

**Minutes**

WiredWest Board Directors Meeting

Worthington Town Hall, 160 Huntington Rd

Worthington, MA 01098

Saturday, January 14 2017, 10:30 am

Meeting called to order at: 10:31 am

**Approval of Minutes**

 Larry Klein moved to approve the minutes of December 21, 2016, Art Schwenger seconded – all approved, with Deb Burke & Robert Heller abstaining.

**Report from the Chair** we’ve been working on pricing and preparing for the January 28 Broadband Workshop. Delegates are urged to bring town officials – it will be at the JFK Middle School in Northampton. Directions will be sent.

**Vote on Regional Solution** Jim Drawe moved that we approved the pricing & product structures as stated during the non-public business meeting (25Mb & 1Gb best effort - $59 & 75, phone at $19 – no standalone phone option, one time activation fee of $99). Seconded by Tim Newman. The motion carried unanimously.

Our partner will be a reputable, local provider. We don’t have a length of the contract yet, Jean Atwater-Williams suggested it should align with town commitments.

There was a question about whether delegates can share the full WiredWest planning spreadsheet. Tim Newman suggested create a simplified one, including clear assumptions to introduce the sheet. The Outreach committee will produce this.

**MBI Update** Peter Larkin letter – Jeremy Dunn stated we had asked towns to adopt the resolution – stressing need for regionalization. The points in the letter requiring standalone operation by towns should be rebutted. The Outreach committee will produce talking points to the letter after the Jan 28 meeting. Steve Nelson reminded that the point of resolution is to state our position, not do a point-point rebuttal and the resolution has more force if the towns keep to the original. He suggests that towns should put any extra comments to a cover letter. Kent Lew would like to see a rebuttal to the regionalization comment. Jim Drawe noted the next Berkman report should be coming out soon, which should support need for regionalization. We could try to get support from Rural Advisory Committee, MMA and similar organizations. Leslie Rule reported the Pioneer School district will send a report – she’s trying to get other school committees/districts to speak out.

Joe Kearns met with Sen Rosenberg yesterday – he was interested in our objections to Peter Larkin’s letter. He’s willing to help with broadband issues. Jim Drawe had sent him an amendment to original MBI charter, asking that 2 board members be from Western Massachusetts and also legislation to allow towns to roll over notes for 20 years of notes, instead of 10.

Charley Rose reports that Massachusetts has requested the FCC release CAFII funds to MBI.

Jim Drawe, Charley Rose & others met in Rowe with staff from MA Auditor’s office, discussing the MBI123 network and their policies and how they’ve changed. Results likely not for 6 months – Trevor Mackie noted this this was a normal audit, not triggered by any concerns.

**Planning for January 28 Workshop** Why are we doing this now? We’ll need towns to sign an MOU, hope to have a draft available there and will need commitments within a few months. We’d like to get as many town officials together at one time, rather than do individual town road shows. Jeremy Dunn - why towns should come to the workshop – we want every town to have at least one option. Kent Lew – things have changed, so the towns should want to get an update. Craig Martin – expects MBI will tell some towns that they can’t afford to do this – we should work with them. Outreach committee will be sending another invitation to town officials

Should we cover plan A2? – Jeremy Dunn it explain assumptions this operations plan is based on. Jean Atwater-Williams – it’s important to show what has changed.

**Reports from Committees**

Outreach: Last week send an update to subscribers – some feedback. Delegates were asked to update town officials list distributed during the meeting.

We’ll have an online signup form for the Jan 28 meeting, information will be sent to invitees, and there will be a press kit. MBI will be releasing results of RFP on January 23, we may have to account for that. Our goal is to distribute plan details to customers Jan 30.

Finance: Handout of income statement as of Dec 31, 2016. Next month we will have an item to vote on dues for FY18. Delegates were asked if towns had included dues for FY2017; about half responded. Bills will go out next week. Escrow account handout -credit card fees deducted from online signups led to shortfall, the Executive Committee voted to restore shortage to the account. Escrow account will only contain fees + interest, other fees from the WW general fund. If we have to return all deposits, will cost ~$3,000 just for the mailing.

**Other Director Input** Kent Lew – towns will have some additional responsibilities – would like some guidance on what will be needed and how to do it. E.G. how to handle the pole application fees. Jim Drawe will put something together – 3 finance options: co-mingle accounts, enterprise fund, parallel books for MLP (Jim’s recommendation)– accounts like depreciation reserve, debt service, revenue/expenses.

Jean – 3 towns (Southern Tier) issued RFP for construction & service provider (Monterey, Sandisfield, Tolland). Bidder’s conference on Jan 17– meeting with State (MBI) on 20th – 1pm in Lee Town Hall (Old Courthouse). Monterey also issued private RFP – due Feb 9. Sandisfield Broadband Committee has scheduled a meeting on the morning of Jan 28.

New Marlborough – Frontier was the only respondent to their RFP. 15 year commitment – they would build/own/operate. Negotiating ongoing, now past the deadline for agreement. MBI announced RFP was defective, and they would not fund. He feels NM will join the 3 towns. Responses due Feb 6. $30/month/household would be guaranteed by the town, even if they don’t take service. Basic service free, higher tiers available.

Steve Nelson – Tyringham has no provider, may be interested in working with WiredWest.

**Confirm and Schedule next BoD meetings**

Saturday, February 4th, 9:30 am – Becket

Saturday, February 25th, 9:30 am in Cummington

– snow date for both the following Wednesday at HCOG in Northampton

[**Other business which could not be reasonably foreseen within 48 hours of meeting**

Whip City Fiber had asked Wired West for a support letter for the response to the MBI RFP. It was distributed to attendees, who had no objections or changes to it.

Anyone planning to speak at MBI Feb 16 should send a request soon to MBI Deputy

Director Edmund Donnelly via email at donnelly@masstech.org. (The Peter Larkin letter specifically invitees Selectboard members and designees to speak then).

**Adjourn** Larry Klein moved, Tim Newman seconded, the group voted to adjourn at 12:15 pm