

Minutes  
Washington Municipal Light Board  
January 25, 2024

- The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.
- Attendees: Pauline Combe-Clark, Kent Lew, John McElwain, Richard Spencer
- The minutes of the December 14 meeting were accepted unanimously. (Motion - Combe-Clark, second - McElwain)
- Next on the agenda was an update on the status of CAF-2 funds. The preliminary indication is the Wahington will receive \$100,067, hopefully in February. The board will need to know the amount by March in order to make decisions as to its allocations, e.g. paying down network debt. A year's worth of funds is being held back and will be distributed later.
- Next on the agenda was an update on the status of poles that Eversource replaced and sometimes moved in the electric network upgrade work along Route 8. The MLP manager does not yet know the status relative to Washington's (and Becket's) fiber optic lines. Eversource may not cover our costs. However, Washington and Becket are actively planning for the future of the lines. The local plan may be merged with that for the Massachusetts Broadband Institutes lines.
- Next on the agenda was an update on the Wired West (WW) Operations and Service agreement. Agreements with all of the Wired West towns will soon expire. D. Gordon, a Rowe representative, has posed several questions regarding details of the proposed updated agreement language. Many are related to WW assuming more of the administration of the networks, as had originally been envisioned for the cooperative. For example,
  - The accounting of town costs and how they affect annual dividends.

- Capital planning. The MLPs should take some responsibility for long range capital planning (i.e. equipment, etc.).

WW is moving toward handling financial accounting for the MLPs.

- Next on the agenda was an MLP operations report. The manager reported that:
  - We have completed negotiations with Whip City Fiber. The new contract will be effective as of February 1.
  - The HVAC system in the hut will need routine maintenance, probably this spring.
  - WW is running a little behind on revenue forecasting, mostly because of repair costs. However, the new, reduced wholesale backhaul rates will temper that effect.
- Next on the agenda was an update on the Affordable Connectivity Program, i.e. the \$30 credit to qualifying households that receive service, which will expire in April. The program will not accept any new applications as of February 7. Washington only has six affected subscribers.
- Next on the agenda was an update on the Digital Equity Planning program. We are still waiting for help from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to develop a plan.
- There was no new business.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.
- The next meeting will be on February 15, 2024 at 7:00 PM via ZOOM.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Spencer, Clerk