

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Community Hall
June 21, 2016

Call to Order at 7:00 p.m. by Sheila Litchfield with Robyn Provost-Carlson, and Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator present. Also present: Art Schwenger, Ned Wolf, Al Canali, and Gloria Fisher. See sign in sheet for additional attendance.

Reviewed Agenda: No changes.

Bill Ennen: Sheila welcomed Bill Ennen of Shelburne Falls. On May 10, 2016, Mr. Ennen was appointed by Gov. Baker to serve as the Housing and Economic Development (HED) Last Mile Implementation Liaison to assist Towns in determining the way forward in pursuing broadband service. Bill will present the 'big picture' tonight, and will meet again to cover more detailed information. Bill offered an overview of MBI and his credentials. MBI Board was reconfigured to fit with Gov. Baker's philosophy. The Director position is vacant but Peter Larkin serves as Chair and reports to Secretary of Economic Development, Carolyn Kirk of the Exec. Office of Housing and Economic Development. Bill reports to Secretary Kirk. Christine Hatch serves as Outreach; and there are four engineers on Board all with experience in fiber build-out. MBI is taking a new direction for broadband and including wireless technology. Middlefield is one town participating in a wireless pilot program. Bill will serve as liaison and Al Canali has been appointed as designee – Bill recommends an alternate as well. This is a very serious role and this person will work directly with Bill. Each town is very unique. Discussed readiness. When application is submitted to MBI, a two hour meeting will be scheduled and the 21 day clock will start. During the 21 days, the Town will work with MBI and a joint recommendation will be made to MBI Chair, Peter Larkin. Application is done and will be sent tomorrow to MBI.

Collaboration is presumed. Bill wants to focus on what each town needs to do individually. Towns are at gate ready to go and Bill will serve to get them going. As towns move forward, they will be asked if they want to collaborate. Al Canali encouraged working in a regional model, no matter the name, to make it viable. Also he stated that voters approved the funding with the understanding that a return will be received on investment. Heath alone is not sustainable. Bill shared that cost savings will be realized if towns converge.

Risk: In readiness process, the Administration is anxious about risk to future tax payers. Therefore, DLS (Div. of Local Services) has been added to the process. Sean Cronin, Senior Deputy Commissioner of Local Services, will be involved with every recommendation from the start. Discussed affordability/sustainability. The cost of professional services will be covered by the State. There are no cost overruns in professional services however the Town will pay cost overruns for construction which includes make-ready work. The mechanism to manage cost overrun numbers will be exposed.

Debt Exclusion? This need will be determined during readiness process. Finance Committee representative should be present at those meetings. Borrowing/financing varies by town. Discussed what was needed for Annual Town Meeting and Bill offered an hypothetical timeframe.

Concerns: Heath cannot afford to NOT do it. Enrollment is declining; low property sales; less tax revenue. Heath would like to utilize the MBI engineering team rather than go-it-alone. Bill will ensure Heath's voice is heard.

Discussed Town Profile and the inaccuracy in Heath's profile (number of households). Bill shared that all towns are incorrect and will be corrected during design phase.

When build-out is complete, discussed what entity controls system. These questions are still unanswered.

The strongest, most effective economic tool is broadband – and according to Art Schwenger, this build-out is pro-business. Small businesses cannot expand without this broadband technology.

Action items:

Bill suggests a representative from Finance Committee during readiness process.
Also, need an alternate designee.

In closing, Bill shared that the governor 'gets it.' He is intensely focused on finding a solution and has fully committed the \$40 million. Discussed whether further funding will be available. Perhaps some federal funding but again, this is uncertain currently.

Governor sees Broadband as THE priority in Western MA. Bill was thanked for attending this meeting tonight.

Larger meeting dispersed.

Mail/Email and Town Coordinator Report:

1. Email from Kimberly Noake MacPhee (Peggy Sloan) regarding META Grant ;
2. Email from Karen Axtell re: Sadoga Road Bridge. Karen Axtell will be here on 6/28 at 6:45 p.m. just before STM to deliver plans, etc;
3. Email from Jessica Atwood re: Brownfields – Draft Access Agreement; It was discussed that Glen Ayers will pursue access through housing court. The Board of Health should prepare a site access agreement, have Town Counsel review, and attempt to gain access from owners. If not successful, then Glen will pursue.
4. Email from Robyn with suggested wording for Personnel Policy/Assessors.

Other Separate Documents for review:

5. Large Broadband packet
6. TC Report

SIGNED:

- Vacation Request
- DCR Bureau of Forest Fire Control Grant Application
- P&S for Land Purchase on Bray Road (Colrain Stage). *On a motion by Sheila Litchfield, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to agree to terms of P&S for the purchase of 6.04 acres off Bray Road for the purchase price of \$55,000.*
- Reimbursement Request
- Warrants

Next meeting scheduled for June 28, 2016 at 7 p.m. (Special Town Meeting).

Future Meetings in 2016:

July 7, 12, 26
August 9, 23
Sept. 13, 27
Oct. 4, 25
Nov. 1, 15, 22 & 29

On a motion by Sheila Litchfield, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Leistyna
Town Coordinator