

WiredWest Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date / time: Wednesday, March 8, 2017 6:00 PM

Location / address: Hampshire Council of Governments, 99 Main Street, Northampton, MA

Attendees: Jim Drawe, Jeremy Dunn, Bob Labrie, MaryEllen Kennedy, Charley Rose

Guests: Leslie Rule, Tim Newman, Gayle Huntress, Craig Martin

Called to order at: 6:05pm – initial time allotted to Outreach discussion

EC meeting called to order at: 7:38 pm

1. Approve minutes of previous meeting – March 1 –Jeremy moved, Bob seconded – approved unamimously
2. Plan for Carolyn Kirk meeting – discussion by Outreach Committee. OC will try to produce a draft report right after meeting, will follow normal procedure for approval. Should go to delegates, with follow up for town officials and press. Jim will talk to Larry Parnass.

1. Regional Broadband Solution – Bob wants to do a brief presentation for Goshen (they attended January meeting).

Meeting in Charlemont Monday evening – WG&E presentation was well received, Aaron answered questions. Toby Gould (Charlemont) had questions about numbers, Jim directed to website and would like to follow up with him. Leslie thinks about 10 towns attended: Rowe, Cummington, Charlemont, Colrain, Hawley, Heath, Plainfield, Leyden, Ashfield

Jim wants to have Kopelman & Paige review agreement with WG&E.

Jim sent updated questions to the providers, but they have not responded. OTT wants a $50 activation fee, need to confirm that WG&E does not. Gayle – WG&E is local and would provide more local jobs. It’s an MLP so would not be bought or sold. Charley – got some negative feedback from former WG&E employee. Chester works with WG&E for electric; will try to get some feedback from there. The WMass delegation met last week to discuss BB, no real information on what happened.

After tomorrow’s meeting, we should publish a statement (regardless of outcome) .

Chesterfield meeting – Bob Labrie and Mark Klitzke attended, SB chair (Trish) – concerned that the co-op would decide on use of excess money and wanted input. Bob replied that the delegate is the person to bring town’s decisions but the whole group must decide. There is now a BB committee – Mark K + 2 others.

Wendell meeting – Gayle presented, Jim talked after. They were receptive to the operational plan.

New Marlborough meeting was not hostile. Chair of BB committee wanted to confirm it’s legal for excess revenue to be returned to towns (instead of lowering rates). Jim will have Deirdre to confirm.

Aaron was in favor of a regional solution. Cheryl Handsaker questioned how we would manage this – it’s too cumbersome for all towns to attend project meetings. Jim & Jeremy think that hiring an OPM to coordinate all towns would be good, she didn’t like that idea. Leslie – might work with multiple OPMs for a subset of towns. OPM adds value at design phase, change orders, watching town’s interest. Jeremy – Todd Corcoran would be a good choice – Jim agrees.

Insurance is still an unknown – Todd/John Furey were working on an agreement with MIIA, no response yet. Jeremy – ask other networks where they get their insurance. One backup strategy – self-insurance.

1. MBI update
2. Committee Updates
3. Review other ongoing work, including meetings, conference calls
4. Other business which could not be reasonably foreseen within 48 hours of meeting

Bob Armstrong renewed the domain name for us.

1. Set next EC meeting

Adjourn: 8:35 pm

Outreach discussion:

4 town RFP – 3 respondents: possibly Frontier, WG&E, Matrix. Each town will negotiate separately. NM had submitted 27 questions to WW which was answered and other requested documents sent. Jim did a presentation, they only wanted followup on Q 25 – WiredWest fee. Combined SB & BB committee with public invited.

1 page summary now on the web

CK meeting – Bob Labrie – ideal outcome would include a joint communication. Jim, if outcome is positive, should release a general report.

MASSworks application Jim emailed to the group – we should not have to supply as much information, since towns have been vetted. Jim would like to see grant process in place to be approved by MTC board.

Jeremy would like to see MBI-Assisted build program killed. He thinks if town build grant program is simple and straightforward, no one will want the assisted program.