

Plainfield Broadband Committee

Meeting Minutes June 4, 2016

Committee Members Present: Brian Hawthorne, Howard Bronstein, Leslie Rule, Lew Robbins, Kimberly Longey. Others Present: Sally Silberberg, Ann Irvine

Brian Hawthorne called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM at Town Hall

A motion was made and seconded to elect Brian Hawthorne as chair of the committee. Motion passed unanimously

Committee members discussed the role of secretary and agreed to defer action on filling this position until the remaining 2 members, out of a total of 7, are seated. Kimberly agreed to serve as interim secretary until then.

The committee agreed to set a twice monthly meeting schedule, generally the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7PM at town hall. The committee will meet more frequently as needed. In addition to meeting on June 13 and June 27, a special meeting has already been scheduled for June 14, to coincide with the Selectmen's meeting and the anticipated visit from newly appointed MBI last mile project manager Bill Ennen.

A motion was made and seconded to allow any committee member to participate in meetings electronically, provided that a quorum is physically present to convene the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee discussed requirements for compliance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Laws, including posting requirements. Brian provided a summary of Plainfield's longstanding practice, which is more expansive than MGL. It was noted that once the new official town website is operational this offer another forum for disseminating information about our committee's work. The committee agreed to follow practice of posting meeting notices at the Post office, transfer station, town offices, Hathaway Hall and town hall.

The committee agreed to use a shared folder in Googledocs to store its records and to facilitate organization of committee work products. Both public (e.g. meeting notices and minutes) and non-public(e.g. Broadband service provider bids) records will be stored there.

Committee members discussed potential candidates for the remaining two seats. Kimberly reported that she had recently sent a personal email update on the status of broadband in Plainfield to approximately 70 Plainfield residents and in it mentioned the opportunity to serve on this newly established broadband committee. Two women, Michal Lumsden and Sally Silberberg expressed interest. Several others, including those active in 2015 in the town-wide outreach effort preceding our annual town meeting, offered to help with specific activities as needed and requested.

A motion was made and seconded to recommend to the Plainfield Board of Selectmen that Sally Silberberg and Michal Lumsden be appointed to the broadband committee at the board's next opportunity. Motion passed unanimously.

The committee reviewed and adopted a [mission](#) statement.

The committee discussed developments for deployment of last mile broadband in our region using state funds appropriated in 2014 for that purpose. Items discussed included: staff changes at Massbroadband Institute; WiredWest's recent changes to its core business plan made in response to MBI concerns; the Baker/Polito administration's newly released approach to the project; and the potential for small and large group regional approaches with neighboring towns. Discussed how some of our neighboring towns are proceeding under the new plan and with the new players and evolving set of rules and criteria. The general sense and priorities of our committee are: to preserve access to the \$650,000 in available state funding for our town's broadband network; to position Plainfield to move quickly, but not too quickly, so that we can help shape the state's emerging criteria; to keep avenues of communication open with all potential collaborators; to limit complexity so as to increase probability of success.

The committee discussed the [town profiles](#) released by MBI in late April. Leslie reported that she had been in touch with Christine Hatch of MBI to communicate our concerns about data discrepancies in Plainfield's premise counts, which is an important data point foundational to cost estimates, funding allocations. She noted the work she and Brian had done in winter of 2015 to ensure accuracy of counts. It was also noted that page two of MBI's profile for our town appeared to have problematic data with regard to location of existing MBI middle mile 123 fiber optic cable, as well as proposed routes for last mile fiber optic cable. Kimberly, in her capacity as Plainfield's formal point of contact with MBI for this project, will send a letter outlining our concerns and confirming our data.

The committee reviewed MBI's "[Last Mile Readiness checklist](#)" released on June 3rd. Completion of this form is the threshold activity that will begin a longer 21 day process for MBI and our town to work together to determine how and when Plainfield will proceed in the Baker/Polito admin last mile plan. It was noted that the Mass Department of Revenue through its division of local services, has a strong role in assessing and deciding any town's readiness to proceed. Kimberly will draft Plainfield's response to this request form and Brian will review and edit. We aim to discuss this at the June 13th meeting for subsequent distribution to the board of Selectmen at its June 14th meeting.

The committee discussed the interplay of MBI last mile program with the existing Baker/Polito administration Community Compact initiative. Brian, in his capacity as member of Plainfield Planning Board, is in process of research and recommendation for that board's participation in any Community Compact. Leslie will work with Brian to identify ways our broadband needs can dovetail with this program.

Ann Irvine offered to assist the committee with dissemination of summary reports of its activities. The committee enthusiastically accepted this offer of help with an aim for regular reports to the community through articles in the Plainfield Post.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Upcoming meeting schedule for the month of June:

Monday June 13, 2016 7PM

Tuesday June 14, 2016 (at Selectboard meeting) 7:15PM

Monday June 27, 2016 7PM

Minutes above as approved at 2016-06-13 meeting.