

**TOWN OF WALPOLE  
MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD  
BROADBAND PROPOSED ISSUANCE OF A BOND  
FEBRUARY 13, 2020**

Selectboard Present: Steven Dalessio (Chair); Peggy Pschirrer; Cheryl Mayberry

Broadband Committee Present: Paul Looney, Dick Hill

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Dalessio called this Public Meeting of the Selectboard on the Broadband Proposed Issuance of a Bond to order at 4:00 PM in the Walpole Town Hall. This will be Article 2 on the Town Warrant. He welcomed everyone and turned this meeting over to Mrs. Pschirrer who is the Selectboard liaison to the Broadband Committee.

Mrs. Pschirrer introduced Mr. Paul Looney and Mr. Dick Hill, members of the Broadband Committee. Mr. Rob Koester, Vice-President of Consumer Products of Consolidated Communications, was also present.

**PUBLIC MEETING – BROADBAND PROPOSED ISSUANCE OF A BOND:** Mr. Looney displayed the Summary page of the Broadband Committee's PowerPoint presentation. The goal is to get high speed internet to all residences in Walpole. High Speed – True Broadband Speeds are (25 Mbps Down 3 Mbps Up). Via fiber, it will be brought to the premises with speeds of up to 1000Mbps with high reliability. The fiber is more reliable than the copper we now have. The Bond will be for \$1,856,100 for 20 years. The Bond will be paid back with money the Town receives from Consolidated. The fee to users will be \$9.00/month in addition to their regular service fee. There will be "No Taxpayer Money and No Tax Increase". Consolidated will pick-up any fees not generated. They feel confident they can sign up enough people so this is not a losing proposition for them. Mr. Looney read Article 2:

**ARTICLE 2:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three million two hundred eighteen thousand five hundred sixty two dollars (\$3,218,562) for the purpose of furnishing, constructing and installing facilities and equipment to make available to residential and business location in the Town of Walpole a "Fiber to the Premises" network by Consolidated Communications Enterprise Services, Inc. ("Consolidated"), with one million eight hundred fifty six thousand one hundred dollars (\$1,856,100) of such sum to be raised through the issuance of bonds or notes, under and in compliance with the Municipal Finance Act, RSA 33:1, et seq, as amended; and one million three hundred sixty two thousand four hundred sixty two dollars (\$1,362,462) of such sum as a donation from Consolidated; to authorize the Selectboard to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, gifts and donations which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; to authorize the Selectboard to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver said bonds and notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof and to authorize the Selectboard to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto.

**\*\*2/3 ballot vote required\*\***

The Selectboard recommends this article. (3 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain)

Mrs. Pschirrer noted that when this comes up on March 14<sup>th</sup>, it will be the first item on the agenda. This article was written by the Bond Bank attorney. Our application will begin soon. They are now collecting all the documents required. If the Town fails to pass by a 2/3 vote, they will not go ahead with the Bond.

The question comes up about the Bond attorney; she will not be paid. At Town Meeting this will be a secret vote. Separate ballots will be given out and then collected. In accordance with State law the results will not be announced for one hour so if someone should arrive late at Town Meeting, they will have the option to cast their ballot on this. This will happen twice during this year's Town Meeting. The second secret vote will be Article 7 for the purchase of a police cruiser. The amount of the Bond is \$1,856,100. Their concern is that people will stop reading Article 2 after the total sum of \$3,218,562 is noted which is the total cost of the project. The Town's obligation will be paid, not with taxpayer money, but rather with user fees that total the \$1,856,100. Assuming this passes at Town Meeting, they will complete their application to the Bond Bank. The Bond will probably be sold in early June or July and they will have approved the contract with Consolidated. When this is complete, the Town will own all the work that Consolidated is doing. After 20 years decisions will be made as to whether to continue with Consolidated, operate it by the Town or issue a Request for Proposals and contract with someone else. It will be a valuable asset. We are excited about this. The Selectboard called three public benefit meetings on Broadband services. Some people have asked who will vote against it. We do not know the answer. It will increase the value of properties. We have enough people in Town who are under-served to do this project. Senator Jay Kahn worked on this for about six years to get it through the legislature.

Replying to a question from a resident, Mrs. Pschirrer said they will not be going out for other money other than the Bond.

A resident asked what happens if you are a Comcast subscriber with a contract but here comes something that is better. Mr. Koester responded there are a number of options. If they think Consolidated services are better, they can move over or they can choose to stay with their existing provider.

Replying to a question, Mrs. Pschirrer confirmed this is a taxable Bond. About six other towns are working on this at the same time.

Mrs. Pschirrer reported that one of the things they had to collect for the Bond Bank was the Town Charter. Researchers in the Bond Bank office found a copy for us. The Town Office now has a copy.

Mr. Dalessio followed-up on a question from a resident. There is a slim possibility that the Bond Bank is not successful in selling the Town's Bond. That is why there is language in the Article "to authorize the Selectboard to take any other action". They can look for other sources. Mr. Looney said there are other alternatives for the Bond.

Mrs. Pschirrer mentioned that we have to supply the Bond Bank with a copy of our budget and all minutes and notices they posted. It is quite detailed. Mrs. Jodi Daigle in the Selectboard Office has been managing this file. The Town does not have any debt. This Bond is not considered debt under the legislation. It has to be paid back but does not impede our ability to borrow should the Town need to in the future.

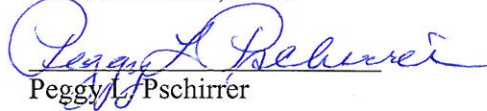
Mrs. Antonia Andreoli stated that all the minutes have been helpful. She thanked everybody for the clarity and timeliness of the information. Mrs. Pschirrer said there are six members on the Broadband Committee and they have worked very hard. Mr. Dalessio said the Committee members provided a lot of detail in a short period of time.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There were no other questions or comments. Mr. Dalessio closed this Public Meeting at 4:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary



Steven Dalessio, Chair



Peggy A. Pschirrer



Cheryl Mayberry

(**Note:** These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the February 20, 2020, Selectboard meeting.)