

New Ashford Select Board Meeting
New Ashford Town Hall
March 19, 2018

Board Present: Jason Jayko (chair), Ken McInerney, Mark Phelps
Others Present: Keith Lacasse, Lori Jayko, Jim Draw, Stephen Jayko, Ed Grosso, Wayne Buckley, Frank Speth, Richard George

Meeting opened at 6:00

1. Wired West: At the last Select Board meeting, there was a vote taken to cease the relationship with Wired West. Ken called Jim Draw from Wired West to let him know and Jim asked to address the board. Jason said the concerns about staying with Wired West center on the revenue sharing, about the town's not being in proximity to other Wired West towns, and that Wired West would just be a middle man.

Jim said there are Wired West towns, such as Shutesbury, that do not border other Wired West towns. Jim shared a spreadsheet to show the cost effectiveness of a town going it alone or staying with Wired West. Wired West expects a 60% savings on back haul expenses, which Jim figures to be a \$31,000 savings for the town. The \$59,000 grossed by New Ashford each year would equate to a stand-alone loss of \$30,000. Through Wired West, an estimated \$8,057 would be revenue shared per year. Jim provided total earnings showing the difference with New Ashford and without at different take rates. He concluded that New Ashford is not a drain on the organization, and does contribute when the take rate is higher.

Jim presented an estimated start-up budget. New Ashford will be the first town with internet for Wired West towns. Fees for service would be \$75 for a gig, and \$59 for 25 meg. Jim made assumptions for making the budget: that all customers pay in advance, collected a month before the internet goes live, with a \$99 activation fee. The month the internet goes live there will be no bills yet because there are no expenses yet. In November, he anticipates collecting \$7,000 in activation fees, \$2,000 for one gig of internet, \$1,000 for 25 meg of internet, and \$1,000 for phone service. In December, when the internet goes live, Wired West would collect \$4,000. Wired West will run on a loss of \$790 per month until Rowe goes live in March of 2019, and from then on it's all positive. Marketing with Whip City needs to be done two months before light up. Wired West would pay all bills for all towns including pole licensing, pole bond, insurance, electricity.

Wired West has been negotiating with Whip City for six months. They expect to have a contract signed in two weeks. Wired West anticipates having its volunteer Executive Committee meet once a month to go over the key performance indicators and meet with Whip City quarterly. Wired West is also making five-year contracts with the member towns. After five years, it will be renegotiated. The contract starts with the first town lit and is pro-rated for the other towns. The cost per subscriber is a town decision. Debt service and depreciation reserves are not included in Wired West's fees. If a customer has an issue, they call Whip City which answers the phone as Wired West. The bills come through as Wired West. A one hour response time from Whip City for problems will be built into the contract.

Jim recommended that the board wait until it gets a contract from Wired West before making an ISP decision. The Board thanked Jim for attending.

2. Approve the minutes from the 3/5/2018 Select Board Meeting. On a motion by Mark, seconded by Jason, the minutes from the 3/5/2018 Select Board Meeting were approved.

3. Public Comment: None.

4. Fire Department: Wayne Buckley, Fire Chief, presented the Select Board with the Fire Department's budget request of \$8,845 for FY19. The increase in funds will be used for repairs, supplies, and training. The Department applied for a regional grant for personal protective equipment. They also reapplied for the AFG tanker, with help from Amalio Jusino, and would like the town's matching portion of the grant to be included on the annual town warrant. The tanker truck was leaking so they drained it and resealed it. Engine two has had multiple breakdowns. Engine four needs brake work. Engine three looks good. The Fire Department has a 1,000-gallon propane tank and gets propane from Ostermann. The Board is researching getting propane tank for the Town Hall. If the Town Hall uses H.A. George, the Fire Department would get discounted service from them.

5. Road Commissioner: Keith Lacasse called Dailey about the Salt Shed. Someone is going to look at it and give an estimate on repairs. If they cannot fix it, they will refer Keith to someone else.

Keith snow blowed and used the skid steer on Beach Hill Road due to high snow banks and wind.

Jason received a letter from the MASS DOT acknowledging the new rails on the bridge at the north end of Roys Rd.

The Culvert grant application is due April 15.

The blacktop in front of the salt shed and the fire station will need attention. Also, there needs to be an apron at the Roys Road bridge.

The board looked at the budget for Roads and Bridges. Keith has a paver and can do smaller jobs, but larger jobs may need to be put out to bid. The price of blacktop went up \$10/ton commercially through Lane. We get our blacktop through the Berkshire Purchasing Group. There is about 60 tons of salt left, which is enough for the rest of the season. Once there is an estimate for the repair work to the salt shed, we will consider purchasing salt with the money left in the budget.

Jason got advice from legal counsel, that per Massachusetts General Law c. 40, § 6C, public money cannot be used on private drives. Therefore, the town cannot plow Mountain Pond Lane. Ken will let Dave Hadley know. Jason will ask Whip City how these situations have been handled, in terms of utilities.

6. Community Compact Update: On 3-15-18, Lieutenant Governor Polito, Representative Barrett, a representative from Senator Hinds' office and a member of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development came to the Town Hall to sign the Community Compact. Jason will draft up a scope of work for the two projects and the expected cost. He is waiting for the requirements for the network equipment to get the appropriate generator. It will likely cost between \$3,000-5,000. The town can reapply to the Community Compact program next year.

7. ATM Warrant: The Annual Town Meeting Warrant is almost finished. Jason will add the fire truck grant back in and will work on adding an article to address a bylaw for bonding loggers or posting the roads to limit heavy traffic at certain times of the year.

8. Budget: The board reviewed the budget line by line. They are waiting for the budget number from the School Committee. Williamstown will provide assessing and an appeals process with their board of assessors for \$7,500 for next year, a combination of FY 18's assessor's salary and expenses. We will still pay for the Patriot Systems software. Debt service for the broadband project may need to go on this budget, but the amount necessary to borrow isn't known yet. The Assessor will be asked to attend the next meeting to talk about the levy limit.

9. Broadband: The project is in phases two and three. There is a meeting on 3-26-18 at Whip City about procurement, and a Drop-Policy Forum on 3-28-18 with Whip City and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. Ken will e-mail Bill Ennon to see if we can use the broadband account money for the \$800 insurance bill.

Mark made a motion to rescind the action on Wired West from the 3/5/18 meeting, and to monitor the situation with Wired West and Westfield Gas and Electric until the best financial solution for the town is known.

10. Vacant Positions: Jason got a list of vacant positions from the Town Clerk. The file was corrupt and he is working on it.

11. Any other unforeseen business: The past two Saturdays, there have been snowmobiles going up and down Brodie Mountain. It was very noisy and they went on farm meadows. Kurt Singer called Environmental Police Officer, Nick Raimer. He will work with the town to try to put a stop to it. Ken will contact the owner of the property and let the Mt. Greylock Advisory Committee know. The state has not been filling the environmental police officer positions. Mark made a motion to send a letter to Representative Barrett and Senator Hinds requesting full funding for the environmental police officer positions. Mark will draft a letter for the Board and the Police Chief to sign.

Richard George, Board of Health, said that he cannot give the new residence on Greylock Road a temporary septic permit. Once the snow melts, the contractor needs to finish the work and installation.

12. Warrant: The warrant was reviewed and signed.

Next meeting April 2, 2018 at 6:30.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57