

**Minutes**

WiredWest Board of Directors Meeting

Cummington Community House

33 Main Street, Cummington MA 01026

Wednesday, August 21, 2019, 7:00 pm

Called to order: 7:09 pm

**Welcome and Introductions**

Jeff Piemont, former Becket delegate has moved there permanently and will be involved in the project there.

**Approval of Minutes**

 July 10, 2019

 Moved: David Dvore

 Seconded: Art Schwenger

 Result: approved unanimously

**Report from the Chair**

**Election of officers**

 Chair – Doug McNally

 Vice-Chair – David Dvore

 Treasurer – Bob Labrie

 Clerk - MaryEllen Kennedy

Moved: to approve the nominees as presented, for the clerk to cast 1 vote for each nominee – by Jeremy Dunn

Seconded: Art Schwenger

Result: approved unanimously

**Report on WG+E Contract negotiations**

 by Executive Director

Jim shared the last message he sent on Tuesday to John Leary, Rich Carnall, and the WGE general manager proposing changed wording to the force majeure section to be more agreeable to them. No reply yet; John Leary is on vacation again this week. We are operating with the current contract, but they have not yet fulfilled it as Rowe and Washington report, e.g. white labelling.

The Board is willing to extend the deadline for a week.

**Vote on final WG+E Contract** - passed over

**Review of finances**

Jim handed a copy of the full financial report for board members to examine. In the future, he will bring the summary and P&L report only to each board meeting.

Rowe customers have been sent bills and Jessica (bookkeeper) has access to process the payments. Payments are being seen to the WiredWest account. Bob Labrie will use a separate account for user fees, separate from the escrow account.

**MLP finance** – report on discussion with Tom Scanlon

Jim, David and Kent had a meeting in Rowe with Tom Scanlon (auditor for most towns) and Rowe town accountant. Tom agreed with the plan for the town to use the chart of accounts as WiredWest has advised. He agreed that using MLP accounting minimizes the burden on the town accountant and treasurer. It works because the customers are WiredWest customers, who pay WiredWest and expenses are pooled with towns sharing in profits. Tom supplied a spreadsheet for MLP manager to use to track depreciation funds.

**Marketing discussion**

Jim spoke to Heath Broadband group, stating that marketing is very important when close to going live. Before that, it’s good to send out info periodically. David will put up a web page for any WW town as he has done for Rowe, Washington & New Salem. He reports the survey he did helped to get email addresses for potential subscribers.

Washington has a survey page up now. Kent reports it helps to stay engaged with customers and see trends as people respond. He plans to focus on the “maybes.” Comments are very helpful, they often include questions and he responds to all. Currently Washington has 50% response – he’s planning to use the responses to decide on FSA build order.

Westfield has some literature which Jim will try to obtain from them; Kent volunteered to help with transforming it for WW if necessary.

**Purchase of conduit for service drops**

One option for people with UG needing conduit who want to install it themselves is purchasing a spool. Customers would pay for segments at cost ($1400 for 5000 feet). Kent asked if WiredWest would purchase a spool, to ease his cash flow issue, and excess could be shared by other towns.

Jim thinks it’s a good idea for WW to buy conduit to be shared by towns which need it.

Doug moved that WW set up a mechanism to buy reels of conduit and allow the towns to sell it to customers at a cost-plus basis, so WW will not suffer a loss. It will be up to the towns to track the sales and have customers remit the cost to WW – checks only. [Sales tax will need to be collected]

Second: Bob Labrie

Result: passed unanimously with Jeremy abstaining.

Kent to confirm lead time with WGE.

**Committee Updates**

**Finance**

 **Vote to adopt budget**

 **Passed over, no copies available – Jim will email to all delegates.**

**Town updates**

New Salem – construction start 9/9

Washington – construction should start 10/1

Rowe – currently about 12 customer connects/week, expects that to ramp up next month under the new contract.

Becket focused on going out to bid for distribution construction about October 1 – expects to have bids by early December. They are still considering how to handle outliers (e.g. small roads with direct buried utilities) and plan to skip much of Becket Woods for now. Jim cautions that there are rules about breaking a project into multiple bids.

**Other Director Input**

**Confirm and Schedule next BoD meetings**

September 18

October 16

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

**Adjourn 8:42 pm**