

WiredWest Outreach & Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date / time: Wednesday, March 29, 2017 6:00 PM

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

Attendees: Jim Drawe, Charley Rose, David Dvore, Jeremy Dunn, Bob Labrie, Leslie Rule

Guests: Steve Nelson, Al Woodhull, Craig Martin

Called to order at: 6:04 pm

Outreach Committee:

1. Report from Franklin County Selectboard meeting: Charley – Steve Kulik said MBI budget info and audit to be released this week. WW presentation – Leslie thought too much detail for that audience
2. Multi-town meeting in Plainfield – Leslie is not getting much response yet. WG&E said they’d prefer to meet with a group – she’s considering making it a meeting with WG&E instead. She’d like to refocus on construction. Leslie planning to cancel the April 3 meeting. Charley was working with a group of towns also, he will schedule a meeting instead.
3. Goshen meeting - meeting focused on WW presentation on operations. MBI gave April 10 deadline, SB thinks that’s too soon to decide, may wait until after informational TM – likely not before the end of April. Craig notes that if a cable company approaches the town to build, the town must then hold a public meeting.
4. David has created a one pager for distribution (ATM, mail to subs, website) – he wrote a draft approved by Gayle & ?. Bob wants to review before making public.
5. Jim – Conway meeting of State senators, Linda Dunlavy talked about Last Mile, spoke well of WW and the grant program. Stan Rosenberg said he’d look at issue of cost (overhead) of MBI giving money to cable companies.
6. Bob & Jim will be at Informational TM in Goshen on Saturday April 22 9 am [rescheduled to April 29], Comcast will be there. Charley – same in Worthington on April 24 6:30 pm. Lesley has spreadsheet comparing private provider with town build. Jeremy – thinks advantages of private (cable) provider are: no town debt, TV, and low cost options, MBI would say experience.

EC:

1. Approve minutes of previous meetings – March 15 and 22 – both approved unanimously
2. MBI Update
   1. Charley sent summary of Board Meeting. Private providers, Comcast severable, Charter non-severable with 3 new added towns. Partial cable town update – faster than planned, expects completion within 18 months, more homes will be served. (MBI assist still in progress, Crocker & Frontier also mentioned). Grant program Carolyn Kirk discussed the process, Charley sent the slides to EC & OC, very streamlined, as discussed at WW & Carolyn Kirk meeting. Kirk expects only 10 towns to sign up, we think at least 15. $20M to be transferred to OHED, MBI will be using rest of the funds for other options.
   2. Any impact to Axia bankruptcy? MBI says there will be no interruption. Axia is borrowing money to keep operating during restructuring.
3. Regional Broadband Solution
   1. Shutesbury Special TM March 28 – purpose was to establish a 5 member MLP Board, but there was some discussion of cable option. Voted overwhelmingly to establish the board.
   2. WCF visit – we were impressed. Jim handed out copies of the proposed contract with towns. We’d like one town to submit to K&P to review for 1 town, then share with the rest. Leslie – Ashfield has done this with their counsel (KPLaw), and sent to Plainfield, who made further edits. Outreach Committee to share the Plainfield version after KPLaw has approved. If KPLaw wants to review, WW will pay if our finance committee agrees. They have much capacity for growth in billing, customer service. David – Marilyn may be willing to get the legal review.
   3. At this point, Plainfield wants to work directly with WCF for D/E/C – they do not want to wait for other towns. Plainfield SB (as MLP board) gives manager ability to negotiate, but SB must sign any contracts. Kimberly will act as liaison to WCF, who will act as OPM. Steve N – WCF is more like general contractor, managing subs, not OPM who acts for the customer. LR thinks Kimberly could be the liaison for multiple towns, or WW if there are enough towns. John Leary of WCF thinks it is beneficial if the towns are contiguous. Plainfield wants to bring Windsor & Cummington along. David is concerned that this design might not accommodate the regional network, Leslie – WCF said they would design to allow towns to join later. Marilyn Wilson asked for spec sheet, so any independent builds are compatible. Steve wants to be sure that towns which want to join but are not immediately ready would be included. Jim – grant money would not be available before May 15, which should give time for towns to be ready.
   4. Al W – WG&E presented to Leyden BB committee. Al would like WCF to reiterate the value of a regional solution and towns working together. CR – towns are individual for the build, but thinks it will be obvious that regionalization is needed and can be accommodated during the design phase.
   5. Jim received task lists from some EC/OC members. He’ll send out consolidated list, and want to do a planning meeting. Next Wednesday, March 29, 2017 meeting will be dedicated to project planning.
   6. Choice of operations vendor: waiting for response from WCF, Aaron wants to report on real experience.
   7. Craig M – we should try to bring Leverett back – Jim & Otis. Should be included in our planning session. Al W – Peter D may be stepping down from LMLP, replaced by Geo Drake. Al thinks if L & O came back it would be a big draw for wavering towns.
   8. Jeremy – suggested a survey to collect information from towns which he drafted. Jim D – we sent the request to SB to sign resolution – Jeremy thinks they are superfluous now. After we select a vendor, should ask towns if they will join. Leslie – waters have been muddied due to new MBI proposal from Crocker. OTT said they wanted to be involved in at least equipment selection, so we need to know what the magnitude is for the operations vendor. Include in planning process. E/OC members should think of questions to draw out town’s commitments.
   9. David D – we need to publish a privacy and net neutrality policy – Jim – we have an example from Frontier that we could use. We also need a reasonable use policy.
4. Delegates/Alternates/EC/OC need to do State Ethics training and submit certificate to me. <http://www.mass.gov/ethics/conflict-of-interest-law-online-training-programs.html>
5. We’d like to expand the EC, propose some new members at next BoD.
6. Committee Updates
   1. Finance – planning for financial update at April 15 meeting and a budget for FY18. Today, we have just over $19,000 in the bank. We have a few remaining towns which will be sending FY17 dues. Sean Cunningham of MBI working on revised agreement for planning grants. We don’t have funds for individual towns, just for the co-op.
7. Review other ongoing work, including meetings, conference calls
8. Other business which could not be reasonably foreseen within 48 hours of meeting
9. Set next EC/OC meeting – Wednesday, April 5 at 6:00 pm in Northampton

Adjourn at: 8:39 pm