

This is the first of what will be a series of updates on the status of on-going efforts to bring broadband (“the last mile”) to Colrain.

Background:

- May 4, 2015 The Town approves a debt exclusion ballot question:
Question 3. Shall the Town of Colrain be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds to be issued in order to fund the Town’s share of the costs of construction, installation and start-up of a high-speed broadband network, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, such project to be carried out by the Town’s Municipal Light Plant totaling \$2,400,000?
- May 5, 2015 Annual Town Meeting authorizes the following:
ARTICLE #52. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for the Town’s share of the costs of the construction, installation and start-up of a high-speed broadband network, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, such project to be carried out by the Town’s Municipal Light Plant; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto. Provided, however, that this vote shall not take effect unless and until the voters of the Town agree by vote to exempt from the limitation on total taxes imposed by G.L. c.59, §21C (Proposition 2½) amounts required to pay the principal of and interest on the borrowing authorized by this vote.

Sept. 17, 2015 Selectmen notify Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) of intent to move forward with the Last Mile. Program thereby satisfying MBI requirements at that time.

Dec. 3, 2015 MBI pulls funding from Wired West, advises towns to walk away from proposed contract.

March 9, 2016 Selectmen apply for and are awarded a \$5,000 Planning Grant from MBI to fund bond Counsel costs that will be incurred during the financing phase of the Broadband project.

May 5, 2016 Governor Baker appoints new leadership team for Last Mile Broadband Project.

May 19, 2016 Colrain Selectmen vote to withdraw the Town from Wired West and request instructions as to obtaining refunds of residents deposits. (instructions posted on the Town website)

June 6, 2016 The Town receives the following e-mail from MBI:

Dear Municipal Leader,

The MBI and Baker-Polito Administration are building a flexible framework that will help all unserved towns achieve broadband access, allowing for a range of project models, including multi-town collaborations, locally-owned networks, and industry partnerships. Many technology and operational choices will be supported, as long as they meet core speed, affordability, and sustainability standards. An outline of available project models and minimum project requirements is available on the [MBI website](#).

The MBI team and Baker-Polito Administration are rapidly building an engagement process around individual town readiness. We will work closely with town designees to determine the project readiness status of each last mile town. **If you have not provided us with the name and contact for your town's designee, please do so ASAP.**

We are now engaging with towns to evaluate project readiness on a deeper level. The readiness evaluation process is intended to result in detailed status reports from the MBI, and successful, approved project proposals.

Achieving project readiness requires a detailed process of collaboration, review, engagement, planning, and evaluation. The MBI will be engaging in intensive 21-day readiness evaluations with towns on a rolling basis. Currently, the MBI has launched an intensive review with Wendell, Ashfield, Shutesbury, Egremont, Otis and Alford.

All other unserved towns pursuing broadband access projects should complete a [Readiness Request Form](#) to confirm their interest. Once the MBI receives a completed town Readiness Request Form, staff will contact the Town Designee to discuss scheduling the 21-day evaluation. Please submit this form as soon as you are able, but by July 29, 2016 at the latest.

While the specific elements will be unique to each community, you can review an example list of readiness elements in the [Readiness Request Form](#).

- June 10, 2016 Colrain Town officials meet with Bill Ennen of MBI to begin Readiness Assessment process.

June 16, 2016 The Town completes and submits the above requested **Readiness Form**.

June 30, 2016 Colrain Town officials meet with John Furey, Program Manager at MBI to prepare the required Town Readiness Submission.

First week of July 2016 Town Treasurer and Town Coordinator contact Financial Advisor and Bond Counsel to begin process of engaging their services toward obtaining a bond to finance the broadband build-out.

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