

Leyden Broadband Committee

Minutes of the Committee Meeting of 2/2/16 at 7:00 PM

Attendees: Bob Ryan, David Curtis, Jeff Neipp, Al Woodhull and Bob Anson.

Minutes from January 5, 2016 accepted and approved.

Old Business:

Update by Al Woodhull on negotiations between Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (MBI) and Wired West (WW).

MBI does not want WW to oversee the build out of the final mile. MBI and WW have met often but Al doesn't have a lot of info. Due to the nature of negotiations in general, it is normal to keep negotiations private within the parties until an agreement is published.

Al has acquired some technical expertise in the area of building out a broadband network. He stated that the lines to each hub from the home should be kept as short as possible. One reason for this practice is If you double the distance from the hub to home, you essentially quadruple the maintenance headaches and risks for maintenance trouble. In the Town of Leyden we have the following distances to keep in mind. From town hall to East Hill Branch is 3.3 miles. From Town Hall to River Road is 2.8 miles. From Town Hall to Brattleboro Road/VT border is 2.4 miles. From Town Hall to Greenfield is 6 miles.

One vision articulated was to have a central hub at Town Hall with four spokes. Each spoke would go to one of the main roads listed in the above paragraph. If one line goes down then all other lines stay up. The question is: Is it possible to build in sensing within our own towns' hub to sense if a part of the line's route is "down"? Can that switch then keep the rest of the line up and active?

New Business:

Bob Ryan passed out a letter from the Leyden Select Board dated 1/31/2016, to Eric Nakajima of MBI. This letter was in support of MBI's position on town ownership of assets and an easy exit strategy for towns should they wish to leave any cooperative they might have joined. Bob feels that there may be other roles for WW to take on. For instance, Wired West could act as our own MLP expert, be our administrator, be our billing agent, etc. Wired West could be an active participant, but does not have to own our equipment. Bob also said the MBI model, which was the basis for our \$1,070,000 appropriation, is predicated upon a hub in each town.

Our gross budget for the network in Leyden is \$1,750,000. This is a “not to exceed” budget figure. We hope that we can we come in below that figure.

A meeting next month has been set up with the Leverett Broadband Committee at 10:30 am on March 1, 2016. Our regularly schedule monthly committee meeting previously scheduled for March 1st will now meet the day after that on March 2nd. Whoever goes to Leverett must do their homework and go over the facts. Leverett’s Committee feels that they can be most helpful to us if we come prepared with questions for them after reviewing Leverett’s experience with building out their own Broadband System.

When we meet again with Kelley we should ask him for more details about the mistakes he claims were made by Leverett when they implemented their broadband network. We want to make sure that we don’t build those same mistakes into our plans.

Leyden’s Committee feels that we should also sit down with MBI. Bob Ryan feels that we should ask MBI: If we connect to Broadband through an agreement with the City of Greenfield, will you then allow Greenfield to hook into AXIA? Currently, Greenfield connects directly to Boston without using MBI's middle mile. Leyden could even build a line directly to Greenfield for approx \$100,000 that would tie us directly into Greenfield and bypass AXIA’s billing costs. Could it cost us less overall in the long run to do a plan like this?

Lots of answers may come to us in Mid March. We will have met with Leverett’s Committee. Negotiations are likely to be finished between MBI and WW. We are also likely to have more answers to our many questions and perhaps be ready to move by then.

Jeff said that by July 1, 2016 MBI will be doing pole studies. The Select Board has sent a letter to MBI saying to go ahead with that study.

We hope to meet with Mayor Martin again in March. We’d like to ask him what his motivation is in allowing Leyden to connect our wireless network to Greenfield’s network. How is he trying to get money for this?

Would the state still give us money if we chose to go it alone, or do something slightly different than proscribed?

Our next meeting will be Wednesday March 2, 2016 at 7:00 PM.