

SELECTBOARD MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 20, 2018

Meeting opened at 1:00pm

Present: David DiNicola, Chair; Judith Hoag; Albert Sirard  
Duane Pease, Town Administrator

Alicia Matthews, Government Relations, Eileen Leahy, Government Relations and Jim Bitzas, Engineering, all of Comcast Cable.

Meeting held so Comcast could present their proposal for high speed internet to the town.

Comcast responded to MBI's request for the flexible grant option after many of the unserved and underserved towns received no responses for their internet service.

Comcast has a heavy local presence in the area and currently is the provider in Chester. They will do all of the construction and provide repair service to their product. They would offer high speed internet, cable TV, phone and cell phone service to all customers. Cost to the consumer would depend on what services they selected. Their internet speed is constant and customers could opt for higher speeds if wanted.

The total cost for providing service to 96% of the homes would be \$1.84 million. The Comcast model is for 20 homes per mile but Middlefield only has 10.5 homes per mile and since Comcast is a public company, they have to make decisions that are financially sound for their investors. They did have a proposal of a little over one millions dollars that would provide service to 75% of the residences but did not identify what 25% would be without service.

When questioned, they did not have an answer for what could be done using just the MBI grant allotment.

Howard Knickerbocker felt there was no way to evaluate their proposal and also questioned what Comcast would be willing to contribute to the total buildout. This is something that would be determined at a later date.

When advised that most residents still have land lines, what would happen in a prolonged power outage, Comcast said they have a 4 hour backup battery and if the outage were longer, they would dispatch generators to provide power to their lines.

They agreed the make ready process is the longest and most expensive part of the process.

When questioned about Whip City fiber constructing a network in Westfield, they said competition is good for business and the consumer.

There was continued discussion on funding, services, availability and what about residences that are remote and if they would still be without service. Comcast would not block or slow down service and supports the principles of the net neutrality law.

Maureen Sullivan noted that currently Verizon DSL service is not available to everyone and the further away from the hub, the slower the service. Comcast said their speed would be consistent at all points of their service.

Board thanked them for their proposal.

Dave motioned to adjourn, AI 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 2:34pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease  
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

David DiNicola, Chair

Judith Hoag

Albert Sirard