

# Leyden Broadband Committee Meeting

March 2, 2016

7: 07 PM called to order

Minutes Approved as amended.

Present: Bob Ryan, Jeff Neipp, David Curtis, Tom Luck, Al Woodhull, Bob Anson

Al passed out a report to the Committee covering the recent Wired West Board of Directors. Included in the documents is a statement concerning how the Executive Committee is defined. The Wired West outreach committee is going to try a different approach to communication. According to Al, WW needs some marketing people and a spokesperson. It helps if there is one and only one voice speaking for Wired West. An analysis has been done within WW about what things could potentially go wrong in a broadband system and how the incidents could be responded to. Leyden's dues for membership in Wired West for fiscal year 2017 will be due in July of 2016 and they will total \$1000.00. Al passed out Wired West's budget for FY 2017.

Al expressed a wish that the Broadband Committee were ready to make a decision about how to invest in our Broadband structure. But many on the committee express a similar eagerness to move. Delaying the ability of the various towns to begin the broadband build-out is disadvantageous for Wired West. The overall situation at this point in time is that things are "stuck" because of many issues not under our control.

Jeff Neipp observed an important point concerning broadband infrastructure and the Commonwealth. Where regionalized schools are concerned, the state will come in to run a troubled school system. With WW or other entities, there is no precedence that the Commonwealth would be inclined to assist a troubled

broadband network. We are on our own here. If we fail we own it still and there is no obligation by the state to help any individual town.

There are delays in implementing the build-out with former MBI administrator Eric Nakajima leaving and Elizabeth Copeland replacing him. There might be another delay if she is replaced. Again, “things are stuck.”

Tom Luck said that he does not feel comfortable talking about preferences for our broadband build-out at this point. He would, however not go with Wired West in the current situation. He would like to find out if Greenfield is a realistic option and offer concerning the financials.

Bob Ryan said that there are only two viable options for Leyden’s decision at this point; either Crocker or Greenfield. He wondered if MBI would be agreeable to taking everything over for some of the small towns that are ready for the build-out and moving forward.

David attended the recent meeting in Leveret with the broadband committee there. He had two takeaways from that meeting. One was that we would be lucky to have MBI doing our billing and administration. The people in Leverett are very intensely involved with the running of their Municipal Lighting Plant. The second takeaway was that Leyden should get experienced broadband professionals involved when we move forward.

Al said that his feeling at the moment is that if Wired West is not stringing wire on poles by the time we get a positive statement written by Greenfield, then he feels that we should accept an offer from the first viable entity that is ready to begin a build-out.

Bob Ryan distributed an outline of Leveret’s associated broadband costs dated 9/23/15. The network operator fee has gone up from the \$64,000 listed to \$80,000. He then showed his projections for Leyden’s financial picture concerning our projected broadband system. A factor that will ultimately affect our costs to run our system is the pace at which our residents will subscribe to our network.

Will we have a take rate of 80%? Will it be 75%, or even lower? There is likely more poverty here in our town when compared to Leverett.

Leverett built in the ability to connect to each home; everybody gets the wires and then can choose later whether or not to subscribe. The initial hook-up fee is \$300. Only 5 out of 800 homes declined to subscribe in Leverett. The broadband fee \$101 per month in Leverett.

We had a number of questions to ponder. Do we want to put all of this in the tax levy? Do we want to move without state aid yet and hope for it later?

We are starting to have an understanding of the finances and individual components. We also understand that Leyden needs to get some other entity to do the MLP billing.

We know that we want the active broadband technology, known as Active Ethernet "AE." AE has equal download and upload.

Our next meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2016.