

**Agenda**

WiredWest Board of Directors and Executive Committee Meeting

Online

Wednesday, June 8, 2022, 6:30 pm

Attending: Jim Drawe, Jeff Piemont, Doug McNally, MaryEllen Kennedy, Kent Lew, Bob Labrie, Don Hall, David Dvore, Kathy Soule-Regine

Guests: David Gordon (for Heath), Matthew Crocker (Crocker Communications), Dick Spencer (Washington MLB)

Called to order at: 6:33 pm

**Approval of Minutes**

May 18, 2022

Moved: Kent

Seconded: Jeff

Discussion:

Vote:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Member Town** | **Vote** |
| Becket | Y |
| Heath | abstain |
| New Salem | Y |
| Rowe | Y |
| Washington | Y |
| Windsor | Y |

Result: Motion carried.

**Matt Crocker**

Matt is president of Crocker Communications. They have been an ISP since 1984. They currently serve Shutesbury and Mt. Washington. They are MBI’s largest service provider for town government, schools, and CWMARS library system. They are shifting their role to be ISP only, partnering with Sertex for construction and maintenance (network operator role). Crocker will do all the customer facing work. They are a CLEC for over 20 years, have their own switch for residential phone service, no need for OOMA boxes. Their ISP only rate is $24.95; would need to work out the cost for Sertex. They have sold the answering service business. The company is now smaller but more stable. They have Internet connections in NYC, Boston, and Springfield (100G between those sites). They peer directly with major services, e.g. Google.

Questions from the attendees:

Kent – how is the phone connected – e.g. would we need new ONTs? Matt - they use the dual ONTs which can keep phone service up during power outages. They have used Polycom OB300s that can connect the phones instead of the OOMA boxes. They could send the boxes to subscribers to with instructions to self-install, replacing the OOMA.

Jeff – would we need to discuss NO fee with Sertex? Matt – Crocker & Sertex would reply together. They may be able to lower price since WiredWest has a large number of subscribers. Sertex thinking of some type of insurance for small repairs – they charge a fixed rate (yearly?) for all repairs instead of billing for each truck roll.

Doug – our current provider does remote support and can connect to customer routers. They are using routers from the same vendor (Kent noted that newer installs are receiving Adtran routers, Adtran bought SmartRG). Matt is checking with Adtran whether the current equipment can be migrated to Crocker’s control.

Doug – WCF has techs in living in the western area who can reach towns quickly. Matt – their techs now are in Pioneer Valley, would need to staff up for us and would try to find ones close to our towns.

Jeff – would they match our seasonal policy? Matt – they are flexible. They have for Shutesbury a 1Mb/1Mb plan for $5/month (and also charging MLP fee), to keep an eye on equipment and keep phone active. They try to avoid multiple add/drops which are labor intensive.

David G – how do you do monitoring? Crocker uses LogicMonitor for monitoring traffic, faults, etc. Sertex supports the physical equipment, in hut, etc. They monitor 100% of network, triage. Sertex maintains the fiber records, splice information, etc.

Kent – there was an incident with routes flapping which required extensive troubleshooting, there was a network person as well as equipment tech. Would Crocker send 2 people out for that? Crocker is responsible for SFP swapping, Sertex would do the optical testing, etc.

David G asked about higher-level expertise. Matt has been Tier 4 support for his company. He is experienced in Cisco & Juniper. They might outsource to their supplier for support of Nokia. They are very familiar with Adtran & Calix.

Doug – do you have experience with expanding the network? Yes, between Crocker & Sertex they have the expertise.

Jim – impact on customers by changing vendors? Matt – they would need to get access to our Nokias. For customers, they would reboot the routers, after reconfiguring to talk to the Crocker equipment. Would do 1 town at a time, scheduled during a maintenance window. There is more work if customers have static IPs. Customers will need to add their billing info to Crocker’s portal. They would ship the OB300s to customers to self-install, there may be availability issues. Phone numbers will need to be ported for incoming calls to work, could be done in bulk.

David G – asked about the K-12 schools and other work they have been doing. Matt mentioned a number of towns’ school systems they have supported. They installed a managed firewall in the Shutesbury elementary school, required by eRate. Most CWMARS libraries are using Crocker.

Kent – the billing is actually done with Stripe, possibly could simplify transition if Crocker would use Stripe. WCF does invoicing.

Kent – does Crocker supply email? Crocker does support email (3 current domains), using Amazon cloud services. They could host a separate email domain. Has been considering a new email platform which would be easier to manage. Most people have email addresses already with Gmail, Aol, etc. so demand seems less.

**Bylaw change**

Second reading of and vote to approve amended bylaw regarding Investment Committee.

Kent shared the document and Jim presented the changes.

Moved: Kent

Seconded: Jeff

Discussion:

Vote:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Member Town** | **Vote** |
| Becket | Y |
| Heath | abstain |
| New Salem | Y |
| Rowe | Y |
| Washington | Y |
| Windsor | Y |

Result: Motion carried

**RRR update**

Central cluster meeting Monday, no documents signed yet, invited Chris to answer questions. Doug shared the updated doc from Northern cluster with his group. Their cost sharing will be based on number of customers, with some review in case of unexpectedly large usage.

Northern Cluster – all towns signed the WCF contract. Not thrilled with the document but feel the need to move ahead. Their deliverables were attached as an appendix to the contract. They still have not completed the cost sharing agreement, which must be signed by MLP Manager & Chair of the SelectBoard. Crown Castle will need to do work to allow the connect – several months lead time, so David wants to start with them. He will share the final contract.

Southern Cluster – Jeremy is taking the lead on the technical side, Kent will try to reconnect with Blandford and Otis. Their topology is different and will require a different solution. They don’t have a good alternate provider yet, but at minimum can share backhaul to save costs.

David – WCF has no engineers certified on any platform. The have a new network manager, who will need to be trained on Nokia. They can handle the day-day operations, but not design. In the WCF RRR contract, the cost depends on the number of clusters signing up.

**Comments on Crocker presentation**

Kathy – WCF has been very good at customer service. Doug agrees and feels any new provider will need to work very hard to smooth the transition.

Jeff – we need to be concerned about our branding. WW is the ISP, we need to make sure the vendors acknowledge that we need to be seen as the ISP. Jim – WCF support was supposed to answer the phone as WW, since we have a distinct number, but they have never done that. Kathy says they have answered as WW when she called. Jim will see about porting our current numbers if we change providers.

Doug – we will need to have new providers’ costs defined well, since they will have different offers.

Kathy – we need to look at customer facing costs, e.g. Crocker charges extra for many phone features included for free in OOMA.

Kent – we shouldn’t consider these discussions as real pricing decisions. They are introductory discussions to get an idea of what they can offer.

Doug – after talking to the other providers and are considering a change, we should invite WCF to attend a meeting. Kent doesn’t feel we need an introductory meeting with WCF, but we should include them if we proceed with procuring a new vendor.

Jeff – towns should consider whether it will be worth the short-term pain of changing vendors and what we will gain by switching.

Doug – we need to consider the services as well as the cost. A cheap solution could put us out of business.

**Finance Report**

Passed over

**Town updates**

Battery replacement – David has the batteries to replace in the UPS, but not the tech to install. The UPS web card can be connected to the switch that was installed with the monitoring system to connect to the network.

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

**Confirm next BoD meetings**

June 15, 2022, 6:30pm

July 20, 2022, 6:30pm

Future - every 3rd Wednesday at 6:30pm

**Adjourn** 8:12pm

Moved: Jeff

Seconded: KSR

Vote:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Member Town** | **Vote** |
| Becket | Y |
| Heath | Y |
| New Salem | Y |
| Rowe | Y |
| Washington | Y |
| Windsor | Y |