

SELECTBOARD MINUTES  
JULY 30, 2018

Meeting opened at 6:00pm

Present: David DiNicola, Chair; Judith Hoag; Albert Sirard  
Duane Pease, Town Administrator (TA)

Warrants reviewed and signed; Payroll: \$14,770.16; Expenses: \$241,741.98

Minutes reviewed and approved with change on motion by Dave, Judy 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0.

DOER Green Grant contract approved and signed by Dave on motion by Judy, Al 2<sup>nd</sup>;  
vote 3-0.

Veteran's Agent contract approved and signed by Dave on his motion, Judy 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote  
3-0.

Highway Superintendent, Skip Savery, met with the Board. He is having a person come and advise on the fencing to be installed on the property of the late Jack Cobb. Feels a 10' fence across the rear of the property would shield the view of the highway garage and storage containers and maybe an 8' fence down the side. There was discussion on the type of fence, etc. He will get various designs and bring them back to the Board.

Dave questioned if the Town should send letters to the owners of driveways that have material wash into the road after heavy rains. Skip said one of them is getting their driveway paved and another is moving. Judy wanted to know when the Purple Heart signs would be going up, Skip said he has ordered the posts and will install them when the posts arrive. He has put up signs on River Road (Caution Children) and one on Skyline Trail just before the intersection of Chester Road (dangerous intersection). He will order another entering Middlefield sign to install on Skyline similar to the one as you enter town from Peru. There will be no indication of population.

Email from PVPC stating the CDBG was approved, this included monies for the demolition of the former General Store and adjacent house. TA called PVPC and spoke with Ted Harvey who is handling the grant in Erica's absence as she is on maternity leave. He advised all she submitted was approved.

Selectboard meeting moved to auditorium to hear the Broadband Committee's presentation.

Broadband committee is chaired by Brent LeBeau and members Maureen Sullivan and Jay Swift were in attendance. Brent stated the committee was formed to review the various proposals submitted for the Town's high speed internet. They had 11 meetings over 5 months and reviewed Charter, Comcast, Crocker, Matrix, Whip City (Westfield Gas & Electric) and WiValley proposals.

Charter a lot of unknowns and never submitted a formal proposal to the committee; Crocker involved a large town money commitment; Matrix was contingent on Worthington and Worthington opted not to go with Matrix; WiValley offered a unique hybrid fiber/wireless proposal but had no speed guarantee. The committee could reconsidered after seeing how their plan works out in some other towns.

It came down to Comcast (CC) and Whip City (WC); subscriber costs vs tax costs. The committee prepared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached)

Maureen spoke next and stated the 2 companies are unlike each other. CC is a publicly traded company and WC is a municipal electric company that provides Westfield with their power and gas and more recently has branched out as WC to install fiber to the home.

CC has an infinite number of options including cable tv, phone and internet. The committee focused on just the internet and phone operations. WC offers only internet and phone. CC would require the Town to borrow \$231,340 and CC would own the network and the Town's MBI money would be used for a portion of the buildout. The internet speed would not be guaranteed. WC would require borrowing \$1 million, they have one speed 1gig down and 1 gig up.

Tax increases were shown for both proposals. CC was based on a 10 year loan @5%, this would result in tax increase of \$90/year on a 200k home. WC would be a 20 year loan and if fully taxpayer funded would result in a \$273 tax increase on a 200k home.

The committee also had WC proposals showing a 50% taxpayer funded and 50% user funded and a 25% tax funded and 75% user funded. These figures can be found on the attached PowerPoint.

There was extended discussion regarding make ready charges, towns obligation for insurance, repairs, additional costs for managing the WC system, advantages of all fiber from WC vs fiber/copper from CC. Fiber doesn't deteriorate as the copper lines would, WC has one charge and no equipment fees, CC charges for the modem and if the user opted for tv there are also charges for the cable boxes. Dave said he had to do a lot of fact checking on the numbers and he would have Bill Enin of MBI at an upcoming meeting the say if it's right or not. He can also address the financing, feasibility and sustainability of the systems.

Jay said that in the end it is going to cost more to the user if Comcast is the provider and the costs will lower as the term of the borrowing lessens and then is paid off. He said he could get a member of the Mount Washington selectboard come to a meeting to explain how their system works, satisfaction, costs, etc.

A few questions were asked by the audience including what would happen if the town were not able to sustain the system, would the state bail us out. What would the impact of new technology be if users opted to leave the system for the new technology.

There was continued talk on the impact on the tax rate with Jay and Maureen saying it would have no or minimal impact on the taxes as the system would be 75% funded by the subscriber fee.

The committee was thanked for their hard work and diligence and will meet with the Selectboard prior to holding an informational meeting with the residents.

Dave motioned to adjourn, July 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 9:00pm

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease  
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

David DiNicola, Chair

Judith Hoag

Albert Sirard