

BROADBAND UPDATE

It has been a year since Selectboard member Toby Gould went to the State House to meet with the governor and witness the announcement of the “reboot” of MBI and the end of the temporary moratorium on the last-mile broadband program. Since then the Charlemont Broadband Committee, the Selectboard and the Finance Committee have worked with our representative Paul Mark and our new senator Adam Hinds to get our project underway. A few important factors in the effort to get going;

MBI has changed criteria for the towns to access state funding multiple times making it difficult to see the scope of the work involved. It now seems likely that parts of the program will be moved from MBI to the executive office of Housing and Economic Development (HED) under the MassWorks grant program, which should speed things up.

The Broadband Committee has discovered a significant error in the pole count done by MBI to help determine the cost of the project. This could increase the cost of the project and we are asking the state for additional funding in light of this error.

Westfield Gas and Electric has entered the picture as a potential builder and/or operator of Charlemont’s fiber network. At present, this new entry seems the best option on the horizon for Charlemont.

In an effort to use town funds wisely, the Broadband Committee, Selectboard and Finance Committee have been careful not to move precipitously but to make sure all “i’s” are dotted and all “t’s” are crossed before signing contracts for such a major project.

All three committees hope that we can sign contracts to proceed within the next few months.

NEWS BY EMAIL

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TOWN OF CHARLEMONT NEWS

from the Select Board

March 2017

\$490,000 SMALL BRIDGE GRANT FOR MAXWELL ROAD

On Wednesday, March 29, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) announced recipients of its first round of Small Bridge grants — including the Town of Charlemont, which received \$490,000 for bridge repairs on Maxwell Road. All three members of the Select Board traveled to Boston to attend the State House award ceremony.

Until recently, MassDOT only inspected bridges that were at least 20 feet long. The first two small bridges — those between 10’ and 20’ in length — that MassDOT inspected in Charlemont were both on Maxwell Road. Both bridges were ordered closed immediately after inspection. The Town’s \$490,000 Small Bridge grant funds will be used fix these two bridges and reopen Maxwell Road as soon as possible. Details about the construction work to be completed on these bridges will be available in future issues of the newsletter.

The MassDOT Municipal Small Bridge Program, which was launched in August 2016, provides reimbursable assistance of up to \$500,000 per town per year for work on Grant applications are accepted three times a year. Charlemont applied for funding in the first round, which closed in October 2016.

APRIL 2017 TOWN EVENTS

Calendar subject to change. Please see the Town website (www.charlemont-ma.us) or the Mohawk Central Office website (www.mohawkschools.org) for updates.

SATURDAY, APRIL 1

- Berkshire Highlands Pentathlon 2017, Berkshire East, 7am
- Tyler Memorial Library open 10am—2pm

SUNDAY APRIL 2

- Tyler Memorial Library Sunday Series, Introduction to Fly Tying and Fishing with the Deerfield Fly Shop, 2pm

MONDAY, APRIL 3

- Board of Assessors meeting, Town Hall, 7pm

TUESDAY, APRIL 4

- Tyler Memorial Library open 1pm—5pm
- Parks and Recreation meeting, 6:30 PM

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5

- Senior Center program and lunch, 10am—1pm, Federated Church

THURSDAY, APRIL 6

- Representative Mark office hours, Town Hall, 9am - noon
- Tyler Memorial Library open 3pm—7pm
- Planning Board Meets, Town Hall, 7pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 8

- Tyler Memorial Library open 10am—2pm

MONDAY, APRIL 10

- Select Board Meeting, Town Hall, 7pm

TUESDAY, APRIL 11

- Tyler Memorial Library open 1pm—5pm

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12

- Senior Center program and lunch, 10am—1pm, Federated Church
- Conservation Commission Meeting, Town Hall, 6:30pm

THURSDAY, APRIL 13

- Representative Mark office hours, Town Hall, 9am - noon
- Tyler Memorial Library open 3pm—7pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 15

- Tyler Memorial Library open 10am—2pm

TUESDAY, APRIL 18

- Tyler Memorial Library open 1pm—5pm

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19

- Senior Center program and lunch, 10am—1pm, Federated Church
- Hawlemont School Committee meeting, Hawlemont, 4:40pm

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

- Representative Mark office hours, Town Hall, 9am - noon
- Tyler Memorial Library open 3pm—7pm
- Planning Board Meets, Town Hall, 7pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

- Tyler Memorial Library open 10am—2pm

MONDAY, APRIL 24

- Select Board Meeting, Town Hall, 7pm

TUESDAY, APRIL 25

- Tyler Memorial Library open 1pm—5pm

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

- Senior Center program and lunch, 10am—1pm, Federated Church
- Board of Health meeting, Town Hall, 6pm

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

- Representative Mark office hours, Town Hall, 9am - noon
- Tyler Memorial Library open 3pm—7pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

- Tyler Memorial Library open 10am—2pm

NOMINATION PAPERS DUE

Nomination papers for elected offices are available now from Town Clerk Kathy Reynolds in Town Hall during her regular office hours, Monday through Thursday, 8:00AM to 2:30PM. To be included on the ballot, each candidate must collect at least 20 valid signatures and return signed nomination papers to the Town Clerk during her business hours on Tuesday, April 18. Elections will be held on Tuesday, May 23.

The following seats are up for election in Charlemont this year: Select Board (3 year term); Board of Assessors (3 year term); Charlemont School Committee (3 year term); Tree Warden (3 year term); Planning Board (5 year term); Planning Board (2 year term); Planning Board, Associate (3 year term); Parks and Recreation Commission (4 year term); Constable (3 year term); Board of Health (3 year term); Tyler Memorial Library Trustee (3 year term); and Moderator (1 year term).

SMALL TOWN SUMMIT MET WITH LEGISLATIVE AIDES

Legislative aides from the offices of Senator Adam Hinds and Representative Paul Mark met with members of the Small Town Summit at Hawlemont on Thursday, March 23. Jon Gould (Hilltown Community Liaison for Senator Hinds) and Jessie Cooley (Legislative Aide for Representative Mark) discussed a list of legislative priorities prepared by Summit members in December. The list includes reviewing the impact of new State legislation on small towns, broadband access, rural school funding, and issues related to town financial stability, such as consistent Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT payments) for state-owned land.

The Charlemont Select Board started hosting a series of Small Town Summits (STS) last spring. These meetings bring together Select Board and Finance Committee members from rural towns around the western part of the state to address common concerns. The most recent meeting was attended by representatives from the towns of Charlemont, Hawley, Peru, Huntington, Russell, Conway, and Deerfield; the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG); the Hampshire Council of Governments; and Hawlemont/ Mohawk Superintendent Michael Buoniconti.