

Wendell Municipal Light Board (MLB) Meeting

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 6:30 pm

Minutes

Present: MLBoard - Robert Heller, Laurie DiDonato, Lou Leelyn; MLP Manager - Ray DiDonato.

Meeting called to order 6:35 pm

Minutes - Approval of September 10th minutes. Robert made a motion to approve. Laurie seconds. Motion passed.

Clarification from last meeting: When all ONTs are upgraded we will have to use depreciation funds to pay for them to be replaced - the ONT and router are MLP property.

Outstanding receivables policy discussion - Email from Carolyn with request "The Auditors have asked that the MLP establish a policy for collecting or dealing with outstanding debt as it is considered a liability on the Town books. I have asked Tom Scanlon for instruction on how to "write-off" old debt that at this point will never be paid but going forward, the MLP will need to have a method to address outstanding receivables that aren't paid by the time an account is disconnected."

- Laurie will ask Carolyn to provide amounts that are due.
- Small claims goes up to \$5000 - in some cases it might be worth it.
- Reach out to customers and ask to do a payment plan.
- Try to get them to pay before the install (Ray will ask if this might be possible.) They might sign something saying they are responsible for cost. Ray will ask about this.
- Lou is willing to reach out to the people in arrearages - try to get a payment plan if possible. If they are deceased we will need to make sure it is known that it is a debt they have.
- Get more info and revisit the next meeting.

Rate decrease discussion -

- Retained earnings for FY2024 was \$78k. We have \$303k in reserve.
- With 360 customers if we reduce the rate by \$5 we will see a reduction of \$1800 a month in revenue or \$21600 per year. We would reduce another \$3000 a year if we take a few dollars off of the phone rate.
- Ray is in favor of decreasing the internet rate by \$5 and considering an additional decrease in phone fees next quarter.
- Robert thinks waiting until spring is a better idea so we know what the winter has done.
- routine maintenance is budgeted for \$60 k - but we usually only use about \$25 K
- Our original estimates for the MLP fee were based on 265 subscribers and we have much more than that.
- Our goal is to decide what amount of reserve makes us comfortable to handle a rate decrease.
- First meeting in March we will decide on rate decrease (every year) - Board agreed that having \$350 K in the reserves (+ retained earnings) will trigger a rate decrease.

MLP Manager Report-

- Power Guaranteed Service - will do service and minor preventative maintenance soon.
- Service Plan to help subscribers to not pay high repair fees was proposed by Whip city. There were concerns it would not be equitable across the towns. It was learned that there would be an end of year true-up so cost would not exceed maintenance over the year. They were proposing a trial for 6 months but are likely abandoning it.
- propane amount in generator is fine- will need to get topped off with the next outage.

Miscellaneous -

- Wendell residents are reporting more problems with Verizon Copper lines - likely to get worse before it gets better. May mean more phone customers.
- Issue at DiDonato house - wifi calling had too many dropped calls. With replacement of our router the problem is fixed.
- Fire dept has requested getting a Starlink account for emergency backup.

Operations- 362 subscribers - went 7 full months without arrearages.

Next meeting- November 19 - 6:30pm

Adjourned 7:28pm