

TA Report 5.11.12

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, MAY 5, 2012

About 125 residents participated in a 3 hours and 20 minutes Town Meeting. The Conservation Preservation Commission house keeping articles that allocated 10% to the housing, open space and historic funds as well as 70% to the undesignated fund all passed. CPA funds of \$146,000 are available to fund projects \$154,000. The one request before town meeting was to expand funding for the West School House repair project by \$8000. Town meeting supported the request.

Town reports were heard from Board of Health, Memorial Day Committee, Personnel Board, Education Study Committee, Regionalization Planning Committee, 250th Committee, Water Resources Committee, Town Building Committee, and Recycling.

Our school administrations were well represented. Union 28 Superintendent Joan Wickman and Finance Director Michael Kociela attended our town meeting. Supt. Wickman reported the school is doing well and Finance Director Kociela answered budget questions. Superintendent Maria Gyrek and Finance Director Rob Detweillar greeted us after a report on the state of the Amherst Regional School by our Shutesbury Regional Rep. Kristen Luschen.

The Finance Committee presented a balanced budget of \$5,750,473. Town Meeting passed the budget in full. The budget includes increases to salaries, capital, OPEB (other post employment benefits), audit, fire dept., elementary school, regional school, ambulance service, library, unemployment and retirement fund.

LONG LOST & FOUND

Found at Annual Town Meeting – a royal blue jacket, small.

Found at Celebrate Shutesbury (months ago) - a purple wind breaker-women’s medium

Found in front of town hall (also months ago) – a light blue women’s bicycle

Call town hall to retrieve, 259-1214 or 259-1204.

THE RECYCLING COMMITTEE LANDS THE TOWN A NEW WASTE DISPOSAL HAULER The waste disposal firm to win the bid is Allied Waste, a Republic Company. The contract begins 7/1/12 and runs for five years.

Allied Waste sent a truck to Shutesbury last Saturday at Annual Town Meeting. Their driver, Patrick, gave demonstration of the side loading compactor. In partnership with Allied Waste we hope to increase recycling awareness and subsequently lowering tonnage of trash to be hauled. Here is a picture of our new hauler’s truck.



MASS BROADBAND INSTITUTE MBI held a Community Anchor Institute (CAI) workshop last Thursday at Greenfield Community College. There are 1300 Community Anchor Institutes (CAIs) in the 120 towns included in the fiber optic buildout by MBI. Axia has been hired by MBI as the network operator. In an unusual partnership MBI sets price caps, and Axia pays MBI for the privilege to run the network. Axia makes their revenue by selling wholesale to retail providers. Twentyone providers have signed up with Axia. The customer will sign up with the retail providers. When the project is done, Axia and MBI will have different roles.

Speakers from Alberta, Canada, who are ahead of us in the roll out of their fiber network “Supernet,” shared their insights in crossing the rural digital divide. Axia, a global company operates the Supernet on behalf of government. They view this project from an open access approach, roads are public, this is public. Twenty one providers will bring compelling pricing and services. The Supernet advisors urged us to start planning now. This can be transformative. Their message was “build, connect, transform.” They spoke about dramatic change in the ability to provide services that have occurred with creation of “Cloud networks” and hi speed internet access to their remote region.

They gave examples of improvements they have made. Moved a data bank infrastructure on to a Cloud, saved \$300,000. Started online follow-up for apprenticeships, saved \$1.5 million on gas and increased employment. How to keep young people in a small town of 300 and one school? Super Net! Institutions stop demanding you come to us. They are reaching out. Post secondary institutions are funding community learning centers, extending programs. Libraries that were struggling with stagnant budgets and waning image as book warehouses have turned into the digital hub in every community. Every possible citizen who comes in can work, study, buying licenses collectively they can access all digital technologies. Libraries are the new attractive magnet. Their hours go beyond the school day. Things are changing quickly. They encouraged us to begin brainstorming new possible uses and savings that this technology will bring us. Pursue the question, how do we make it a game changer?

MBI has asked us to define our bandwidth needs for the CAIs (Community Anchor Institutions). Shutesbury’s CAIs are the elementary school, fire station, library and town hall. Quickly it was clear that as town officials we do not know how to assess that, yet. How do we define a quantity when we are still working to understand how to utilize it based on how and what functions can change and what new capacities will be created? MBI will hold more workshops to help us with these questions. If you have ideas on how to utilize Cloud networks please share them. The door is opening to new opportunities.

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