

Leyden Broadband Committee

Minutes of the Committee Meeting of 5/3/16 at 7:00 PM

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

Minutes from the April 12, 2016 Committee meeting accepted and approved as amended.

Old Business:

From what the Committee has seen, in letters drafted for Selectboard signatures in all Wired West towns and a proposed resolution to be added to the warrants in all Wired West towns, it would appear that Wired West is lobbying the state to turn over its earmarked broadband grant money directly to the towns involved. It apparently is Wired West hope/expectation that the towns would then in turn give those monies to Wired West to handle the town's broadband buildout. This would essentially remove MBI from any oversight of whatever was done going forward. This approach is unacceptable to the Committee.

Bob Ryan said that he wants to get to the point soon where we can meet with MBI and find out how they came up with their projected costs for our network. Has MBI ever had anyone on the ground to look at our poles and the future route of the fiber-optic cable? Where did MBI get their figures? Also, what proposed new alternatives are they planning to announce?

David spoke in glowing terms of the wireless network that he has experienced in Southern Vermont. He wonders if a wireless network for Leyden with transmitters on poles and receivers in the homes wouldn't still be a viable alternative.

Al echoed the opinion of most on the Committee that Leyden needs broadband capabilities similar to what the big towns have. He feels that we must go with Fiber To The Premise (FTTP) so as to be "future-proof" and able to handle new applications in the future.

New Business:

Sharon Mallory of South Schoolhouse Road attended tonight's meeting at the invitation of Jeff Neipp. Jeff has just today informed the Committee Chair Bob Ryan that he intends to recommend that Sharon be appointed to the Committee.

Bob Ryan told Sharon that the Committee has no desire to enlarge its size and that at this time there are no openings on the Committee. Further, Bob mentioned that no one on the Committee knows the protocol for adding new members and we need guidance from the select board on what role the Committee has, if any, in the nomination process. Bob indicated that both he and Tom Luck had already identified various possible candidates with strong technical backgrounds should an opening arise.

Sharon spoke of her affection for Wired West and her early involvement in the creation of the movement that eventually became Wired West.

Bob Anson addressed his concerns about the partiality of the appointment process and spoke of his early interest and support of Wired West. He also spoke to his gradual disillusionment with WW as his experience on this committee progresses. Bob A. said that he had been attracted to the idea of Wired West in the beginning because the town would have ownership and not be subject to the whims of an independent, for-profit business. He added that even though Wired West has made some favorable changes to their operating plans, the penalties involved if Leyden chose to leave were simply not acceptable.

Al brought up the fact that it was he who originally suggested the creation of the Leyden Broadband Committee that kicked off in September 2015. Although committed to Wired West, he is not entirely convinced that Wired West is doing everything right, particularly in the area of its exit strategy for towns. That said, he also cautions that we must always remember that MBI is a large state bureaucracy that has not had stable leadership in some time. Eric Nakajima, who recently resigned, was the 5th or 6th leader of MBI in the last 7 years and the current director is likely a transitional appointment. Per Al, MBI's recent

Montague decision, where they excluded Matrix from the allowable vendor pool to extend broadband to unserved areas of the town, shows the same arbitrary bias that Wired West has been experiencing. It is Al's understanding that Wired West might be ready to announce a new position on asset ownership, with towns possibly being allowed to own all of the equipment used in the network.

Bob Ryan suggested that if Jeff does decide to resign, we should ask one of the other selectmen to join the Committee. It is his belief that it really helps to have a member of the Selectboard with us when we meet with MBI, Mayor Martin, Crocker, etc. Bob Ryan also mentioned that when he and Bob Anson had recently met with the town's Wired West delegates and the selectboard to discuss the wording of a broadband resolution to be added to the town warrant, that Lance Fritz asked for a written summary from the Broadband Committee as to what it has been doing, where it stands and where it is going. Bob Anson agreed to help Bob Ryan develop a draft for Committee review.

The Committee then talked about the articles on the warrant for the upcoming town meeting. After a short discussion we unanimously felt that we could support the payment of the \$1,000 dues to Wired West.

All of our meetings are scheduled to take place on the first Tuesday of each month.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday June 7, 2016.

Meeting ended at 9:04pm

Addendum: These minutes were sent out for review on May 17, 2016. Al Woodhull took exception to the minutes as written. He suggests that the meetings be recorded with an electronic device for insuring that the minutes more accurately reflect the content of said meetings.

The board secretary polled the members and it was agreed that meetings would be recorded from now on.

