lark said he would get the process moving again. The Network Services Agreement must be completed before the first customer can be turned on.
- 2) Brian mentioned that some of the obstacles encountered so far have changed the content of project Phases I and II. Specifically, the DCR issue has been moved to a new phase 1A.
- 3) Lark reported on Charlemont: The special town meeting resulted in a rejection of the Comcast proposal, in favor of the older plan to build their own fiber network via WG&E.
- 4) Also, Charlemont Selectboard Chair Sarah Reynolds told Lark that the Hawley Selectboard would be receiving a letter shortly saying that Charlemont's Selectboard has the legal authority to hold a pole hearing regarding Legate Hill, and is open to receiving Hawley's petition.
- 5) Lark and Brian also indicated that a meeting regarding a pole site in Rowe to serve Monroe would have to be set up. David Gagne agreed to arrange it.
- 6) Lark emphasized that pole approvals for the rest of Savoy and all of Monroe are also needed.

- **Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee was tentatively set for Thursday, January 24, 2019.

- **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:46 pm.

There was a brief Christmas party and celebration of progress to date after this meeting.