

**Charlemont Joint Committee Meeting 6-29-18
(Select Board, Finance Committee, and Broadband Committee)**

In attendance: Finance Committee Chair Rich Filoramo, Finance Committee members Amy Wales, Ron Smith, Lynn Hathaway, and Vaughn Tower, Select Board Chair Sarah Reynolds, Select Board member Marguerite Willis; Broadband Committee Chair Bob Handsaker, and Broadband Committee members Cheryl Handsaker, and Mary Ellen Banks; also in attendance Karen Hogness, Rick DiFillipi, and Town Administrator Peg Dean

1. Meeting called to order at 8:02 AM by Amy Wales.
2. Rich Filoramo arrived a few moments later and mentioned that the reason the meeting was called to order was to get an update in advance of the CAF II auction.
3. Bob Handsaker gave an update on the costs to pursue fiber through a municipal network versus cable through Comcast. If going with Comcast their reach would be 89% potentially not reaching the following neighborhoods: Hawk Hill Road, Deer Run, Warner Hill, the upper part of Maxwell Road, and Bassett Road at a potential cost of \$460K.
4. Cheryl Handsaker highlighted The Broadband Committee's pros and cons for Comcast versus a municipal network. The pros for Comcast are: 1) mitigated risk from future competition, 2) less work for committee, 3) lower capital investment, 4) TV is offered, and 5) low introductory pricing; the cons of Comcast are: 1) private sector monopoly who owns the asset at the end of the service, 2) the unconscionable action to ask one of the smallest towns in the Commonwealth to pay its tax dollars towards a private sector monopoly, 3) less attractive when comparing neighboring towns, 4) net neutrality argument, and 5) higher costs after the initial costs and fees. Cheryl Handsaker added Comcast is the only opportunity where we are unable to recoup the investment.
5. Bob Handsaker gave an update on Connect America Fund (CAF) – II through the Federal Communications Commissions. The lowest bidder wins. Census Blocks Groups can be bid on. As the MLP Manager, Bob Handsaker has signed a letter stating Westfield Gas & Electric may go forward on the Town's behalf, revocable within 10 days' notice by either party. Charlemont is not the bidder. Bob Handsaker recommends going to Town Counsel to review the letter. Amy Wales agrees, suggesting we get clarification on what we are committing to and whether the letter is legal. The total amount that can be awarded is \$1M, as \$100k over 10 years. Should the Town consider a floor price amount to proceed with the auction? We have no written agreement with Comcast yet. We need to decide in the next couple weeks.
6. The CAF-II group, comprised of Rick DiFillipi, Bill Tucci, Karen Hogness, Mary Ellen Banks, and Bob Handsaker have been researching the available information. Present today in addition to Rich Filoramo and Bob Handsaker were Rick DiFillipi and Karen Hogness. They provided their comments regarding the CAF-II funding to the group, posing the question whether it would be an injustice to the Town to leave such a significant amount of money on the table knowing at an established threshold it is equal to the potential cost of Comcast with the exception it will be municipally owned, with potentially better service and the opportunity for return on investment?
7. **Action:** On a motion from the Select Board Chair Sarah Reynolds, 2ndd by Marguerite Willis, the Select Board voted to contact the Attorney to review the agreement with

Westfield Gas and Electric to bid on the Town's behalf in the CAF-II auction asking to what we are obligated and to ask if we are allowed to proceed with Comcast without a Town Meeting vote. Voted unanimously, Ms. S. Reynolds – yes, Ms. Willis – yes.

8. The Broadband Committee has drafted a bidding strategy and cheat sheet that Bob Handsaker will share with Sarah Reynolds. If the Town could get \$50k a year it would be cheaper than Comcast for the first 10 years.
9. The Select Board excused themselves at 8:58 AM. The rest remained to continue the discussion.
10. The remainder of the group adjourned at 9:15 AM.

Document viewed: CAF-2 Cheat Sheet

Respectfully submitted by Peg Dean

Draft minutes until approved

1. The Select Board stepped out to meet with Jonathan Diamond to review a Memorandum of Understanding. **Action:** On a motion from Marguerite Willis, 2ndd by Sarah Reynolds, the Select Board voted to approve and sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Mohawk Trail Regional Schools, Hawlemont Regional School and Hilltown Performing Arts Programs stating that all parties understand that during the period between June 27, 2018 and August 8, 2018 while they are using the ballfields at Hawlemont School, that any Medical Helicopter called for an emergency may choose to not use the Landing Zone at Hawlemont in his/her discretion. Pilot will notify Control/Dispatch and other local EMS personnel to determine another location. Voted unanimously, Ms. S. Reynolds – yes, Ms. Willis – yes.
2. The Select Board discussed the BUILD and Mass Works grants. **Action:** On a motion from Sarah Reynolds, 2ndd by Marguerite Willis, the Select Board voted not to pursue the Mass Works grant this year and to pursue a planning grant for the BUILD grant instead of a full construction grant this year. Voted unanimously, Ms. S. Reynolds – yes, Ms. Willis – yes.
3. The Select Board adjourned at 9:03 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Peg Dean

Draft minutes until approved

Documents viewed:

- Revised 6-29-18 meeting agenda, from Kathy Reynolds
- Memorandum of Understanding with the Mohawk Trail Regional Schools, Hawlemont Regional School and Hilltown Performing Arts Programs