



Town of Middlefield

Communications Committee

FY 2015 Annual Report

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

The Town Website

The Town website at www.middlefieldma.net, which employs the popular and powerful WordPress content management system (CMS), continues to run without a hitch. Various boards and committees continue to post their meetings and upload their minutes, and community events are regularly submitted for posting. Other additions include historical town records from 1879 to 1966, and searchable annual collections of Selectboard minutes.

A new online system accessed via the Building Commissioner's page allows you to apply for and view the status of various permits.

The comprehensive security system with firewall protection and daily scans continues to do its job, including the interception of frequent hacking attacks.

Connecting to MassBroadband 123

Verizon DSL service in the Town Hall was replaced by service over MassBroadband 123 middle mile fiber from Crocker Communications, serving all town offices, including the Library.

Two additional public wireless access points were installed in the town offices, bringing the total to four.

Town Hall Data Security

The Backblaze cloud backup & recovery service provides continuous real-time backup for on all critical computers – the Selectboard, accountant, assessors, treasurer, tax collector, and the library.

The Town Hall Network

The 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.

A Comprehensive Gateway Security system protects the entire network.

Town Hall AV system

A comprehensive AV system was installed in the Town Hall auditorium, including overhead projector, screen, blu-ray player, and an audio system with wireless mics and speakers for performances, town meetings, police training, presentations, movies, and more.

The Middlefield GIS

Our powerful, customized geographic information system (GIS), which can be accessed via the town website, continues to run smoothly.

“Reverse 911” review

After reviewing “reverse 911” options with Middlefield’s emergency responders, we determined that the CodeRED system is superior to the previously reviewed Blackboard Connect, which was originally designed for schools, and commenced CodeRED service in March.

Emergency communications

We are evaluating various dispatching options including using the Hampshire County repeater site on Skyline in Chester. This site should provide solid coverage along River Road which is now lacking. The Chester Fire Department will assist in conducting a series of radio coverage tests once leave cover is again on the trees. The Police Department is acquiring a surplus tower for potential service in Middlefield.

Public computers

We installed three public computers in the Town Hall auditorium for classroom training and free public access.

Last Mile Broadband

We continue to be an active participant in the WiredWest cooperative. We are exploring less costly town-based solutions, including wireless and fiber-to-the-neighborhood (FTTN).

Respectfully submitted,

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