



# Town of Middlefield

## Communications Committee

### FY 2014 Annual Report

The Communications Committee is pleased to report further progress in upgrading and maintaining the Town's communications infrastructure during FY 2014.

#### The Town Website

The Town website at [www.middlefieldma.net](http://www.middlefieldma.net), which employs the popular and powerful WordPress content management system (CMS), has been running without a hitch since its implementation two years ago. Various boards and committees have been regularly adding calendar events and uploading their minutes, and more community events and vital town information have been submitted for posting.

New website features include realtime access to production data for the Town's photoelectric array. Behind the scenes we instituted a comprehensive security system with firewall protection and daily scans, which has detected no problems to date.

#### Town Hall Data Security

A backup solution was needed for the computers in the town hall, including a means of recovery in the event of disaster such as a hard disk crash, fire or theft. After analyzing a number of options, it was determined that Backblaze cloud backup would be the most economical and effective solution to back up all data files. Backblaze was installed on all critical computers – for the Selectboard, accountant, assessors, treasurer, tax collector, and the library – and set to provide continuous, real-time backup.

#### Connecting to MassBroadband 123

The MassBroadband 123 middle mile fiber network finally made it to the Town Hall and Firehouse, and went live at the end of 2013. After the horrendously noisy Ethernet switch in the "chair closet" was replaced with a low-power, low-acoustic, 12-port device that is more than adequate for our needs, peace was restored to the auditorium.

We analyzed potential applications for MassBroadband 123 at various locations, and are in the process of transitioning to fiber for the town offices and library, including the installation of additional wireless access points.

### **The Town Hall Network**

The totally rewired Town Hall network continues run smoothly. The dual system provides an open, public network for library and general use, and a separate, secure network for official town business. There is public, wireless access in the Town Hall for meetings, auditorium presentations, and many other uses.

We have had occasional issues with DSL service. We expect the new fiber service will provide more continuous uptime.

### **New Phone System**

With the implementation of fiber service, the Committee is looked into the feasibility and cost of replacing the current Verizon phone service in the Town Hall with a Centrex-type hosted VoIP alternative with ring central and other features. We have hired an expert consultant to help us sort through numerous options.

### **The Middlefield GIS**

Our powerful geographic information system (GIS), which can be accessed via the town website, continues to run smoothly. We added a new “data layer,” which lets you see where DLS service is available.

### **WiredWest**

We continue to be an active participant in the WiredWest cooperative to bring last mile fiber broadband to underserved communities. You can view project updates and other information at <http://wiredwest.net>.

Respectfully submitted,

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