



MUNICIPAL LIGHT PLANT WARRANT ARTICLE INFORMATION

What are we voting for?

We're voting for our town to form a Municipal Lighting Plant (MLP) department, under Massachusetts General Laws 164. If passed with a two-thirds majority vote of voters present, at two town meetings, two to 13 months apart, this allows our town to join the WiredWest Cooperative, which will undertake the capitalization, buildout and operation of a municipal fiber-optic network in participating Municipal Light Plant towns.

What are the Town's roles and responsibilities?

The Selectboard can choose to oversee its MLP department themselves or appoint a three to five member board. This group is responsible for appointing a manager, making decisions around the town's participation and representation in the WiredWest Cooperative (WWC), and filing annually with the State.

Creating the MLP incurs no cost to the town. If a town joins the WWC, there will be a membership fee of not more than \$1,000 per town. Participation in the WWC is voluntary, but a town's decision to leave the WWC after the point of project financing will be determined by the type and terms of the financing.

Why do we need this initiative?

Passing the MLP legislation is the first critical step to getting every business, student, institution and citizen connected to the 21st century digital world and ensuring we have access to the same advantages our urban and suburban counterparts enjoy.

Today, our region's lack of universal broadband disadvantages us with higher costs, lower productivity and fewer opportunities. Businesses and students cannot compete on a level playing field, and healthcare providers, schools, local governments, public safety agencies and the citizens they serve, cannot reap the cost savings and improved service delivery enabled by a robust, high-bandwidth fiber-optic network.

Without an effort now to bring our region's telecommunications infrastructure into the 21st century, this digital divide will continue to grow, and our region's appeal for businesses, young people, families and working professionals will diminish. The WiredWest plan to build and operate a municipal fiber network is critical to creating much needed economic stability and growth, sustaining our communities, and protecting the quality of life so many of us treasure in Western Massachusetts.

Warrant Article:

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take all necessary and appropriate action to establish and to maintain, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 164 of the General Laws and in accordance with the rules, regulations and orders of the Department of Public Utilities and the Department of Telecommunications & Cable, a municipal lighting plant for all purposes allowable under the laws of the Commonwealth, including without limitation the operation of a telecommunications system and any related services, or to take any other action relative thereto.

WiredWest is a community-driven initiative to build a municipal, last-mile, fiber-optic network in Western Massachusetts towns unserved and underserved by high-speed internet, and create a long-lived asset that drives regional economic growth and quality of life for years to come.

