

Broadband Study Committee (BSC) Meeting Notes

Date: November 3rd, 2022

The meeting was held virtually, on Zoom.

Committee Members Present: Sean Powers, Bob Espindola, Sean Daly, Alyssa Botelho,

Committee Members Absent: Cathy Melanson, Tom McAfee

Guests

Entry Point, Jeff Christensen, Devin Cox

LYRB – David Robertson

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 PM.

The meeting minutes from the September 22nd meeting notes were reviewed. Sean Daly abstained as he was not at the meeting and the committee elected to wait on meeting approval based on not having a quorum present of members who were in attendance.

The committee was given an update by Bob Espindola on the memo from Town Counsel about options for forming a Municipal Light Board.

Bob Explained that subject would be discussed at the next Select Board meeting.

There was a discussion about an email that was forwarded by Jeff Christensen at Entry Point from the City of Quincy that related to the option to utilize an enterprise fund for Broadband vs. an MLP.

The committee asked for further clarification on the documents that were attached to that email. Bob said he would request clarification through the Town Administrator, from Town Counsel in the context of Articles 34 and 35 from the last Town Meeting.

Bob Espindola provided an outline of what transpired at the two day conference that he attended that was hosted by Mass Broadband Institute. MBI has \$50M available and a much large scale of money will be available in the next couple years for capital projects. He explained that in order for each state to access their portion of Federal funds, they must come up with a Digital Equity Plan and submit to the Federal Government. MBI indicated that, in order to complete that process, they will be looking to municipalities and regional planning authorities for support in putting together their own regional / local plans that will work up into the State Plan.

MBI will be hiring consultants who will help manage the process and will soon be opening up for Municipalities to submit applications to receive support from those consultants.

Bob explained that MBI will require a community who is applying for support through a consultant to designate a staff member or an elected official as a point of contact. He said that at the next Select Board meeting he will

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be asking the Select Board to consider appointing someone to serve in that role so that the Town is poised to apply for the grant funding / consulting support.

Bob Espindola provided an update on the Community Compact Cabinet Grant for the Housing Authority. He said that he has met with representatives of the company doing the construction and they have provided plans of the ongoing renovation project. The intent was to see if the Broadband Project can leverage the status of construction at the Housing Authority to help keep expenses down.

Bob Explained that the residents of the FHA expressed concern about security with an open Wifi based system. Various protection options were discussed. Sean Daly indicated he had security experience and offered to assist with a campaign to educate FHA residents about things they can do to protect themselves in this area.

Bob explained that a consultant had sent a document received by email from the Town Administrator that had come to he unsolicited from a company in the Broadband field.

The name of the company was Market Place City and they were offering to offer consulting services to the Town.

The committee reviewed the document and nobody on the committee was familiar with them. The committee determined there was nothing in the services offered that the Town was in need of at this time. Bob will relay that message back to the Town Administrator.

Sean Powers asked a question about how other communities are going about the decisions around MLP vs. enterprise funds.

Jeff Christensen said that this is all new and no communities have actually made those decisions but a number of them are talking about that at this time.

Bob suggested it would be helpful if we had a list of the communities having that discussion and to possibly set up a call to share notes, and possibly even share legal services for work in these areas.

The committee discussed adding a Digital Equity section to the Broadband Master Plan at some point.

The Committee discussed a date for the next meeting and decided to set the next meeting for December 1st starting at 7:00.

Sean Powers made a motion to Adjourn at 8:36 P.M. Sean Daly seconded. There was no further discussion.

The vote by roll call vote was unanimous.

Minutes Submitted by Bob Espindola

