

SELECTBOARD MINUTES
APRIL 27, 2018

Meeting opened at 11:30am

Present: David DiNicola, Chair; Judith Hoag; Albert Sirard
Duane Pease, Town Administrator
Also present: Curt Robie; Finance Committee

On the conference call were: Peter Larkin. MBI; Deborah Wagner, DOR and Matt Andre, DOR

Larkin explained the reason for the call was to advise the Town of what additional funding and loan arrangement could be made if the Town were to choose Comcast as its internet provider. MBI has put out a Flexible grant RFP to all providers that were interested in providing internet to the unserved towns and Comcast replied to provide services to Middlefield. After discussions with MBI, Comcast agreed to provide the required 96% coverage. This would cover 268 of the 280 homes in town. the cost of internet alone would \$69 a month.

Comcast would be willing to contribute \$268,000 to this build out; MBI would also contribute an additional \$231,000 that would leave the Town's contribution at \$231,000. The State would be willing to front the money to the Town and pay as Comcast completed certain objectives. DOR advised there were a number of ways the Town could pay back the loan over 10-15 years: deductions from the yearly "cherry sheet" payments, use Free Cash or take money from the Stabilization Account. The loan from the State would have a rate of less than 2%. The advantage of using Comcast would be it has a strong financial history and has been in business for an extended period, any costs in excess of the town's share would be borne by Comcast and they could offer high speed internet as well as phone and cable TV.

Curt Robie said that the governor and legislators are serious about education and technology and are willing to do what is necessary to bring the tech age to the unserved areas. If the areas that Comcast could not reach due to a lack of poles, could the town install the poles to reach these houses. The answer was yes.

Judy questioned the loan and interest rate and was advised it would be part of the State's revolving loan fund. She also questioned what other providers were available. Larkin said the Selectboard controls the decision as to who will be the provider but strongly recommended Comcast as they have operational sustainability. Matrix has provided some of the financials that MBI requested but not all. Also, Comcast is the only provider that has offered service to Middlefield that will not seek additional funding if the make ready costs rise.

The participants were thanked for there participation and the call was ended at 12:08pm.

Dave said he had spoken with a Montgomery Selectman and they are pleased with their agreement with Comcast and would be willing to share it with Middlefield. Dave also stated that the decision may be the Selectboard's but the Townspeople should have the final say.

Al said he liked the Comcast proposal as the town would not own or have to maintain the system.

Dave motioned to adjourn, July 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 12:12pm

Audio tape of the meeting will be filed under Selectboard Minutes.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

David DiNicola, chair

Judith Hoag

Albert Sirard