

Minutes: New Salem Broadband Committee/Municipal Light Board

Date: February 23, 2023

Time: The meeting convened at 12:40 pm and adjourned at 1:30 pm

Place: Google Meet

List of members present:

MaryEllen Kennedy (MEK)
Kathy Soule-Regine (KSR)
Sue Dunbar (SD)
Sue Cloutier (SC)

List of documents submitted to the committee for consideration:

- Agenda
- Minutes of January 19, 2023, BB/MLP meeting

Discussion and Decisions:

- **Minutes**
 - Voted to accept January 19 minutes as presented.
 - Moved by SC, seconded by SD.
 - No discussion.
 - Vote: Unanimous to accept as presented.
- **Town COLAs**
 - Discussed the application of COLAs to MLP positions.
 - KSR made a motion to accept the town's decision on the application of COLAs to the MLP salaried and elected positions.
 - SC Seconded the motion.
 - No further discussion.
 - Vote: Unanimous to accept the motion as presented.
- **FY24 MLP Manager & Bookkeeper salaries and ML Board Stipends**
 - Discussed the salaries for the Town Budget.
 - Town will be reimbursed from MLP funds.
 - MLP Manager salary & ML Board stipends will be dispersed by New Salem Treasurer in April.
 - New Salem Treasurer will pay Bookkeeper monthly.
 - Base salaries & stipends (will be increased by COLA):
 - MLP Manager: \$5,000
 - Bookkeeper: \$1,248
 - ML Board: \$1,600 (Chair), \$800 (Board members)
 - SC made a motion to accept the proposed FY24 MLP salaries and stipends.
 - SD seconded the motion.
 - No further discussion.
 - Vote: Unanimous to accept the motion as presented.
- **Town surplus solar credits**
 - KSR will discuss allocating some to the MLP Hut electrical bill with Kathy Neal.

- **WCF Monthly Partnership Meetings January 25 & February 22**
 - Hilltown customers - 8674
 - New Salem ACP – 31, Lifeline – 3
 - Disbursement of CAFII funds projected for the third quarter of 2023.
 - Proposed individual towns contact legislators to encourage support of the bill to streamline CAFII fund disbursements.
 - Working to improve construction communication with new construction fliers.
 - Agreed KSR should add to the website and MEK will provide to the Building Inspector but not local realtors.
 - Encouraged towns to coordinate with the other facilities in town using generators. Also, contact the propane supplier to ensure the hut has a “critical facility” designation.
 - MEK will pursue these and investigate buying the tank.
 - Piloting targeted Google search ads to ensure WCF will appear at the top of results when searching for “internet near me.”
 - Discussed ACP-related costs. Will provide an updated listing of all ACP costs for towns.
 - MBI is still reviewing the RFP for Network Operator.
 - Described WCF customer termination process and provided quarterly stats for each town.
 - Provided stats per town for trouble calls.
 - Discussed handling motor vehicle/pole accidents and winter storm events.
- **WiredWest update from 2/15/23 Board Mtg**
 - Engaged Auditor on 1/23.
 - Windsor is working with WCF on peak speed issues not resolved by increasing backhaul to 5Gb.
 - Continuing to work with WCF on the phone-only billing charges, updated maps and cut sheets, details of Plume cost/contracts (NS has 5), a potential adjustment in retainage for emergency crews due to Becket completion, Nokia maintenance charge clarification, and issue with using Asplundh for tree maintenance.

NEXT MEETINGS:

WiredWest Board meeting: Wednesday, March 15, 6:30 pm, Zoom

WCF/Hilltown Partners call: Wednesday, March 29, 12:00 pm, Microsoft Meeting

BB/MLP Conference call: Thursday, March 30, 12:30 pm, Google Meet