



Town of Middlefield Communications Committee

Open meeting: May 20, 2015

Committee members present:

Howard Knickerbocker
Joe Kearns
Steve Harris

Attending from Crocker:

Matthew Crocker, President
Bill Stathis, Director of Sales

Minutes:

Meeting called to order at 3:00 pm.

Discussed Crocker's desire to be Middlefield's last mile Internet Service Provider (ISP):

- Spoke of Crocker's 50+ year history starting as regional answering service in 1963.
- Crocker has more middle mile customers than all other ISPs combined, providing economies of scale.
- Seeking to extend Leverett model to other last mile communities.
- Offering: 1 GB internet \$25 per mo; comprehensive phone service \$29 per mo.
- Combined service \$45 per mo.
- 24/7 365 customer support.
- User surcharge can be added by law for up to 8% of capital costs. (Leverett has \$50 MLP surcharge, totaling \$320k per year, which is passed back to town.)
- MBI would build town's last mile infrastructure.
- Town would bear all construction costs beyond state allocation.
- Repeatedly urged town to retain ownership of assets, not sign over to WiredWest.
- Considers WiredWest business model unrealistic – they have no idea of all that is involved as ISP.
- Crocker has tried to work with WiredWest but WW not interested.

- Crocker claims to lower fees as wholesale costs go down.
- Looking into to how to form “light” version of municipal cooperative to manage municipal requirements in common, such as insurance while keeping town ownership of assets.
- Outside premises connection would cost \$600 more but simpler to service, as per Verizon phone & DSL.
- Crocker to provide cost estimates to Communications Committee based on info on road miles, pole & house locations provided by Steve.
- Recommended that town apply for MBI planning grant.

Discussed arranging meeting with Leverett re their municipal network & Crocker experience.

Discussed emergency communications upgrade:

- Joe reported on discussion with Richie Small re sharing of Chester repeater on fire tower. Next to impossible considering all the ownership issues and bureaucratic hoops.
- Howard said that’s all he needed to know – town will have to go with Town Hall antenna.
- Also, Chester reports little reception from tower in Bancroft not clear whether for hand held or mobile booster.) Joe will arrange for test with Richie.

Howard to speak with John Savery re new underground electrical service to town hall.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.