

**Minutes**

WiredWest Board of Directors Meeting

Cummington Community House

33 Main Street, Cummington MA 01026

Wednesday, July 10, 2019, 7:00 pm

Called to order at 7:10 pm

**Welcome and Introductions** 5 minutes

**Approval of Minutes** 5 minutes

June 12, 2019

Moved: Art Schwenger, Seconded: David Dvore

Result – approved unanimously

**Report from the Chair**  5 minutes

Doug reports Bill Ennen says our legislative delegation are aware of the drop cost issue, and Doug has heard the same from Adam Hinds. WCF has procurement out now for drop vendors. Joe Parda has hopes we will get better pricing; the specs are now written for rural towns.

**Report on WG+E Contract negotiations** 10 minutes

by Executive Director

One issue remains, the White Label for services. John Leary (?) states the Customer Service Department can’t do it. Jim suggested a method to accomplish this. Also reminded him that they need to do a website. Still waiting for a reply, but Jim will hold firm on these requirements. We still have the original contract.

David reports that the website payment system is not yet ready, but Rowe is doing installations now and people can’t pay. He still does not have an IGA for drop installation.

**Vote on final WG+E Contract** 15 minutes

The contract is not finalized, so vote is passed over.

**Review of finances** 30 minutes

We have moved deposits from towns who have signed the agreement from escrow, so WW has some working capital.

**Drops for customers in adjacent towns** 20 minutes

David proposed this due to a customer with residence in Heath, but driveway is still in Rowe. Point became moot because the owner is a taxpayer in Rowe. David had asked if Rowe could use some WiredWest revenue to build before finding it’s legal to pay for his drop.

Doug has potential customer in Cheshire whose utilities come from a pole in Windsor. Other towns have found that the town where the customer lives should pay for the installation.

Vote on agreed decision – passed over – this is a town decision

Discussion of $99 fee to build reserve for contingencies. Steve Nelson suggested we need to determine what is the appropriate level of reserve. Jim feels that a robust capital reserve will help us in operations. E.g. IRUs are cheaper than leasing lines for backhaul but require capital expense up front. Kent suggested part of reserve could be used to help with cash flow issues (like waiting for the last payment from state grant).

Towns need to pay initial pole licenses and bonding, initial insurance, first month’s electric bill, first propane tank fill and possibly Lifeline setup fee. WiredWest will cover the rest of expenses during operation.

**Nominations for officers – election in August** 15 minutes

Current officers:

* Chair: Doug McNally
* Vice-chair: David Dvore
* Treasurer: Bob Labrie
* Clerk: MaryEllen Kennedy

Kathy Soule-Regine nominated the existing slate, Steve Nelson seconded.

**Marketing discussion** 15 minutes

David recommends using email as primary communication mechanism. Steve says we need to make WiredWest prominent and make sure people understand what it is. Doug positioned WW as enabling town to run a business.

Kent suggests that it would help to educate people on streaming, since many are asking about TV. He suggests we put together a WW branded handout, with information on this subject. David found YouTube TV the best in his investigation so far. Doug says handouts explaining the benefits of high speed (especially Gb) will be good for marketing.

David – the website needs to be revamped to be more customer-centric. Jim – we need a Communications Committee to work on revamping this. Jeremy will ask Gayle if she’s willing to help with our website & other marketing.

Some things that should be covered: streaming, cloud, home controls (Nest & security cameras). Good to do material targeted at different types of customer.

Jim – New Salem and Washington will be the next towns to come up, about December, our marketing focus will be on them. Marketing costs per town are based on # of premises.

**Goshen Fiber for George Propane** 10 minutes

We pay pole rental on 14 poles in Goshen and have sufficient fiber to serve all the houses on that stretch of road. Jim proposes that we give that fiber to the town of Goshen if they sign the service contract with WW. If they don’t, we will sell the segment to Goshen.

Vote on agreed decision

Moved: Jeremy moved that we accept Jim’s proposal.

Second: Doug McNally

Result: Approved unanimously

**Committee Updates** 10 minutes

**Finance**

Jim distributed the budget overview. It’s been loaded into QuickBooks. He will recast budget as each town goes live. It only includes towns which have signed service agreement. The detailed list he handed out shows all 8 towns.

Vote to adopt budget

Moved: MaryEllen

Second David

Result passed unanimously

**Town updates**  10 minutes

Make ready has started in Becket, may complete in January. Plan to go to bid about October for construction, and to start on underground construction. May go live January 2021.

Doug - Bill Ennen says the governor’s office may start working with the construction firms like they have been with utilities.

David – Shutesbury included a ‘shot clock’ in their contract to ensure timely completion (or get a penalty payment). Jim says it will result in higher quotes.

Heath expected to come up in September 2020.

**Other Director Input** 5 minutes

**Confirm and Schedule next BoD meetings**

August 21

September 18

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

**Adjourn** 9:30 pm