



Four Towns Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the FHMS Four Towns Broadband Committee took place on Google Meet on Thursday, November 16, 2023.

In Attendance:

Hawley: Hussain Hamdan, *Lark Thwing
 Florida: *Cindy Bosley
 Monroe: *Richard Olney-Jones
 Savoy: *Melanie Glynn, Sarah Satherthwaite
 WiValley: Brian Foucher
 Others: Will Crosby, Chaz Garrity, and Casey Pease

*Voting Members

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

➤ Quorum, Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 4:30 pm with a quorum.

➤ Review and approve minutes from the October meeting –

- Vote was taken to approve the October 5th meeting minutes. No discussion or questions SB/MG

➤ Report from on current project status.

Homes connected:

	Connected	Active
Florida	96	
Hawley	121	
Monroe	32	
Savoy	127	
Total	376	279*

*Only total active reported

- Borden Mountain status:
 - Fence posts have been installed. 6 week lead time for gates. The generator is up there. Waiting on propane tank delivery. Everything else is ready.
- What the future expansions might look like (infrastructure bill monies): Changes at WiValley, Hub66 and another potential partner

- Brian announced WiValley was acquired by Ring Squared.
- Chaz Garrity was introduced as VP of Sales, Ring Squared/Access Plus.
- They have an in-depth letter of intent with lots of details. Still need to review with MBI/Mass Tech.
- Chaz describes the goal is to take what has been built and expand it in the short term. Long term is deploying fiber for home and business and leverage current deployment for redundancy or the difficult to get to areas.
- MBI goal is 100% coverage, a requirement of new funding at a speed of 100/100. Hybrid service could come into play once funds are awarded. This is a negotiating point after the award is granted.
- Could fixed wireless deliver 100/100? Yes, potentially with upgrades. Scoring is less with MBI though. Not a goal for the future unless only was to provide to address.
- If grant is not awarded to Access Plus – some upgrades could occur on current network to meet requirements of CAF II.
- Access Plus is the applicant for the next level of funding.
- Discussion around underserved vs unserved. The definition is 100/20 for minimum.
- These 4 towns are eligible for future funding but reduced in Savoy and Florida due to RDOF funding.
- Some entity will get MBI funding to build out the 4 towns and everyone will be provided service.
- Access Plus is used by the town of North Adams and Williams College. Ring Squared is used by Berkshire Bank, Berkshire Health, and the town of Savoy.
- The first deployment by FHMS used Access Plus from Borden Mountain before fiber was connected to Chapel.
- WiValley will be meeting with Select Boards in the coming weeks.
- Two rounds of funding December 11 and April 17. How much in each round and other details are still unknown.
- Those addresses that received RDOF funding are not eligible for next level funding.
- Access Plus was planning to build fiber in the Berkshires before this grant offering.
- The grant states the network must be built out by 12/2026. Some towns have lots of make ready work.
- Letters of support from individuals, resolutions of support desired from the towns showing they are wanting to increase conductivity.
- WiValley will be around for at least another 7 years to report to the FCC and uphold the FHMS agreement.

➤ **Will the four towns hang together for the next phase or will the towns go their separate ways**

Not discussed

➤ **Other questions or topics not elsewhere anticipated.**

Not discussed

➤ **Next meeting date:**

January 11, 2024 at 4:30 pm online. This was suggested on the agenda.

➤ **Adjourn**

The meeting abruptly ended at 5:00pm due to a time-out on Google Meet. The end of the agenda was not discussed.

Respectfully Submitted, *Melanie Glynn*