



# Town of Middlefield Communications Committee

Open meeting April 5, 2017

## Committee members present:

Leanne Every  
Joe Kearns  
Steve Harris

## Others present:

Tamarin Laurel-Paine

## Minutes:

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm.

Voted to approve minutes of 3/8/17 meeting, as read.

Discussed recent broadband developments, including:

- The new Last Mile Infrastructure Grant Program that gives towns full control over the development and construction of municipally-owned broadband networks.
- Grant awards will include both the “professional services” allocation and the “construction” allocation designated for each town – \$580K in Middlefield’s case.
- The ongoing Berkshire Eagle series on the Digital Divide, including towns’ complaints of poor Charter cable service.
- Unfolding events with MBI, including the transfer of grant responsibility to EOHEd.

Voted unanimously to approve our Last Mile Broadband Recommendations to the Selectboard:

The new Last Mile Infrastructure Grant Program gives towns full control over the development and construction of municipally-owned broadband networks. Grant awards will include both the “professional services” allocation and the “construction” allocation designated for each town – \$580K in Middlefield’s case.

We therefore recommend that:

- The town apply to implement the Hybrid Broadband Project in the attached budget which, at an estimated cost of \$483K, would entail no cost to Middlefield taxpayers.
- That the project be implemented in three phases:
  - An initial wireless pilot to provide engineering specs.
  - A wireless rollout to the entire town.

- Fiber implementation in the town's Business District, including Skyline Trail from 140 Skyline to the Town Hall.
- That the town engage with Westfield Gas + Electric to implement the project on a MLP-to-MLP basis.

Voted unanimously to approve our Communications Committee annual report.

Discussed the need secure access to the Chester Fire Tower via other channels, in light of the MBI's failure to follow through.

Discussed the town's Wireless Communications Facilities bylaw:

- Both the Building Commissioner and town counsel have stated in writing that the town currently has the right to erect a communications tower at the transfer station.
- We are postponing efforts at possible amendment until the town clearly expresses a desire to move forward on the project.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.