

# Newbury REDI District

Minutes of 11-13-2017 meeting at Tenney Library

## Meeting called to order at 4:42 PM.

**Board Members present:** Lenice Ceccini (LC), Chip Conquest (CC), Jim Henderson (JH), Claude Phipps (CP), Richard Pollack (RP), Susan Underwood (SU), and Brad Vietje (BV). **Guests Present:** Richard Hausman (RP)

- 1) **Agenda addition:** Discuss Surveys
- 2) **Note taker:** Brad Vietje
- 3) **Minutes:** Minutes of 10-23-17 approved as posted.
- 4) **Treasurer's report:** skipped till next meeting – treasurer not present. Discussion of “members” vs. residents of the ToN, and customers who may live in other towns. Who gets to vote on what? Questions need to be resolved by the legislature; we'll make suggestions.
- 5) **Clerk's report (BV):** BV and JH to meet and work on REDI District website; Town of Newbury (ToN) website will only host us until our by-laws are approved. We will need our site to be the official repository of minutes, agendas, etc. We have no direct access to Town website – submissions through the webmaster (Mary Collins). Calendar on ToN site corrected; still only accessed through the Selectboard link. We also need a hard copy (paper) archive of all documents – BV has spare file cabinet, and will work with CP to make sure we have a complete collection.
- 6) **Sub Committee Reports:**
  - a) **Fairpoint Coordination:** CC to contact Jeff Austin at Fairpoint RE: deliverables of their town-wide network engineering survey.
  - b) **Technology:**
    - i) SU reported that the ToN uses a VOIP phone system from BCN, which appears to be accessed over the Fairpoint phone lines; Fairpoint provides technical service & repair, but BCN provides a separate bill. This is an example of Fairpoint already pairing up with an outside company to provide a service that they support with repair crews.
    - ii) RH reports that John Munson (off-grid home in Ryegate) uses a satellite service for phone and internet that is fast, and works well. Service appears to be 1 25/25 symmetrical connection for \$150 per month.
    - iii) We need to explore and identify a single best option for difficult “last-mile” conditions. CP suggests we look at the progress in Petersham, MA; web site here: <http://www.connectingpetersham.com/>
  - c) **Finance:**
    - i) RH thanked on behalf of the Hausman Family Foundation (gift of \$500 to help us get started)
    - ii) CP spoke with Eric Law (USDA Rural development), who has met with the telecom consultants for his department, and has requested a face-to-face meeting with all important players if possible. Mr. Law reports that the Trump Administration is pushing for broadband internet, so there could be funds available.
    - iii) CP also spoke with someone (Lauren Bruno?) who handles grants at VT Charitable Fund , who requested a brief summary of our efforts (CP has sent), and also explored the Bill

Gates Foundation, which only funds projects they select (no open application process), so we'd have to find a way to get their attention.

- d) **Publicity:** JH and BV to look at ways we can use our web site and social media to get the word out.
- e) **By-laws Committee:** Committee has met twice, and has made progress, despite the conflicting language in the Statute. CC has facilitated some clarifying statements from Paul Giuliani and the Legislative Council, but there are portions which will need clarification by amendment. CC reports that VLCT supported language giving the host municipality the right to appoint – not nominate -- the majority of the board. In our particular case, that may seem cumbersome, but we need to remember that REDI districts might be formed to address a variety of situations, such as a town sewer district, and the needs of those districts could be very different than our telecommunications district. CC to bring our suggestions to the Legislature.
- f) **Web Site:** Name and logo needed! CP suggests we all come up with snappy name and logo ideas. Petersham, MA has some good graphics we should look at for inspiration (link above).
- 7) **“Last Mile” Policy:** Need to define our policy regarding longer runs to reach customers. Possibly base the policy on cost of build, not on distance. LC to chair. RH will try to work out the costs to reach his house to serve as a model.
- 8) **Seasonal Use Policy:** RP to chair; will collect ideas and circulate a draft proposal for comments.
- 9) Meeting with Leahy, Sanders & Welch: CC to contact their rep's to make sure they are aware of what we're doing. Probably too difficult to get the right aide from all 3 offices to meet at the same time, so calls and e-mails may suffice for now.
- 10) **White Paper:** needs a new revision before we discuss; CJ Stumpf to create newer version.
- 11) **Next steps, schedule:** Annual Meeting probably in March, 2018; need by-laws completed and approved. Discussion of working with Fairpoint to get the engineering study done.
- 12) **Other business:** Surveys: RP asked if we should explore mailing out our broadband surveys. We will need to figure out the costs for this. Surveys will need follow-up and some sort of financial commitment before approaching our funding sources to build the network.
- 13) **Next REDI Board meeting:** November 27, 2017, and Tenney Library, 4:30 – 6:30 PM