

Wendell Municipal Light Board (MLB) Meeting

Tuesday, March 26, 2024 6:30 pm

Minutes

Present: ML Board - Laurie DiDonato, Lou Leelyn ; MLP Manager - Ray DiDonato. Absent: Robert Heller
Meeting called to order 6:36 pm

Minutes - Approval of Feb 27th minutes. Lou made a motion to approve. Laurie seconds. Motion passed.

MLP Manager Report

- Generator will be preventatively maintained soon
- Received pole rental bill from National Grid
- Bill Braidwood now works for whip city managing crews - Rich Carnal retired.
- Annual Report sent as a draft. A few changes still need to be made.

Customer with tech issues: 48 Wendell Depot Road had a complaint about dropped calls, which seems to be getting better. She also complained about a rude customer service rep.

In February she asked for compensation for her troubles. Whip City gave a credit of \$35 for Ooma issues. There is nothing in CRM past March 1st- they replaced hardware, and maybe ooma. Should we ask other customers to see if this is affecting them? We will try to investigate the issue further, and will get back to her. Ray will log his own ticket for a similar problem.

Cost-sharing agreement draft for RRR -

Lou was concerned with a discrepancy in the amount of years - this RRR agreement is 5 years, Crown Castle is 10 years- paying for everything up front for it, and our maintenance agreement with Whip city is 3 years.

Otherwise we feel it is good to go.

Grant application to fund this with New Salem - haven't heard anything from town counsel. Looks good to Ray. New Salem is submitting and wants to submit by Friday the 29th.

ACP funding

There are issues with providing bridge funding. There are no ways to qualify people so the list will be frozen with those who currently qualify. Qualification is rolling and lasts for a year, so people's qualification will expire at different times.

Whip City has notified customers and is hoping to hear if people decide to opt out or stay in. We can monitor who opts out to see what the impact might be on subscription. So far nobody in Wendell

responded to the first email. Whip City has until April 1st to determine if people are opting out, if there is no response, people will automatically continue at the higher cost. If we get a lot of people dropping then we can subsidize everybody. Lou doesn't mind managing the expiration of benefits a year after their qualification, which can be found in the CRM. May require a call to the customer to let them know.

There was uncertainty if providing this subsidy was OK legally. Ray has sent the question to the lawyer.

It is still possible congress will re-authorize the funding and this won't be necessary. There are lots of advocates for it including big internet companies.

Point of interest: There has been a legal change to the definition of broadband to be 100Mbytes.

Digital Equity - This is an initiative several towns are working on with FRCOG, Ray is involved. MLB member can probably sit in on meetings. Lou is looking at the percentage of people not served to better understand where there may be need. There is a Digital Equity meeting tomorrow morning at 9:30am - Ray can't make it, but he is looped in. Maybe this money could fund free wifi in the center of town or fund a qualifying agency and ACP credits.

Operations- 5 Rush Road finally activated phone and internet, 363 bills went out last month.

Last Hilltown call- WC discussed a kind of service plan, a few dollars on the customers bill, creating a pool of money to cover all of the drop service issues. They want to do it across the board for all towns.

Our policy says maintenance from street to house is billed to the customer.

Migration to an elected board. Tabled because Robert was not here.

Next meeting time - April 9th, 6:30pm on Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 7:51pm