

New Ashford Select Board Meeting
New Ashford Town Hall
July 24, 2017

Board Present: Jason Jayko (chair), Mark Phelps

Call In: Ken McInerney

Others Present: Cindy Grosso, Ed Grosso, Jim Drawe, Chuck Morrone, Keith Lacasse, Lori Jayko, Richard Demyer, Frank Youngkin, Leslie Rule, Stephen Jayko, Barb Hassan, Tom Bordeau, Kevin Towle

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Wired West: Jim Drawe from Wired West's Executive Committee and Leslie Rule from the Board of Directors spoke about what Wired West can offer. Wired West will operate the network as a cooperative with the other Wired West towns, consolidating operation costs, pole licensing, insurance, insurance bonds, and paperwork. Smaller towns are subsidized by the larger towns, but there's enough benefit to the big towns to make it worthwhile. The advantage for big towns, and all towns, is the amount of profit is greater than if operating on their own. MIAA will provide insurance for Wired West. The town would need to contact MIAA and pay those fees during construction until there are customers.

Westfield Gas and Electric has been chosen by Wired West to provide internet services. They will be in charge of marketing, sales, etc. Money from the customer will be paid to Westfield Gas and Electric, which will take their fees and send the rest to Wired West. Wired West will use that to pay the bills that have to do with the physical plant that the town builds, including liability insurance for the poles, electronics in the huts, pole bonding and licensing fees, maintenance of physical plant and electronics, and back haul (it would cost each town alone \$28,000 per year to have 2 gigs of back haul, according to Wired West). Wired West's calculations for New Ashford's costs of running the internet on its own: \$4,500 insurance, \$3,800 for pole bonding, \$4,300 for maintenance break/fix, \$28,000 back haul, and 10 % for electricity etc, for a total \$45,000 a year. If Wired West ran the internet, it would cover all of those costs out of the fees. They would charge: \$59 internet, and \$19 phone. If 50% of the town took service at \$59, the town would receive \$3,000 a year. Wired West claims the town would need 129 subscribers to cover the cost of services, if running the internet on its own, not including the cost of debt service. Approximately \$4,200 should be saved each year for depreciation reserves or \$6 per month per customer bill. Debt service would be around \$29,800 per year, or \$46 per month per customer. (Based on projected debt over 20 years, with one year borrowings.)

A one-time, \$99 activation fee will be charged by Wired West. This is to build up cash reserves for insurance cases. The \$49 that some people have already paid in will go towards the first month's subscription. Part-time customers can turn internet service on and off at will at monthly increments. For phone customers, there will be a minimum fee to maintain the phone number.

The cost estimate is based on pole to pole aerial, but there are wires under the ground. Policies would need to be set by the town for connectivity for new customers. Jim recommended that the Planning Board add language to the zoning by-laws to add the cost of fiber to developers, should a developer build several lots.

Next steps: Wired West is distributing an MOU that says that towns are committed. Several towns have made verbal commitments, but no towns have signed yet. The deadline to sign is November 1, 2017.

2. Public Comment: Kevin Towle introduced himself. He worked with Gail Carriddi and is now running for State Representative. The town will hold a forum for candidates in early September.

Chuck Morrone, Historical Commission, gave a town flag update. Cindy Grosso presented the Board with a rendering of the flag, endorsed by the Historical Commission. She would like to include the date of the town's incorporation on the flag, but noticed a discrepancy between the date on the town seal and the date on the town road sign. Chuck will look into how to get flags made.

3. Veterans: Richard Demyer, Veterans Services Officer, reported that the two established cases received increases from the state, effective immediately. One's benefits went from \$488.10 to \$633.10, and the other's went from \$583.91 to \$586.91. This is set for the rest of the fiscal year. There is enough money in the Veterans' account to pay the two veterans through December. The disputed case is still in limbo. There was a hearing on the 20th, and it will be 6-8 weeks before the hearing officer renders a decision. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting to help plan for a special town meeting.

4. Road Commissioner: Keith Lacasse, submitted the Chapter 90 paperwork to the state for Beech Hill Road paving and got approval. He will give Lori Jayko the bid specifications and she will place ads in the Berkshire Eagle and Central Register. Bids will be opened on August 21st. Keith will ask Kathy Stevens about the liability of loggers.

Greylock Road work will begin tomorrow with drainage ditches, and then the road base will be put down.

Keith will put the guardrails on the Roys Road bridge this week and do patching on town roads. He will have the shared mower next week for the sides of the roads. After he mows, he will review the ditches, doing the worst first. There are culverts on Beech Hill Road that need to be cleaned.

There has been no written work request from the resident on White Road.

5. Greylock Road Update: (Covered already)

6. Snow Plow Contract: Jason received the contract back from legal counsel with the recommendation of including the cost of what is left for salt and sand. Since the town purchases this, it doesn't apply. Jason will attach a map of the roads and then it will be put out for bids for the first meeting in September.

7. Broadband: Wired West covered already. There is a kick-off meeting with Westfield Gas and Electric on August 29th, at 10:00 at the Town Hall. The fiber engineer and project managers will be present for the three hour meeting.

8. Any other subjects for consideration: Mark Phelps provided an update on the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership meeting on July 11th. The proposed legislation is on hold as it was to be spear headed by the environment committee that was co-chaired by Gail Carriddi. Once committee assignments are clear, the partnership will work on getting the legislation going again. There was a presentation on large tract land owners selling carbon credits, however unless they have lots of acreage, it's not feasible with all the fees. They also discussed the opportunities for forest owners in Massachusetts for selling low grade lumber for laminated timbers. The purpose of the partnership is to create economic opportunities for rural land owners. Umass is doing a study on wood-pellets to measure air quality based on different usage of fuels (oil vs wood chips).

Chuck Morrone, Tree Warden, thanked Mark for clearing a fallen tree off of Ingraham Road.

Mark also cleaned out a culvert on Ingraham Road.

Keith got a bill for the mower. After we get the mower this year, we will attach a note saying we never got use last year.

9. Approve the minutes from July 10, 2017. On a motion by Mark, seconded by Jason, the minutes from July 10, 2017 were approved.

10. Warrant: The warrant was reviewed and signed.

Next meeting August 7, 2017 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 8:40