

Plainfield Broadband Committee
Meeting Minutes January 9, 2017

Committee Members Present: Brian Hawthorne, Kimberly Longey, Michal Lumsden, Sally Silberberg, David Kramer, Leslie Rule (left at 6PM) and Lew Robbins (arrived at 7PM).

Brian called the meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. at Town Hall.

Brian reviewed the agenda and asked for additions or changes. It was suggested that we reorder the discussion items to address topics that required Leslie's participation, as Leslie needs to leave the meeting early to attend a regional school committee meeting. All agreed.

Brian requested approval of the Minutes for the December 19, 2016 meeting. A motion was made and seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

WiredWest Update: Leslie provided an update on developments within WiredWest. She noted the recently released WiredWest update to subscribers and the process through which WiredWest solicited and is now reviewing/vetting proposal from existing businesses (both private companies and existing municipal broadband networks) to provide WiredWest member towns with network operations and internet services (including data and telephone) on a regional basis. WiredWest expects to release its new proposed business and operating plan at a public meeting on January 28th. The WiredWest executive committee is carefully vetting the proposals and finalizing financial presentations for each town and will make themselves available for meetings with Select Board's, Finance Committee members and other towns leaders upon request. The WiredWest outreach committee, of which Leslie is a member, is anchoring the preparations for the January 28th meeting. Legislators will be invited to that meeting.

MBI Update: The committee discussed MBI's January 6 update and progress report as received from Peter Larkin, MBI board chair. This report indicates fairly substantial changes to MBI's last mile policy but provides little practical or actionable information about those changes. MBI has said it will release the results of the private sector RFP soon after the RFP response deadline of January 11, 2017. MBI has indicated it will schedule a workshop for municipal officials on the legal requirements for procurement of infrastructure services. Date to be determined. Kimberly agreed to contact MBI's town liaison, Bill Ennen for more information about this latest set of policy changes at MBI.

The committee discussed Crocker Communications recent request for a letter of support from Plainfield for its submission to the MBI November 21, 2016 RFP for Last Mile Grants to Provide Broadband Service to Unserved Towns. It was noted that WiredWest has recommended that its member towns NOT support Crocker's proposal for several reasons, including low coverage (only 70% of community is guaranteed to be wired) and high connection fees (approx \$2,500 - \$3,000 per premise). The committee agreed not to issue a letter of support at this time.

Plainfield RFP: Brian reported that he has outlined an RFP/RFI document and intends to continue drafting with collaboration from leaders from broadband committee members in nearby communities.

In context of the continued evolution of policy at MBI, and the continued delay in actual progress by the state in bringing broadband to our community, Kimberly recommended that the broadband committee double-down on its intention to solicit information about both network design and construction and network operations directly from potential service providers. She feels it is important for Plainfield to explore all available options and to not only rely upon MBI and WiredWest.

The committee discussed desire to have informal conversations with potential providers prior to issuance of a formal Request for Proposals or Request for Information. The committee agreed that information about procurement will be useful for our purposes. Brian noted that Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has a program that could potentially provide financial or staff support to our committee for broadband procurement. Kimberly noted that Franklin County Council of Governments may also be a resource for staff support, especially if we partner with one or more neighboring communities from Franklin County, though this is likely to be on a fee for service basis.

Committee Work Management: Brian noted that Kimberly had distributed a tool for potential use in ensuring work assignments move forward with coordination and efficiency. This tool is call "MOCHA" and is a quick way to assign project management roles (e.g. "manager", "owner", "helper" "approver").

Communications: The committee agreed to the need for a short article in the upcoming Plainfield Post to update townspeople on our work in process. Kimberly will attempt to draft an article in time.

FY 2018 Budget: Lew reported on his role and efforts within the Finance Committee to adjust how budgeting before annual town meeting is done. He requested clarity from the broadband committee on potential financial needs for the year beginning July 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2018. The committee identified desire to include a line item for the Plainfield Municipal Light Plant, with funding sufficient to continue membership in WiredWest and to transact any necessary work related to the planning, design, engineering or construction of our broadband network. Exact financial needs to be determined and discussed at our next meeting.

Minutes above as approved at the February 13, 2017 meeting.