

MINUTES OF THE FISCAL AND REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF THURMAN HELD JANUARY 14, 2014 AT THE TOWN HALL, 311 ATHOL ROAD, ATHOL NEW YORK, COMMENCING AT 6:30 P.M...

PRESENT: MRS. EVELYN WOOD, SUPERVISOR
MR. LEON GALUSHA, COUNCILMAN
MR. DANIAL SMITH, COUNCILMAN
MRS. GAIL SEAMAN, COUNCILWOMAN
MR. MICHAEL EDDY, COUNCILMAN

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

SENATOR BETTY LITTLE
ASSEMBLYMAN DAN STEC
FRED ENGLMANN
AVA ASHENDORF

Recording secretary: **Cynthia R. Hyde**, Town Clerk

FISCAL MEETING: The Town Board reviewed all claims

BOARD MEETING: The regular town board meeting was called to order by **Evelyn Wood, Supervisor.**

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

PRESENTATION:

Supervisor Wood turned the meeting over to **Ava Ashendorf.**

Ava Ashendorf explained how she became interested in helping to bring internet to the Town of Thurman and expedited a meeting between the town and internet

specialist **Fred Englemann**, proposer of White Space Internet for the Town of Thurman.

Ms. Ashendorf read several letters from non-residents in support of **Fred Englemann's** network services.

Town Clerk Cynthia Hyde read a large pile of letters from residents in support of moving forward with this project and one letter from a resident who felt other options could be looked at.

Senator Betty Little and **Assemblyman Dan Stec** spoke of their support and interest in the Whitespace project. They both felt that White Space could be a benefit to rural communities with low population density. Large companies such as Verizon will not serve small towns because of the small number of users.

Senator Betty Little and **Assemblyman Dan Stec** both saw this project as a health, safety, educational and economic plus for rural communities and urged the Town Board to move forward.

Ava Ashendorf then introduced **Fred Englemann** of Rain Maker technologies.

Fred Englemann gave a presentation about White Space. Using maps projected on a screen **Englemann** discussed the many technical points of the White Space project and then treated everyone to a demonstration. Via White Space on the computer screen (projected onto the wall) the audience was able to see and hear **Eric Lohrey, Nettle Meadows Sheila Flanagan** and **Derrick Conine** who were several miles away. Afterward **Mr. Englemann** answered many questions from the floor.

SUPPORT OF WHITESPACE:

On a motion by **Supervisor Wood**, seconded by **Councilwoman Seaman**, the town board decided to move forward with support of the White Space Internet Project

MOTION CARRIED: ROLL CALL ~ WOOD-YES, SEAMAN-YES, SMITH-YES, GALUSHA-YES, EDDY-ABSTAIN

BREAK:

The meeting was closed for a break at 8:40 pm

MEETING RESUMED:

The meeting was resumed at 8:52 pm

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Correction: Supervisor Wood said that a correction needed to be made pertaining to the resolution at the Dec. 27, 2013 meeting establishing the position of bookkeeper/secretary. The minutes say that **Gail Seaman** made the motion and **Leon Galusha** seconded it, **Wood** said that it should be the other way around with **Gail Seaman** making the motion and **Leon Galusha** seconded it.

On a motion by **Councilman Galusha**, seconded by **Councilwoman Seaman**, the minutes of the December 27, 2013 meeting were approved with the following amendment.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

Supervisor Wood said that the minutes of the December 10, 2013 meeting would not be brought up for approval until the next meeting.

REPORTS:

Councilman Galusha read a report from the Warrensburg EMS. Attached

Councilwoman Seaman gave a report on the Food Pantry, the Thurman Youth Commission, the Fire Company and the Thurman Highway Department.

Supervisor Wood gave the Supervisor's Report.

Points of interest:

Valentines for Vets

RESOLUTION #10:

Resolution Approving Contract

JANUARY 14, 2014 REGULAR

WHEREAS it is necessary to have a plan that will make available and/or transfer to Jager & Flynn Associates, Inc. certain protected health information in conjunction with services offered by Jager and Flynn, and

WHEREAS Jager and Flynn Associates, Inc. has provided the town with an appropriate business associate agreement that addresses this need, be it

RESOLVED that the Town Board hereby authorizes the Business Associate Agreement and authorizes the Supervisor to execute the contract.

On a motion by **Councilwoman Seaman**, seconded by **Councilman Smith**, resolution # 10 was approved.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

RESOLUTION #11:

Resolution Approving Contract

WHEREAS the Town of Thurman utilizes Foresight Electronic Monitoring Systems, Inc for fire alarm services, and

WHEREAS it is necessary to renew the Town's contract for service with Foresight for these services at the same rate, be it

RESOLVED that the Town Board authorizes the Supervisor to sign a contract with Foresight Electronic Monitoring Systems.

On a motion by **Councilwoman Seaman**, seconded by **Councilman Galusha**, resolution # 11 was approved.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

RESOLUTION #12:

Resolution Approving Contract

WHEREAS the Town of Thurman will be utilizing CDPHP for health care coverage for eligible employees for the term of December 1, 2013 thru November 30, 2014 and

WHEREAS it is necessary to execute a contract with CDPHP for this service, be it

RESOLVED that the Town Board authorizes the Supervisor to sign a contract with CDPHP for health care coverage through CDPHP.

On a motion by **Councilman Galusha**, seconded by **Councilwoman Seaman**, resolution # 12 was approved.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

RESOLUTION #13:

Resolution to Approve Training

BE IT RESOLVED that the following Training is hereby approved:

<i>April 8 & 9, 2014</i>	<i>APA Local Government Day Conference</i>	<i>Evelyn Wood</i>		
<i>Lake Placid, NY</i>	<i>\$58.75</i>			
<i>May 28-30, 2014</i>	<i>Basic Accounting School</i>	<i>\$85</i>		<i>Sally Feihel</i>
<i>Town of Malta</i>				
<i>September 3-5, 2014</i>	<i>Advanced Accounting School</i>	<i>\$85</i>		<i>Sally Feihel</i>
<i>Town of Malta</i>				

On a motion by **Councilwoman Seaman**, seconded by **Councilman Smith**, resolution # 13 was approved.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

Discussion Bookkeeper:

There was discussion regarding how a town bookkeeper is hired.

Discussion Bids:

Discussion ensued regarding whitespace bids and giving bidders more time to prepare bids.

Supervisor Wood said that she had to submit an E4 by the 17th so the bids would need to be awarded.

RESOLUTION #14:

Resolution Awarding Bid

WHEREAS the Town of Thurman received two bids in response to its request for bids for equipment as set forth in Resolution 55 of 2013 which were opened on January 6, 2014, and

WHEREAS the bids have been reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the town's procurement policy, and with regard for Executive Order 8 of 2011, and

WHEREAS both bids submitted had no bid on certain pieces of equipment listed in the bid document, and

WHEREAS the switching ups is the most essential component of the equipment listed in the bid, and

WHEREAS both parties did submit bids for the switching ups switch equipment, now therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Town of Thurman awards the bid for electrical equipment as shown on the attached Tab Sheet to KGP Telecommunications, Inc. dba KGP Logistics, a women owned business, in the amount of \$15,704.07, and to Twinstare Technologies in the amount of \$5,274.83. The Town Board further instructs the Town Clerk to make the bidders aware of the outcome of these awards.

On a motion by **Councilman Galusha**, seconded by **Councilwoman Seaman**, resolution # 14 was approved.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

RESOLUTION #15:

Resolution Accepting LARAC Grant

WHEREAS the Town of Thurman applied for funding through the LARAC grant process for the town's events, and

WHEREAS LARAC has approved \$2,585 in funding for the Jack Wax party and the Summer Concert Series, be it

RESOLVED that the Town Board hereby accepts this grant and authorizes the Supervisor to fill out the necessary paperwork and sign the necessary documents for the grant.

On a motion by **Councilman Galusha**, seconded by **Councilman Smith**, resolution # 15 was approved.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

APPROVAL OF THE CLAIMS:

On a motion by **Councilman Galusha**, seconded by **Councilman Smith**, The Town Board approved vouchers # **2014-7** thru **2014-77** with a general fund total of **\$32,581.05**, a highway fund total of **\$47,727.44** and a capital projects fund total of **\$20,864.53**, with the grand total being **\$101,173.02**

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

PROCEDURE FOR BOARD MEMBERS:

Supervisor Wood advised the board on procedures.

DISCUSSION:

Discussion about the Supervisor putting meeting recordings online and having the bookkeeper transcribe minutes from those recordings that will be available in hard copy form before the Town Clerk's official minutes are ready.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Winnie Martin said that she enjoyed listening to the minutes on line and that she had read some of the past minutes and thought they appeared to have a personal view.

Delbert Chambers was concerned that he was going to help pay for 80 homes to have internet and that the internet may never get to his area.

Supervisor Wood said that the town would apply for more equipment and expand as grants become available.

Erin Beadnell asked about access to computers for disadvantaged citizens which is part of the grant and if the supervisor's secretary was going to write minutes then wouldn't we be paying two people to do the same job.

Supervisor Wood explained that it could mean using old town computers for use to the public at the town hall and maybe setting up some computer educational services.

Supervisor Wood stated that the town clerk's minutes are the official minutes but people have said they want the minutes sooner and don't want to wait. **Wood** said that it really won't take that long for the secretary to write the basics of what happened at the meetings.

Mary Eddy asked about the process of putting out bids and the bidding process time line.

Supervisor Wood explained the process of bidding and preparing for bidding.

Paula Hubert was in support of going forward with the grant.

Councilman Eddy felt that two sets of minutes will create confusion.

Councilman Galusha asked what we are going to do about the electricians.

Supervisor Wood said that we will look to see if we can do it under professional services.

Councilman Galusha wanted to know if we would need another meeting and if a good faith effort (to hire women or minority companies) would be accepted.

Supervisor Wood stated that she didn't know of anyone who has gotten around it (hiring women or minority companies). **Wood** said that she would try to find out and if not we'll have to rebid.

OFFICIAL DELEGATE:

On a motion by **Councilwoman Seaman**, seconded by **Councilman Smith**, the Town Board designated **Supervisor Wood** to be the Town of Thurman delegate at the Association of Towns meeting in February 2014.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

AJOURNMENT:

On a motion by **Councilman Galusha**, seconded by **Councilwoman Seaman**, the town board adjourned the meeting at **10:17 PM**

JANUARY 14, 2014 REGULAR

MOTION CARRIED: 5 AYES ~ WOOD, GALUSHA, SEAMAN, SMITH, EDDY

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

**CYNTHIA R. HYDE
TOWN CLERK 01/28/2014**

ATTACHED:

Letters and EMS report

Richard D. and Persis R. Granger
11 Clarence Russell Road
Thurman, NY

January 9, 2014

Thurman Town Council
PO Box 29
Athol, NY 12810

Dear Mike, Dan, Leon, Gail and Evie:

I'm writing to ask our town council to start out this new year with a united effort to bring white space to Thurman. It's time.

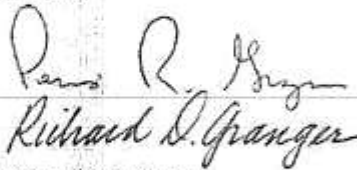
I've kept quiet for a long time because I didn't feel I knew enough about the project. Today I spent some time asking questions and learning more, and I now urge my neighbors to do the same and throw their support behind this plan that promises to be a solution to a large problem.

The days when the Internet was treated as a toy, to be accessed just for social networking, sharing snapshots, jokes and recipes are gone. When one of the town's largest employers can't expand because it is crippled by inadequate Internet access, and other businesses have difficulty processing orders or conducting important activities in a timely fashion, it's time to dig in, find the necessary information and move forward. The thought that inaction could result in Thurman's giving up its \$200,000 grant and assuming the cost of expenditures already made from it, is appalling - and why would we let that happen? Because we "don't know enough?" It's time.

It's time for all of us who are uncertain to ask meaningful questions rather than raising suspicious challenges. It's time to make this technology work to solve some of our problems. It's time to find out how to make this work for Thurman.

Our household will subscribe. Who else is on board?

Sincerely,



Persis R. Granger
Richard D. Granger

Dick and Perky Granger

Please attach this letter to the minutes of the January 14th board meeting.



484 S. Johnsbury Road • Warrensburg, NY 12885
phone: 518/623-3372 • fax: 518/623-2085
cheese@nettlemeadow.com • www.nettlemeadow.com

Evelyn Wood, Thurman Town Supervisor & Town Board
Thurman Town Hall
Athol, NY 12810

Re: White Space High Speed Internet Project

Dear Ms. Wood & Town Board Members:

It has come to our attention that there are some detractors to the White Space Project that the town has been working on during the past year and we wanted to write today to reiterate how pleased we are that this project appears to be coming closer to completion and we hope that the detractors will not bog it down.

Since we bought Nettle Meadow and worked on building a larger company and a national brand we have had multiple opportunities to participate in several large web-based sales programs which require intensive internet access. In fact for two years we participated in the national Williams Sonoma Holiday gift catalog but we found the downloading of selected items and shipping addresses was so time-consuming it required our getting up at 2am just to have the labels downloaded and prepared by UPS' arrival at midday to pick up packages. It was unworkable and we have had to decline any further web sales programs with our current internet options. This is unfortunate for both our company and our town as our inability to promote web sales stunts our ability to grow. It is notable that many New York cheesemakers have built their business on web sales, but our company has been unable to do so because of the limited internet options in this town. High speed internet would likely mean further growth for Nettle Meadow resulting in at least one more job opening in our cheese plant which would be good economic news for our community.

Even today with a limited web presence it takes us hours instead of minutes to process shipments through the UPS website or to download and respond to orders from our customers. We have an excellent workforce, a more than adequate farm and cheese facility, and it is frustrating that the one item that holds us back the most from profitability and growth is the absence of viable high speed internet access. I attended the White Space demonstration on Garnet Lake Road at the Lohrey's on

December 29th and I was so impressed by how quickly pages loaded and packages could be processed using the white space technology.

On a personal note, we also purchased high speed satellite for my mother who has been in poor health for the last two years in order to give her a way to have weekly contact with her granddaughter through skype or facetime. However we found that satellite was too slow for her to see her grandchild and she must be taken to Warrensburg to be able to use facetime. I also understand from people who work with us at Nettle Meadow that there are families in Thurman who have to transport their children home from Warrensburg schools because they miss the bus in an effort to get their homework done online because these families don't have access to viable high speed internet in Thurman. I can only imagine how those gas dollars must add up just because we don't have proper access to high speed internet in portions of this town.

The White Space project is particularly appealing to us as it relies on fiber-optic cable which is a proven reliable source of high speed internet unlike satellite which we have found to be exceedingly slow and unreliable. We have purchased and tried to work with two such Satellite carriers over the last nine years and have been continually disappointed by extremely slow service.

It is difficult for us to understand what might motivate the detractors of this project as the town has already been awarded a grant for much of the costs and the people like us who would be using the white space would be shouldering the burden of ongoing costs meaning that townspeople who are not using the white space would be paying nothing for it. While we do understand the frustration of those that are not immediate benefactors of the white space project, we are hopeful that a successful launch of the initial white space in this town will mean growth of the project and higher speed connections for all of Thurman in the very near future.

Sincerely,



Sheila Flanagan
Nettle Meadow Farm

January 10, 2014

Thurman Town Board
PO Box 29
Athol NY 12810

Re: The Whitespace Project

I for one have long awaited for high speed internet to become available at my residence, therefore, I sincerely hope that it becomes a **timely, reliable and affordable** reality. Having high speed internet in Thurman would be an asset to the town, its people and its businesses (present & future).

Existing dialup service is practically worthless; satellite internet (Hughes.net) is costly, not fast enough and is subject to disrupted service; and Verizon does not appear to be interested in providing high speed service to my area. The "Whitespace Project" seems to offer a solution to provide high speed internet to those of us that cannot otherwise obtain it. While this is a new technology, it does come with many questions and I would expect some glitches, but overall, I think it would be in our best interests to pursue it providing it doesn't severely impact the town's budget and it's costs are reasonable.

Some specific questions that I have are:

- What would my costs be to purchase the equipment? Would the individual's equipment cost be reduced as more subscribers come on board?
- What is the monthly cost for the service?
- Is there a contract requirement for the service or is it month-to-month?
- Will the service be able to be put on suspension or vacation? If yes, would there be any costs associated with that?
- What policy would be in place if the service turns out not to work or works unsatisfactorily? Would any of the costs to the individual or the town be refundable?

Although I am highly in favor of getting high speed internet, and am interested in the "Whitespace Project" becoming viable, one of my main concerns is: *What happens if it turns out not to work as expected or the provider goes out of business?*



Robert W. Russell
221 Don Potter Road
Thurman, NY 12810-0119

Ellen F. Kenney
306 Valley Rd
Warrensburg, NY 12885



Jan. 10, 2014

Supervisor Wood & Thurman Town Board,
Thurman Town Hall
PO Box 29
Athol, NY 12810

Dear Supervisor Wood & Thurman Town Board

I would like to be able to use Whitespace with my computer, because at this moment I can't even get to my Wild Blue internet site to check my bandwidth usage. Apparently I have exceeded the cap for my internet package and I am being punished for over-usage. It will be about a week before I can use the computer expecting normal speeds.

Another example of poor internet connections is signing up for a beautiful music website, paying for it, and getting a message saying - "Insufficient Bandwidth!! This may cause interruptions to our streams as your computer waits for data to arrive."

We were a host site for the Rainmaker test for Whitespace. It is amazing what speed can be experienced on the web when not curtailed by the company that connects you to the internet.

over →

With Whitespace, I could project ⁽²⁾ internet programs to my T.V. and say "Goodbye" to Direct TV! My Direct TV bill has increased to \$80/month (with not much I want to watch). Whitespace would cost me \$40-\$50/month after the initial set-up.

So I would save \$80/month on TV, I would save \$56/month for Wild & Blue satellite, totaling \$136/month saved. Add \$50/month for whitespace I am now ahead \$86 each month. That's \$1,032/year.

Please continue with the Thurman Whitespace Project. Here are 4 reasons we need Whitespace:

1. Good and Necessary now for students.
2. Users would save money + no penalty for usage.
3. Only ~~those~~ that want, pay for it.
4. It will increase the value of your home.

Thank you for listening. Please include this letter in the Board Minutes.

Sincerely,
Ellen Kenney
Valley Road

January 8, 2014

Winefred Martin
280 Valley Rd.
Warrensbug NY 12885

Supervisor Wood and Thurman Town Board Members
PO Box 29
Athol, NY 12810

Dear Supervisor Wood and Thurman Town Board Members,

As a small business and also just as a family living in Thurman we need fast speed internet. For years we struggled with dial up service, and then paid for Satellite through Wild Blue which we were extremely dissatisfied with. We now have Hughes Net which is not much better than dial up and as I sit here tonight, once again I am unable to get on line due to some glitch in the Satellite system.

For years I was in hopes of Verizon extending their DSL but I have since been told repeatedly by Verizon that they will never extend their DSL to our area and are in the actual process of reducing their DSL services.

Although I do not understand the technical workings of the Whitespace project for internet nor can I even begin to address the innuendoes and misinformation that has been submitted in opposition to this project I ask those that sincerely have doubts about it to look at the facts rather than opinions of others who do not understand it.

I know the facts speak for themselves! Look at the reports and finding that show the test results, White Space does work. I have seen it for myself and have absolutely no doubts.

Please continue to move forward as fast as possible to get the whitespace internet up and running.

Please attach to board meeting minutes.

Sincerely,



Winefred Martin
Martins Lumber

January 14, 2014

Town of Thurman
P.O. Box 29
Athol, NY 12810

Madam Supervisor and Thurman Town Board Members:

The Town is faced with an economics issue. Some say it is a political issue—and it *might be* that some are acting as if it is a political issue—nevertheless, at its core, the issue is economics.

The whitespace project under consideration now, will provide internet service to 89 residents living along 4 to 5 miles of road. The New York State Legislature's Spring 2013 Rural Futures newsletter states that the cost of installing "last mile" infrastructure is \$20,000 per mile. For your convenience, a copy of the relevant pages of that Newsletter is attached hereto.

Under the Connect NY Broadband Grant program, other communities have received grants to install fiber optic cable. Fiber optic cable is the "state of the art". It operates at gigabit speed, literally hundreds of times faster than DSL, wireless, or cable TV. The signals travel by light, completely immune to electromagnetic interference, and weather including lightening. Fiber to the home is what Verizon is installing in densely populated city territories under the name FiOS.

I am sure you are correct when you say that no telephone or cable company is willing to run cable along the road. Those companies are businesses, motivated by profit; and they cannot justify the infrastructure cost to serve just 80-90 residents. However, neither have you found a company willing to spend their own money to build the whitespace infrastructure.

Therefore, the fair comparison to the proposed whitespace project is, for the Town to pay for the fiber optic infrastructure, and then request bids for a company to operate the system for a percentage of the revenue. And to be a complete comparison, the operator would be further subsidized by each customer hooked up paying \$300 for equipment plus an installation fee. In the business world it's called a sweetheart deal – the business gets a revenue stream without any upfront costs or investment by the company.

It is clear that Thurman must pay the cost of the infrastructure for *any* broadband internet service. The difference is the quality, dependability, and forward thinking capacity of the system chosen. The mere fact that some of the cost will be reimbursed by a grant does not relieve the Town Board of its responsibility to choose the best system.

Instead of being short changed, and stuck with a limited whitespace system for the next five years, Thurman can install a top of the line fiber optic system now --- a system that won't be obsolete, and that will be worth expanding to the rest of the Town over the coming years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Bardi". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Richard Bardi



NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources

SPRING 2013 ISSUE

Bridging the Digital Divide with White Space

Our communities need strong communication networks. In some upstate counties of New York, access to broadband technology is almost non-existent.

In Hamilton County, for example, only three percent of the population has access to broadband – making it the largest percentage of underserved residents in the State.

This lack of service leaves affected areas at a competitive disadvantage as broadband access impacts all aspects of life, including healthcare, education, agriculture, social services and economic development.

As a means of addressing these shortages, the state and federal governments have implemented a number of programs to incentivize development. New projects are developing throughout the state and exciting opportunities to bridge the “digital divide” are popping up in rural communities like Thurman and Gallatin.

The technology, known as *white space broadband* or *super wi-fi*, is a wireless network running on the unlicensed spectrum – blank channels on your television dial. White space has an estimated speed capacity capable of allowing for services including, but not limited to, email, web browsing, standard definition video, telecommuting, file sharing, internet protocol television (IPTV), limited telemedicine, remote education and IPTV High definition.

In September of 2010, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved the use of white space for broadband, making way for a new era in internet access. White space broadband signals, when compared to traditional wi-fi, can travel significantly farther and have fewer problems with interference from natural obstacles like mountains. These characteristics make it ideally suited to serve even the most isolated of communities.

By “wiring in” to a traditional fiber network, a white space system of repeaters and antenna receivers can extend the broadband signal out to those who may not otherwise have had access. This provides a great opportunity to address “last mile” access issues.

(Continued on next page)

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A SPOTLIGHT ON WHITESPACE PROJECTS:

SPRING 2013 ISSUE

Spring 2013 Rural Futures

**NEWS OF INTEREST
ABOUT RURAL
NEW YORK STATE**

A Publication of the NYS Legislative
Commission on Rural Resources

The NYS Legislative Commission on
Rural Resources is a joint bipartisan
office of the State Legislature.



Senator Catharine M. Young, Chair



**Assemblyman Dennis H. Gabryszak,
Co-Chair**

Senate Members:

- Senator Thomas F. O'Mara
- Senator Patricia A. Ritchie
- Senator David J. Valesky, Ex Officio
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Assembly Members:

- Assemblywoman Barbara S. Lifton
- Assemblyman Michael J. Fitzpatrick
- Assemblyman Philip A. Palmesano

Tel: 518-455-3999

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Website: assembly.state.ny.us

Bridging the Digital Divide with White Space

(Continued from page 1)

"Last mile" access arises in service situations where it would be cost prohibitive for traditional internet providers to build out the infrastructure needed to provide internet to individual homes and businesses. This scenario arises when the population density in a rural area makes the extension of service unprofitable for the company which cannot support the estimated \$20,000 cost per mile to build out the system.

A Spotlight on Whitespace Projects:

At present, two projects are catching the eye of those suffering from lack of internet access. The Town of Gallatin in Columbia County is making waves, as the white space provider ASA Networks finalizes testing and calibration of equipment for a pilot program. The pilot program will give 30 residents internet access, free of charge, for three months.

A representative for the proposed pilot program in Gallatin described the proposal:

Q: Tell me about white space.

A: Going back to the old day when we had the rabbit ears on TV to get the television picture, now we can use a similar idea to get an internet signal through white space. After the switch to digital cable, the decision was made by the federal government to dedicate those white spaces to public use and approve equipment such as routers and repeaters to supply the whitespace.

Q: What made you pick Gallatin as the location for the pilot program?

A: Well, I am a New Yorker. Our whole group is New York focused. The biggest thing is how much of an impact a lack of internet access can have on a town.

Gallatin specifically had limited service at best, especially when alternative internet options and their susceptibility to atmospheric interference and unreliability are taken into account. After putting together a plan to do a white space pilot in rural New York, we raised money for the pilot program and met some individuals from Gallatin, including Town Supervisor Thomas Garrick and Lisa DeLeeuw, the Town Clerk. This town was an ideal candidate to show how white space can help the areas that time and metropolitan life forgot.

Q: So where is the project right now?

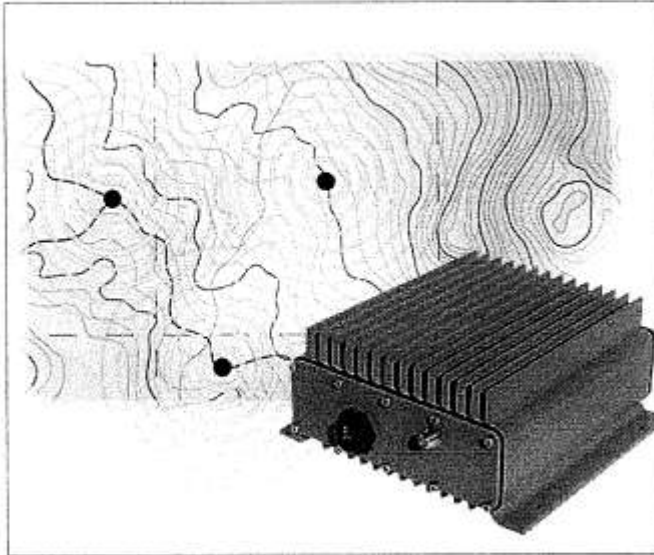
A: Currently, we have an antenna attached to the Gallatin Town Hall right now. We are recalibrating and operating. Once we feel the system is operating at optimum performance, we will open up the network to 30 public users. The pilot is expected to last 3 months, free of charge to the end user. At the conclusion of the trial, the public users will have the opportunity to get a commercial plan.

Q: What are the speeds you are seeing? Is it comparable to DSL?

A: We have found white space to be on par with DSL or better. The speeds we provide are in line with both the Federal standards as well as New York State's.

To give you an idea, we have test users right now who can stream Hulu without buffering.

(Continued on next page)



(Continued from page 2)

Q: How are you evaluating the cost to the public? Have you determined a cost per month?

A: There are several factors that will impact the cost of a white space development for the end users. The most important is the improvement in technology that we are seeing. We believe there will be a quantum leap in the next year and a half to two years with white space equipment. This should improve our ability to provide white space, and it should also improve the price of the equipment. At this time we are working to provide the service to home users for \$50 or less.

Q: What do you envision going forward?

A: We as a company are very focused on New York State. We are hoping to expand outward. The current system can support several thousand people. We are working with local leaders and speaking to other municipalities about opportunities going forward.

The Town of Thurman, in the Adirondacks, is also attracting attention for its use of white space to address issues with last mile access, land use limits and naturally obstructed terrain. They have contracted for a propagation study and initial design from Rainmaker Network Services, a local company that has provided residential and visitor wireless Internet access for over ten years. Thurman's Town Supervisor, Evelyn Wood, is equally as excited about white space coming to her municipality:

Q: How is the white space project going?

A: Our proposed initial coverage area will reach approximately 80 homes, which we expect will cost \$250,000 from start to finish. This includes providing a subsidy to our residents in order to make the individual home hook-ups affordable.

Q: How will white space actually work in Thurman?

A: Well, you start out with trunk lines. In this case, we have two trunk lines that have massive capacity. We plan to hook into those lines for the main base stations that are in a weatherproof enclosure. The base stations are connected to small antennas. From there, the signal goes to other base stations, then to houses with a small antenna. The antenna connects to a receiver in the house that provides an Ethernet connection.

Q: You mentioned that you had written a proposal for grant funding under the ConnectNY program, that included a subsidy for the individual homes. How did you structure that?

A: When we originally looked at this proposal, we projected that it would cost approximately \$600 per household for a one-time fee to purchase and connect the equipment to, and within, the home. Using the subsidy, we are hoping to drop that cost to a one-time fee of \$300 per household. Then there would be a monthly fee of \$40 to \$60 per house.

Q: At this time, is the program up and running?

A: We are very excited because we just received a shipment of second generation white space equipment that has a much higher capacity than the equipment used in earlier trials. This allows us to begin the first phase, which is the propagation studies. We had applied for grant approval to fund the build-out and are very happy to say that the Connect NY Broadband grant awardees were announced on March 5, 2013 and Thurman's White Space project received \$200,000 from the program. This award will allow us to proceed with the actual build out.

Q: What is the reaction of the local residents?

A: It is great. We need internet up here for those who telecommute, and to offer our children educational opportunities on the same level as area schools that already have internet access. This will help with all of those concerns. We are very excited!

January 7th, 2014

To: Thurman Town Board

Subject: White-Space Project

We are writing this letter to the Board to express our support for the Thurman White Space Project. This project started over two years ago as an initial step toward addressing the needs of local, family owned businesses, as well as families and school children who do not have reliable internet service. Many people over many years have identified the need to keep the towns' tax base healthy and, ideally, growing. Good internet service has become integral in every aspect of people's lives in this day and age. There is currently a window of opportunity to take advantage of grant funds available.

We ask that each Board member listen with an open mind to the presentation on the White Space Project to be given at the January 14th town meeting. Hopefully, there will be enough information made available for members to make an informed decision regarding the viability of the project and its usefulness to the town. Please keep in mind the present and future challenges facing the town that this project is trying to address.

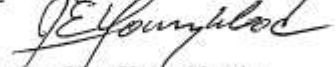
When you vote, pro or con, it would be helpful to town people if you give the reasons for your vote. Lastly, if the project is not supported, we would ask the Board to be proactive in initiating a process by which the challenges facing the town, and which this project was attempting to address, can be discussed at a town meeting in an apolitical, solution oriented forum.

Thank you for your attention.


We request that his letter be read at the January 14th town meeting and that it be included in the minutes of the meeting.

Sincerely,

Jey Youngblood



Marlyn Hoy-Youngblood



January 10, 2014

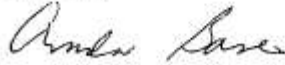
Dear ladies and gentlemen of the town board,

At this time I wish to make clear my support of the White Space Project in Thurman. Although, or perhaps because, I have access to a Verizon DSL line, I know how important quick, reliable internet access can be. This project was warmly greeted by many when it was proposed, even those who might not access the service immediately. I am now concerned that other town political interests might well hinder the project's progress.

I therefore urge you to wholeheartedly support this project. Those homes and businesses which will immediately benefit from better internet service will thank you. Those still waiting for the service will support the effort in the hopes of its expansion.

Thank you for your careful consideration as you go forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amanda Barnes".

Amanda (Mandie) Barnes

Please enter this letter into the board minutes.



Stephen W. Emerson
Operations Manager

Phone ~ (518) 232-0817
Fax ~ (518) 623-3651
Email ~ tek910@nycap.rr.com

*Our Patients Are Our First Priority
Our Members Are Our Greatest Asset*

January 14, 2014

Thurman Town Board Members,

Attached you will find the run totals for December 2013 for Warrensburg EMS in the Town of Thurman. There was only 1 call that we covered and our response time was 24 minutes but one of the WEMS first responders was on scene prior to the ambulance arriving. There was also one call that was a second out call for Warrensburg and Johnsbury was dispatched immediately and handled the call with no delay.

Also attached are the yearly calls statistics for 2013. In total there were 57 calls in the Town of Thurman in 2013. Warrensburg EMS handled or responded to 53 calls. Warrensburg transported 52 patients, Thurman EMS transported 2 patients, Johnsbury EMS transported 2 patients and Stony Creek EMS transported 1 patient. Our average response time was just over 12 minutes and our longest was 24 minutes and that occurred on two occasions.

Warrensburg EMS has 3 members that live in Thurman that are all set for first response and there is also a WEMS member that lives close to Thurman that is also set up to provide first response. We also just received applications from 2 Thurman residents that are members of Thurman EMS that will also be providing first response as they are able.

As we proceed through 2014 I would encourage any Thurman Town Board Member and residents alike to stop by and see us at our building at 3 King Street in Warrensburg. Also, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. I can be reached on my cell phone at 232-0817.

I would like to thank the Town Board and the Thurman residents for their continued support.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen W. Emerson

Stephen W. Emerson
Operations Manager
Warrensburg EMS, Inc.

Warrensburg Emergency Medical Services Inc.
PO Box 157
Warrensburg, New York 12885

Thurman Calls handled by Warrensburg EMS
December 2013

DATE	PCR #	PRIORITY	CHIEF COMPLAINT	ENROUTE TO SCENE
12/14/2013		ALS	CARDIAC	24 MINUTES

Calls Handled by WEMS in the Town of Thurman
2013

Month	# of Calls	Total Times	Average Times	Notes
January	4	44	11	
February	7	117	16	includes a transport home and 2 2nd out calls
March	4	54	13.5	
April	7	92	13	
May	6	61	10.1	includes a transport home
June	2	25	12.5	
July	5	55	11	
August	4	36	9	
September	5	64	12.8	
October	2	46	23	
November	6	54	9	includes a transport home from GFH
December	1	24	24	increased time due to location of call
Totals	53	672		12.68 Average Response Time