

Leyden Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes

March 22, 2017 at 7:00 pm

Leyden Town Hall

Committee members present: Bob Ryan, Bob Anson, Lance Fritz, Dave Curtis, Tom Luck, and Al Woodhull.

Select board member Jeff Neipp, and Bill Stathis of Crocker Communications were also present.

The meeting was called to order by Chm. Ryan at 7:03 pm.

The minutes from the Broadband Committee Meetings of February 14, 2017 and February 22, 2017 were accepted.

Bill Stathis of Crocker Communications spoke to the committee about the company's revised plans to offer broadband services to towns like Leyden. This is the result of ongoing negotiations between Crocker/Fujitsu with the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) the parent company of MBI.

Crocker, along with the support of their partner Fujitsu, has submitted a proposal to the MTC to build the broadband network for most of the un-served and underserved towns in Western Massachusetts. This project would utilize the construction and professional services funds to be awarded to the towns by the state, with the addition of investment from Fujitsu and Crocker. This partnership of companies would own the networks, once built, and have a fifteen year contract on servicing the broadband needs of the towns involved.

Stathis said that their plan called for an additional investment from each subscriber of \$500. They contend that this would be needed to offset the installation costs of the ONT – the Optical Network Terminal, essentially the modem – and other associated network connections at the home.

Bill Stathis of Crocker Communications also said that their plan to build the network called for FTTC throughout the entire Town, tying in only subscribers and

would bypass homes of those not wishing to join the network. Wiring inside the home will be the responsibility of the homeowner. Their plan also accounts for a 500 foot run from the street to the home. With long driveways, the homeowner would have to pay for the balance of the wire/labor.

Stathis said that it is possible to move quickly according to their timeline. Perhaps by early April the company will get a go ahead from the State. Decisions on whether to participate could then be made by the Select Boards on a simple up or down vote. He projects that the network would be operational by December of 2018.

Members of the Broadband Committee later expressed a desire to offset subscriber connection costs by Town monies in order to aid every homeowner in obtaining a broadband connection.

OTT Communications and Westfield Gas and Electric are now competing to be chosen to be the network operators for any towns in which Wired West might end up being the ISP and network operator.

There was an update on the MBI assist program. The program may not happen after all and those monies set aside may go elsewhere because of recent developments at the state level.

A preliminary result of the pole survey being undertaken by Osmose shows that the Town of Leyden has 336 poles that may need to be replaced in order to be ready for the build-out. This figure represents 37% of all poles in the town. The cost for replacing a pole is estimated to be between \$2200 and \$4000 per pole.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Anson, Clerk