

# Town of Princeton, Mass. – Oct. 28, 2015

## Executive Session Minutes - PBMLP

### Executive Session

12:02 PM PBMLP members took roll call vote in regular session and opened executive session.

Edith asked what's up with Ayacht, and possible recent/pending upgrades. John K. suggested asking a subscriber what they charge for 4G on the upgraded service. He described the issues facing Mark Ayacht as all equipment is dated and in need of replacement. WiFi is much more limited than wired internet. Stan guessed 250 customers remain on Ayacht at \$60/month for 1.5 MB. The group has questions for the lawyers, such as non-premise or commercial customers, and avoiding selling service to Ayacht who could re-sell to customers. A provision could be made to provide fiber to cell towers or other businesses; should it be available to all or to none?

Jon had a report from a discussion with Mark Ayacht and his take on the Fiber-optic project. He has other business interests beyond town WiFi. The group noted his advantage over the town's effort—he has customers in hand, he has low prices, while the town is a high-capital start-up from scratch and they're always risky. Stan suggests eliminating risk by partnering with a vendor like Axia or Genesis. Group is intent on getting some pre-sold subscriptions for the elimination of (most) risk, but there needs to be some policy decisions made first. Phil Leaman and John K. pledged to keep this meeting confidential, as the PBMLP plans could be used against them. Stan reported on an MBI grant that went to PMLD for \$50,000 and it was used by Ayacht for upgrades.

One policy will be to service any PMLD customer. Group will ask Phil O. about when to start pre-subscriptions.

The group decided to post a PBMLP meeting for Nov. 3 at 10 AM, to address policies which tie into marketing, a brochure and other pre-subscription issues.

1 PM Edith moved to adjourn, Jon seconded and Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye."

*Respectfully submitted, Marie N. Auger, administrative assistant*

## Town of Princeton, Mass. – Nov. 3, 2015 – 10 AM

### Executive Session Minutes - PBMLP

**10 AM** Meeting opened with PBMLP members Stan Moss, chair, Edith Morgan and Jon Fudeman were joined by John Kowaleski of the Broadband Committee, Phil Leaman of Linx and Phil O'Brien, marketing consultant

Stan noted that he has collected quote/estimates from vendors for certain start-up items, Verizon issues, design costs, equipment huts.

#### Executive Session

PBMLP Board voted to go into executive session: Edith made motion "To go into executive session under the provision of Ch. 30A, Sect. 21, Exemption 10, To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive or other proprietary information, if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and to adjourn from executive session." and Jon F. seconded the motion. Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon Voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye." Nina had visitors sign a non-disclosure agreement.

Stan presented top priority of meeting, to spell out policies needed for marketing plan being developed by Phil O. Started with: installing laterals and ONT to only subscribers; at time of installation—or ahead of time--there will be an installation charge with a two-year contract, which is binding but with some exceptions, such as residents moving, and possibly amortize remaining cost of contract. There was much discussion around the ONT 'box' which the PBMLP owns, and which can be install on exterior of home or plugged into outlet indoors, like a modem. Exterior install costs half of interior version, but more advantages to interior, such as directly communicating with ISP. Phil O. says town is in good position to be first out of gate compared to competition. Jon F. mentioned potential competition from the Ayacht upgrade.

A second policy needs to address access to homes on private roads and buried utilities in newer subdivisions. Fiber lines needs to run under driveways, or to avoid that, down middle of paved road. Group discussed issues at Snow Pond and The Clearings. A third policy has to do with data use and volume from individual subscribers. It was noted that data costs are fixed, and that as bandwidth goes up, costs for data go down. The system being considered can identify how much usage is going to individual subscribers, and it can throttle a site that is using excessive data. One solution is to charge extra for users who go two or three times the average user amount. The idea of offering a low-cost option for low or fixed income households was discussed, similar to Hearts For Heat, which would be operated by a separate nonprofit. The MLP's attorney (Ferriter & Ferriter) will be consulted. The group also talked about commercial properties, and that each separate business in a single building would have one 'drop' per business, not just one to the building.

John K. reported that a rep. from Comcast is now again showing interest in Princeton, as the make-ready is actually underway. He said that since the Charter buyout deal fell through, Comcast is looking for expansion opportunities. They would hang line on all roadways and up to 250' down driveways. They also bundle internet with phone and TV, which is a service many residents have requested. Comcast works under a FCC license with many restrictions and requirements that are intended to offer consumer protection—completely different than a private vendor running broadband under contract with the PBMLP, which may be considered much more risky. The group decided that idea would be feasible only if Comcast could have it online in 1-2 years and if delivered to every address wishing to subscribe. Stan M. noted that if Comcast is serious they would need a decision in two weeks. Phil O. said this idea stops the pre-subscription effort, but he can continue with 'soft' marketing.

**12:30 PM** Edith moved to adjourn, Jon seconded and Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye."

*Respectfully submitted, Marie N. Auger, administrative assistant*

## Town of Princeton, Mass. – Nov. 9, 2015 – 10 AM

### Executive Session Minutes - PBMLP

**10 AM** Meeting opened with PBMLP members Stan Moss, chair, Edith Morgan and Jon Fudeman along with T.A. Nina Nazarian. They were joined by John Kowaleski of the Broadband Committee and Phil Leaman of Linx.

**10:05 Executive Session** PBMLP Board voted to go into executive session during open session.

It was reported that the first round of pole assessments have been received from Verizon so a check can be released. More assessments may come in this week. Second step will be pole realignments. Broadband Committee has a pole list so Verizon and PMLD can do a pole survey. About 80 poles need replacement. Group wants to upgrade pole in order of the "loops" with "Prince 1" going first. Phil reported that a subcontractor will be able to replace all those poles in less than one week. The cost is appx. \$2,000 per pole and payment terms were discussed. Group decided that PLMD should be involved and a meeting will be scheduled with Brian Allen, Nina N. Phil L. and John K.

Stan presented 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of policies needed for marketing plan being developed by Phil O. and group reviewed several items and suggested some minor edits. The PBMLP will run connections to homes/buildings where easy install is available, but only charge for ONT (indoor) set-up. He noted that distance to house/building from street is not issue at about \$2/ft. The main expense is splicing off street and hook-up onto building. Group shared information about methods of installation from street to houses, and Phil L. suggested that installing fiber into pre-existing conduit should require that it meets Nat. Elec. Safety Code and any extra work required should be billed to customer for "time and materials." A "drop bury" of line along a driveway can be done with a vibratory plow (similar to method for lawn sprinkler systems) with cost for first 500' covered by PBMLP.

**11:05 AM** The group discussed audits which will be required of PBMLP with suggestions for seeking advice, like from the Shrewsbury MLP. Group discussed standards in the NES Code about who is responsible for maintenance/repair on lines to house. The standard threshold is the electric meter—anything from the meter going outside is the utility company responsibility, anything going inside from the meter is the homeowner's. For the fiber connection, the ONT would be the threshold, even though it's in the house. They discussed need for down payment of \$200 per subscriber to be received by two months before construction. Starts on laterals (street). Group will consider making center of town a wireless access point, for "open wireless."

Group discussed setting upper limit on high-volume data usage on a case-by-case basis. Solution could be to throttle down or charge extra to high-volume users. Most seem to prefer setting threshold at three time the average use. No final decision needed yet. Edits to the first draft of policies were reviewed; Phil L. with John K. will combine notes from both drafts and create a final policy list.

**11:45 AM** Edith moved to adjourn, Jon seconded and Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye."

*Respectfully submitted, Marie N. Auger, administrative assistant*

**BOS Referenced Documents:** PBMLP 1st policy draft; PBMLP 2nd policy draft; Pole list.

## Town of Princeton, Mass. – Dec. 1, 2015 – 4 PM

### Executive Session Minutes - PBMLP

**4:05 AM** Meeting opened with PBMLP members Stan Moss, chair, Edith Morgan and Jon Fudeman with T.A. Nina Nazarian

#### Executive Session

PBMLP Board voted to go into executive session: Edith made motion "To go into executive session under the provision of Ch. 30A, Sect. 21, Exemption 10, To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive or other proprietary information, if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and to adjourn from executive session." and Jon F. seconded the motion. Stan M called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon Voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye."

Group discussed possibility of adding volunteers to PBMLP.

Jon F. voiced concern about financing, and what could happen if town meeting fails to approve more funding after having voted for \$1.2 million for 'make-ready.' He indicated there could be a powerful market for Ayacht which is now offering 8 Mb/s data speed. He also mentioned concerns about moving forward with a town meeting for broadband with split financing and if that was the plan, he is considering abstaining. He suggests scheduling a town meeting ASAP "so we don't spend too much make-ready money to build a bridge to nowhere." The group discussed a strategy regarding timing of town meeting and agreed to discuss further at a near future meeting.

**5:43 PM** Edith moved to adjourn, Jon seconded and Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye."

*Respectfully submitted, T.A. Nina Nazarian and Marie N. Auger, Administrative Assistant*

Town of Princeton, Mass. – Dec. 21, 2015 – 8:30 AM

Executive Session Minutes - PBMLP

**8:41 AM Executive Session** PBMLP Board voted to go into executive session during open session.

Stan called meeting to order. Edith asked about a strategy regarding competition with Ayacht WiFi—such as regulations Mark Ayacht might have to follow, a special permit or something like that, and the nature or duration of his contract with PMLD; maybe it's expired.

**8:59 AM** Edith moved to adjourn from executive session, Jon seconded and Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye." They returned to open session.

*Respectfully submitted, Marie N. Auger, administrative assistant*

## Town of Princeton, Mass. – Jan. 26, 2016 – 5 PM

### Executive Session Minutes - PBMLP

**6:05 PM Executive Session** PBMLP Board voted to go into executive session during open session.

Stan called meeting to order and has a financial business model, still confidential, that originated from George Handy. Wayne pointed out that some customers are happy with internet on smart phones and DSL service, and rates vary considerably, as do opinions. There was discussion about the proposed monthly rate of \$95. being enough to finance and repay debt. That and the construction/operational cost are the two main issues, Stan said. He noted that Ayacht would suffer with slower service if its subscriptions increased. Edith wants to make sure that VOIP (phone) service on fiber is not forgotten. John S. wants meeting with Mark Ayotte to feel out the situation and Jim O. noted the need to identify competitors and respond—or yiu'll lose out. Selling dark fiber to other vendors could be a revenue source.

The Advisory Board offered to provide a team to review Stan's financial model, probably John S., Jim O., Wayne A. and George H. and do it in Exec. Session.

**6:40 PM** Group was reduced to PBMLP plus John K. and Phil L. Stan continued describing the confidential financial model which is now version #9.

**6:59 AM** Edith moved to adjourn from executive session, Jon seconded and Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye."

*Respectfully submitted, Marie N. Auger, administrative assistant*

**PBMLP Referenced Documents:** Draft: 9<sup>th</sup> updated version of "PBMLP financial model"

## Town of Princeton, Mass. – Feb. 2, 2016 – 5 PM

### Executive Session Minutes - PBMLP

**5:50 PM Executive Session** PBMLP Board voted to go into executive session during open session.

Jon F. described his concerns with Ayacht (as potential competition) and suggested reducing the subscription cost to be more competitive with Ayacht's fees. That may also increase subscriber numbers. Stan noted that the PBMLP breaks even at about 663 subscribers. John K. asked if Jon F. could come up with the numbers of how low subscription cost can go. Edith noted that bundling phone service could add appeal. Group discussed the numbers to break even.

Phil O. began his presentation on marketing.

**6:50 PM** Group started to dwindle and by 7:15 PM was reduced to PBMLP plus John K. and Phil L. Discussed continued on remaining presentation and Ayacht competition.

**7:56 AM** Edith moved to adjourn from executive session, Jon seconded and Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye."

*Respectfully submitted, Marie N. Auger, administrative assistant*

**PBMLP Referenced Documents:** Presentation on marketing

## Town of Princeton, Mass. – Feb. 16, 2016 – 5 PM

### Executive Session Minutes - PBMLP

**4:25 PM Executive Session** PBMLP Board voted to go into executive session during open session.

Stan presented the financial breakdown with a spreadsheet on the projector. Estimated total build cost of \$4.6 million includes a \$600,000 contingency. An anticipated MBI grant leaves \$3.7 million in long-term borrowing—at 3.5% for 20 years. Monthly operating costs are almost \$20,000. Revenue from subscribers could exceed costs, if so, customers could see lower monthly fees, currently pegged at \$95/month. Town can save money by purchasing materials directly rather than through contractor. Stan is seeking contractors within 2.5 hour drive.

Some discussion about bundling phone service with internet (VoIP) and group noted it is up to the ISP vendor to offer that as a bundle—otherwise the customer can arrange their own from many low-cost offerings like Vonage and MagicJack. Phil O. pointed out that info for phone add-in is described on the website. Group discussed providing a VoIP demonstration for customers.

Stan outlined timeline for a STM and July 12 seems soonest, or last Tuesday in June if certain conditions are met.

As design engineering for public works does not come under state procurement regulations, and doesn't require bid process, the search for engineering firm for the CAD work has started. Phil L. has a firm in mind. Nina suggests having two firms submit proposals, then pick one. Phil and Stan have one proposal already, for \$220,000. Phil L. said engineering work is crucial and has a major impact on the actual build. All CAD work must be accurate, otherwise everything's a change-order. Phil has a reference on an engineering firm that can work with no conflict with construction firms. Jon F. noted he wants to be sure we have good quality engineering work and not to rush the process.

Nina is only concerned about justification—for the choice of engineer—and the risk of over-promising especially on timelines. Stan asked board to vote in open session to authorize Phil L. to research firms and report to PBMLP who can then vote on his choice.

**5:20 PM** Edith moved to adjourn from executive session, Jon seconded and Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye."

*Respectfully submitted, Marie N. Auger, administrative assistant*

**PBMLP Referenced Documents:** Presentation on financial model

## Town of Princeton, Mass. – Feb. 23, 2016 – 5 PM

### Executive Session Minutes - PBMLP

**6 PM Executive Session** PBMLP Board voted to go into executive session during open session.

Board noted that assistant manager must be paid from the PBMLP Expense account, which is now under-budget by a few thousand dollars. The Make-Ready funds could be used, and there may be \$30,000 left. The favored candidate has 'project management certification.' Transfers of funds from other accounts must be approved at a town meeting. The asst. mgr. hourly rate can be \$30 - \$33/hour and no more than 19 hours/week, for initial six months. Board will require reference checks, CORI, driver history.

**6:20 PM** Board voted, with Jon F. abstaining, to approve an initial budget of \$25,000 and authorize the PBMLP manager (Nina N to spend it on salary—up to 624 hours--of assistant manager through September 2016.

Stan reported his research into potential network Operations Center (NOC) vendors for O&M (operations and management). He had asked Holyoke Gas & Electric because they do O&M for Leverett, but they are not taking on any new towns, because of the WiredWest stalemate.

**6:40 PM** Edith moved to adjourn from executive session, Jon seconded and Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Edith voted "Aye," Jon voted "Aye" and Stan voted "Aye."

*Respectfully submitted, Marie N. Auger, administrative assistant*

**PBMLP Referenced Documents:** Documents from job candidates; financial spreadsheet/chart outlining salary proposals

## Town of Princeton, Mass. – May 12, 2016 – 2 PM

### Executive Session Minutes - Princeton Broadband Municipal Light Plant

**3:40 PM Executive Session** PBMLP Board voted to go into executive session during open session.

The PBMLP discussed strategies regarding Marketing. Nina explained that the Board should not get into the details of the marketing efforts, that it has selected a volunteer to head marketing, that volunteer has established a team, and are moving the effort along very deliberately. Any individual member of the PBMLP asking that there be changes in the marketing practices, should make the suggestion to the PBMLP as a whole, not to the marketing volunteer. Nina explained that the marketing effort, along with other decisions made on the project cannot be orchestrated by one member having discussions and asking for a change in course. In the extreme example where the PBMLP as a whole, or majority, wish to disagree with the now established marketing team, the PBMLP should select a new marketing team. The PBMLP discussed this matter at length and concluded that the individual members of the PBMLP will work with the administrative staff, and with the other members if they feel that there are marketing or other matters which they propose being addressed differently.

**4:35 PM** The PBMLP voted 3-0 on a motion by Jon, second by Edie to adjourn from executive session. Stan M. called for a vote and in roll call Jon voted "Aye", Edith voted "Aye," and Stan voted "Aye."

*Respectfully submitted, Nina Nazarian, Town Administrator*