

**Plainfield Broadband Committee**  
Meeting Minutes November 28, 2016

Committee Members Present: Brian Hawthorne, Kimberly Longey, Lew Robbins, Michal Lumsden, David Kramer

Absent: Leslie Rule

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. at Town Hall.

Michal agreed to take minutes.

Brian moved to delayed the reading of the minutes of the 11/14 meeting until next meeting; David seconded. Passed unanimously.

Brian and the rest of the committee officially welcomed David Kramer as the newest member of the committee.

**MBI RFP**

Brian began a discussion about the RFP that MBI recently sent out. He also noted that MBI has updated its FAQ page to reflect the latest policy change. Earlier in the fall MBI said they would like to make it possible for private companies to build the network for the towns that don't have high-speed internet. The new RFP seeks bids to build, own, and operate network(s).

The language in MBI's RFP narrows down the possibilities to a few national corporations. In MBI's current policy, Plainfield is not obligated to accept any proposal that comes from the RFP. The state has already allocated a certain amount of money for our town. If we choose to go with a private company, that company would receive part of our town's state money (under the current MBI policy). If we choose to go it alone, we still get our town's money and can still build, own, and operate the network ourselves.

However, the language in the RFP makes it sound like MBI will have the final say in the decision; the FAQ makes it sound like the towns will have the final say. Brian said he wants our committee to be prepared for MBI to change its policy again.

**Plainfield RFP**

Brian said he would like Plainfield to send out our own request for proposals seeking someone to design and build the network for our town. This would leave all of our operations options open. Kimberly said Charlemont could be interested in joining this effort, and she suspects that some other towns might be interested in working together on this. Brian said he will work on an initial draft of the RFP. We will then need to make sure we post it legally according to the state's procurement laws. Ideally, we could get this RFP out by the time the MBI proposals are due (January 11). Kimberly will talk to people in Charlemont about working together on this project.

Kimberly said she thinks this is the right thing for Plainfield to do, but wondered if there is a political consideration to doing this. Brian said he doesn't think there is a political risk; he said the town of Plainfield needs to take every step we can to find options.

### **MBI Readiness Process**

The bond counsel sent a letter to Allan Kidston specifying the documents that are still needed in order to be bond-able. Kimberly will draft a response from Allan to the bond counsel to keep this process moving.

### **Broadband Committee Survey**

Sally shared her distillation of Lew's preamble to the survey of town residents. After much discussion, Kimberly pointed out that we don't need to do a large-scale town-wide survey for the information MBI needs, since we can use the information we collected in our smaller survey from last month. Once we're further down the road and know better what subscription options we might offer, we can conduct a large-scale survey.

Lew said this whole discussion really makes him want to get fiber in the town and not go with something else. Brian agreed that if the town is going to spend any town money on this, the town needs to be in the driver's seat and make all the decisions. Brian will draw up a document showing all the possible pathways currently available to Plainfield.

### **WiredWest Update**

Sally moved to postpone our discussion of WiredWest until next meeting; David seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **New Business**

The next Broadband Committee meeting will be Monday, December 12, at 7 p.m. The committee agreed to reschedule our second December meeting to December 19 (rather than the 26th).

David made a motion to adjourn; Kimberly seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Minutes above as approved at the December 19, 2016 meeting.