

Selectmen's minutes of meeting March 16, 2015

Members present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Lisa Blackmer, Steve Harasyko
Dolores Harasyko

Called to order at 7:07 p.m.

Joe Markarian from Franklin Regional Council of Government and Jim Drawe Treasurer of Wired West in to present a review of the financial requirements of the town regarding Wired West. We will have an article on the annual town warrant authorizing the Treasurer to go out for a bond for \$2,400,000. This vote requires a passage by 2/3. The second requirement is to place a dept exclusion on the ballot. This requires a majority vote to pass. The total cost for Sandisfield is \$3,600,000. MBI is putting \$1,250,000 towards Sandisfield's cost leaving a balance of \$2,400,000 net town obligation. The yearly tax impact for the first year is \$5.11 and increases each year after on average subject to change based on a 20 year loan. Mr. Drawe addressed Wired West installation. The install includes running the lines and electrical to all houses that have signed up. If the homeowner does not sign now and wants it later the homeowner will have to pay for the installation. The \$2,400,000 is a "not to exceed" number. Dolores asked for clarification on the fact that the numbers are based on 45 towns passing it, only 31 towns have committed. Who picks up the tab for the towns that didn't sign up. Jim responded that the \$2,400,000 is the "not to exceed" number. The build is a 4 year project. They will pay for the first 300 feet to install, after 300 feet the homeowners pays. They will offer financing on the monthly bill for this cost. Wired West is a coop of the Municipal Lighting Plant. If there is a 40% subscription signup or more there will be a profit which they may be able to lower rates or give money back to the towns. There is a possibility there will be no profit and the town will still have to make payments. Sonja Gray asked if this technology is already obsolete. Jim responded that technology is always changing but the fiber optic lines do not go bad. The current copper lines do deteriorate. What changes is the electricity. Rita Kasky asked about cost per house, response is \$49 per month for the lowest package to \$139 per package. Potential savings could be \$48 per month for the full internet, phone, tv package. John Burrows asked if all towns do not pass what happens. Jim responded that he does not know what the financial model will be. Discussed how to operate once Wired West is built. There are options to train our own staff for to contract out. If this project fails, which is a possibility; they will look for more subscriptions, raise rates or have layoffs. They have a \$2,000,000 reserve fund to protect against this. The Selectmen thanked them for coming out and giving a thorough presentation.

Anina Carr in to request permission to use the Old Town Hall for exercise classes. She has contacted the COA and Recreation commit to offer Tai Chi and Pilates classes with the idea of reaching out to all age groups. Lisa followed up with Town Council regarding liability. The instructors will have to have insurance naming the town as an additional insured. Dolores suggested the fees be collected by a town group such as the COA or Recreation Committee and then that board will pay for the service. The Selectmen gave

permission to go forward with the programs and thanked Anina for working on bringing these activities to the town.

Gary bottom in to present the contract for the Master Plan with the Berkshire Regional Planning Committee for review and signatures. The Strategic Planning and Planning Board are working together on the Master Plan. Contract reviewed and signed.

Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to re appoint Kim Spring as Inspector of Animals.

Reviewed FY2016 budgets.

Lisa provided Town Administrator's weekly report. She has attended a Berkshire Regional Managers meeting. Discussed at this meeting was dpw's around the state. They all follow the same format we do. She attended a MMA breakfast in New Marlborough, discussed free cash and overlay, worked with the planning board on bylaws, followed up with Athena Health Care, attended the school committee budget meeting with Selectmen Gray. It was not a well attended meeting by other boards. She looked into vehicle maintenance programs, mostly done in larger towns with 20 or more vehicles, she will continue looking into it. She has been looking into purchasing used vehicles as opposed to new trucks. Discussed chapter 90 funds. Discussed regional transportation. She followed with Ron Fortune regarding the Happy Banga gas station, they are working on it with the state.

Town Administrator seeking permission to attend a meeting of the Legislature's Joint Comm. on Ways and Means Budget Hearing on March 24, 2014. She has been invited to be a panelist at this meeting. Both Selectmen agreed to allow her to attend. She will do 2 hours of work from home before the meeting.

Reviewed and signed minutes of meetings.

Warrants reviewed and signed

Mail reviewed

Bogart Muller commented on all the trash on the roadside.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Patrick Barrett

Jeffrey Gray