



## MINUTES

WiredWest Board of Directors Meeting

February 8, 2014 9:30 AM

Cummington Town Hall, 32 Main Street, Cummington, MA

**Welcome and Introductions-** Chairperson Monica Webb called the meeting to order at 9:34 AM and welcomed the attendees, who introduced themselves. Monica thanked our hosts Jim Drawe and the town of Cummington.

Monica reviewed the developments of the past month, including David Epstein's involvement in the MBI's "kitchen cabinet". She overviewed some of the efforts to determine various ways for the towns to participate financially.

**Approval of minutes** from December 7th, 2013 meeting Mike Crochiere moved to accept; Bob Armstrong seconded; all in favor with no nays and 3 abstentions: Jean Atwater-Williams, Brian Hawthorne and Brian Brault.

**Report from the Executive Director** – David Epstein overviewed his activities with the Kitchen Cabinet including the review of last mile models proposed by CMA and Tilson. Their models, as well as ours, identify a \$100 million project. WW EC members met with Judy Dumont to make the case for WW having an active role in the last mile network, which was favorably received. Unfortunately, Judy Dumont has now left the MBI. Kitchen Cabinet continues its work under MTC (Mass Technology Collaborative). The \$50 million bond bill now before the legislature is designated to the MBI for last mile; \$10 million will be for cable towns, the balance for non-cable towns. The balance of the project (another \$50 million) will need to be found, part of which must come from the towns in some way. David gave some details about how WW is actively seeking funding such as RUS and CAF funds, as well as exploring ways towns could participate in guaranteeing a WW bond as their contribution.

**Legislative Update** – Monica gave a status update on the IT bond bill, which is now in the Senate Bonding Committee prior to going to Senate Ways and Means. The timing now looks like June. Monica participated in a panel at the MMA conference in Boston about advancing broadband.

**Outreach to Select Boards / Town Officials** – Monica reiterated that a local contribution will be critical to the successful building of the network. To that end, WW will be scheduling regional informational meetings with town select boards and finance committees, some of which will be held prior to March 7<sup>th</sup>. Reva will be coordinating this effort. Steve distributed a hard copy of the most recent Progress Report document which will be electronically distributed to delegates and town selectboards and officials.

**Criteria for apportioning town contributions for network financing** – Monica introduced the EC’s thought process for varying potential methods for apportioning cost (borrowing authorization) to each town. Jim presented a breakdown of various components of the costs and approaches to apportionment. Delegates provided feedback and discussed a number of scenarios, the two most commonly discussed approaches were apportionment by actual cost or regionally by housing unit.

**Committee Reports:**

- Sales – Glenn continuing to price potential installations. Pricing is deterring some individual customers. Goshen is expected to be ready to go in mid-March. Still waiting for middle mile to be completely lit.
- Marketing – Monica has developed a plan and a draft survey for the RUS application, but is currently on hold as we will need funding support, ideally from MBI, although there is a potential funder for some of the costs.
- Governance – Steve reported that he has been investigating bonding and funding alternatives. A cable towns policy has been drafted, which will be covered under Town Liaison report (below). Our counsel has changed firms and the hourly rate has been reduced.
- Finance – Jim distributed an Operating Statement for the Period 7/1/2013 - 1/31/2014.
- Technology – Kevin was unable to attend; tech items were covered in other reports. Monica mentioned that one of our delegates received a request from Western Mass Connect asking for verification of DSL availability. Monica requested that if delegates are asked to do so in their towns that they share the information with WiredWest as well.
- Town Liaison – Reva will be doing a letter of assessment for the WiredWest annual fee. She requested that delegates and alternates complete sheets with current board members’ addresses for submission with our updated incorporation documents. Reva also reported on cable towns activities, meetings, and a revised draft written policy, which was distributed to the board for their consideration. Reva moved we adopt the WiredWest Cable Towns Policy approved by the Executive Committee on 2/7/2014. Steve recommended we remove the phrase “at every opportunity.” Reva accepted the friendly removal. Mike Crochiere seconded. Discussion ensued. All in favor.

**Other Director Input** – Bill Stathis reported that he is no longer employed by Axia. He also reported that approximately half of the physical locations are ready to be turned up. The remaining locations have been turned over and in the commissioning process. He believes that mid-March is realistic.

**Confirm and Schedule next BoD meetings**

- March 15, 2014, possibly in Goshen
- April 12, 2014 location TBD
- May 17, 2014 location TBD

Adjourn at 12:51 p.m.: Jim Drawe moved to adjourn; Mike Crochiere seconded. All in favor.