

New Ashford Municipal Light Board/Select Board/ Finance Committee Public Forum
New Ashford Town Hall
December 12, 2018

Board Present: Jason Jayko (Select Board Chair), Ken McInerney (MLP Manager), Mark Phelps
Others Present: Karen Benko, Richard George, Pete Haig, Joan Wilkinson, Allen Seney, Linda Seney, Cindy Grosso, Ed Grosso, Mike Birch, Mark Raimer, Kal Harrington, Sadao Yagi, Helen Majchowski

Meeting opened at 6:00

Drop Policy Funding Discussion: The purpose of the forum was to discuss funding for the broadband fiber connections from the street to the house. A power point presentation showed how the broadband project has been funded to date and how the MLP suggests funding it going forward. The original project estimate was \$700,00 and the town voted to borrow up to \$420,000 to fund what the grant did not cover. The town has received \$272,500 of a \$280,000 grant, and has been using that to fund the project. The town has spent \$134,708.51 on applications, project management, pole work, IT closet construction, and insurance. There is \$137,791.49 left.

The town got two Community Compact grants totaling \$32,892.00 for Town Hall electric upgrades, a generator, and two propane powered furnaces. The electric work and generator cost \$14,745 and the furnaces, propane tanks, and propane cost \$30,857 for a total of \$45,602. In addition to the Community Compact grant amount, the town spent \$11,765 from town funds and \$950 from the Broadband grant. Expenses that are expected for the completion of the broadband project include: the buildout completed by Sertex \$161,000, equipment for IT Closet \$54,000, and miscellaneous expenses of \$1,000 for a total of \$215,000.

The MLP recommended that the town fully cover the cost of the drops to the houses, as an investment in town infrastructure. They created a rough draft drop policy: All established town residences/businesses that are connected to public utilities will have town funds cover connection costs to the town's Fiber Network. This is a one-time policy and all new residences/businesses will bear the connection costs. The worst-case scenario cost to get service from pole to home is \$180,242, with the average connection costing \$1,086. Residents can help by digging trenches, etc. The town has \$221,498 in Free Cash and \$256,954.30 in the Stabilization fund. The MLP is proposing using \$128,816.29 from each account. There will be \$92,681.75 left in Free Cash and \$128,138.05 in Stabilization. This proposal will not affect the tax rate.

The forum attendees expressed support for the proposal.

The town is leaving Wired West with thanks for their efforts. Residents that made the \$49 deposit can request a refund by mail. The address will be posted to the town website.

A base rate for one gig service will be \$69. Depreciation and back haul costs will be added to the rate. Telephone service will be \$12.99.

Verizon and Eversource have completed their pole work. Next, Sertex will do the buildout. The Town Hall should be lit up in February and the town in March.

Whip City will handle the marketing of the broadband to residents.

Meeting closed at 6:50.