

On 8/31/2015 10:44 AM, Otis Selectmen wrote:

Dear ,

The Select Board shares your enthusiasm for bringing broadband services to all residents in Otis. Please see the attached explanation for the Board's decision to opt out of Wired West. Also, please see the attached document from MBI, the agency that is managing the design and construction of the project.

Unfortunately, many residents have the impression that Wired West is the developer of this project when it is not; nor is membership in WW needed to access Otis' share of state aid (\$1.8 million).

Wired West is simply one of several vendors seeking long term commitments from towns to serve as network operator and internet service provider. In fact, since WW lacks the capacity to perform either of these services, it will be contracting out for these services, essentially serving as a middleman, which the town views as unnecessary.

Town officials met with WW a few months ago and frankly, WW did not make a positive impression on any town officials. They asserted repeatedly that we would lose our \$1.8 million in aid if we were not part of their cooperative which we knew was not the case. They also maintained that they were going to save money by bypassing MBI's middle mile and running "dark fiber" to another vendor to try to save money on buying bandwidth. We knew there was no way MBI was going to allow them to bypass their state of the art taxpayer funded middle mile and in fact MBI is not going to allow it.

WW also greatly exaggerated its role in the design and construction processes. The only role they have is advisory and that's only to the extent that towns delegate their authority to negotiate with MBI to WW, something that Otis officials have decided they do not want to do.

WW also proposes to provide "drops" only to pre-subscribers which would leave some residents with a \$1,400.00 to \$1,500.00 barrier to obtaining service in the future. Town officials believe that all taxpayers should reap the same benefits regardless of whether they have pre-subscribed or not.

Likewise, town officials are unwilling to transfer ownership and/or control of a network paid for by Otis taxpayers to Wired West or any other vendor.

Last, I point out that Otis is only 2/3rds of the way to signing up the 40% of premises WW requires for membership in its cooperative. That goal may never be obtained and is not necessary to proceed anyway. It is WW's requirement, not MBI's.

Otis needs to move forward with a vote soon so it can be part of the first wave of MBI's design work. In fact, Otis' design work may begin sooner than that of Towns in WW because WW towns still have to iron out details of the cooperative agreement. In any case, there is no need to hold up Otis' progress in a vain attempt to meet Wired West's 40% requirement.

No vendor should be trying to take control of a Town's project in the manner in which Wired West is by actually urging voters to delay a public project to ensure its services are chosen.

Thank you very much for expressing your concerns .