

**Town of Fairhaven
Municipal Fiber Study Committee
February 26, 2019
East Room**

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FAIRHAVEN,
MASS.

Present: Brad Perkins, John Seed, Bob Espindola, and Sean Powers.

John Methia was also in attendance, although not sworn in by Town Clerk yet, because Cable Advisory has not voted to appoint him technically to the Committee as of yet. But they actively support Mr. Methia's position on this committee.

Absent: Jay Simmons

Derek Frates, Director of Cable Access was also in attendance.

Mr. Espindola called the meeting to order at 7:07pm. Introductions were made of Committee Members.

Mr. Espindola stated that one of the quest objections would be to get a RFP for a consultant to help the committee along – scope of services, questions and format that the committee wants to be presented with.

Mr. Espindola verified that all members have been sworn in at the Town Clerk's office and have received the documentation for State Ethics Certification.

Nominations for Chairperson, and Vice Chair.

John Seed made a motion to nominate Sean Powers to Chairperson, and Mr. Espindola seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Brad Perkins volunteered to be Vice Chair. Bob Espindola made a motion to nominate Mr. Perkins and was seconded by Mr. Seed. Motion passed unanimously.

Discuss Committee Charge: Mr. Espindola spoke briefly about the fiber optic network that the Town was building out through the Town. He stated the goal is to see if there is an opportunity to bring competition to the cable/Comcast in our area. He said they would be looking at other models from different communities. Discussion on how they could use a consultant, perhaps pro/cons of managing the connection ourselves through the Town; or billing it out.

Mr. Methia "spectrum option".. wireless carriers came in & negotiated tv stations -open up to wireless providers (Verizon, sprint) – having enough spectrum to provide broadband over a smart device. Mr. Methia suggested that change their name to a Broadband Study Committee vs. Municipal.

Mr. Powers explained in his house they just use Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon – high def screens – not sure high broadband would be able to handle my house.

John Methia stated the first competition for Comcast in our town would be the broadband spectrum – think we should explore that option.

Mr. Espindola stated that how do we find the most affordable to internet/broadband, etc., and is it sustainable.

Continuing, Mr. Espindola stated they would have to put bullet points together for what they were seeking in a Consultant. Some which included the following:

Feasibility of cost

Different models – pro/cons

Operating models – software

Technology

Prospect of tying into town fiber optic line.

Mr. Espindola stated it was the Committee's job to research the facts to support one way or another, and vote on a recommendation to recommend to the Selectboard.

Consultant needs to be familiar with all broadband wireless or other solutions, per Mr. Methia's opinion.

Mr. Methia stated he has heard that Verizon of the world's will give you a box to hook up wireless broadband for all your TV, etc. needs and said that the right consultant could tell you that from the get go.. what it is going to cost? And how far away is that sort of service?

Mr. Powers said the draw back of wireless is wireless.. can't guarantee you 99.9% of wireless .

Mr. Espindola stated he is involved with SRPEDD and there was some talk at one point of a possible collaboration with them to do a wide – partner with other southcoast communities to do some research on broadband.

Mr. Powers stated there was a website with towns that have already done through the RFP process & perhaps committee should look into that.

Mr. Perkins stated he had experience with build outs for campuses, etc. (not the big scale of a big town) -but he'll look into perhaps seeing if someone he knows could find someone to guide us.

Mr. Espindola suggested that a couple of people do some research to scope out what may be needed to further discuss.

Mr. Espindola read the Municipal Fiber Study Committee Charge as written in the December 17, 2018 minutes of the Board of Selectmen. (see attached)

Broadband Study Committee – committee agreed to the name change for the Committee.

Bob Espindola made a motion to change the committee name to The Broadband Study Committee and was seconded by John Seed. Motion passed unanimously with John Methia abstaining (he has not officially been voted in from the Cable Advisory Committee).

The Committee agreed to keep the lines of communication open with any regionalization research (through SRPEDD).

Sean Powers will reach out to the Towns who have already done it and bring back different research at the next meeting.

John Methia suggested inviting the towns who have already done it to get their opinion on how they went about to get the consultant, especially on how to write up the scope for the consultants.

Mr. Powers stated that Comcast will always be there, this is just to provide different alternatives.

Mr. Espindola stated there will be a new loop around the Town, building to building that is being overseen by the Town's IT Department. He will forward more information to the group.

He will contact Nikki Potter-Verrano to ask the contractor to come in and talk to the meeting members to understand the capacity issues. Derek Frates will send out info to the contractor to come back to the next meeting for discussion.

Internet band-width only, stated Sean Powers; some would still have to go through Comcast.

Sean Powers and Bob Espindola will work together to get on the RFP process.

Mr. Espindola said he would reach out to Chuck Sherwood, the consultant who helped with their negotiations with Comcast. He said he may have enough connections to guide us. He will also reach out to Attorney Bill Solomon, regarding the RFP documents & ask if he has any recommendations on fiber optical..

Set a date for next meeting:

Bob Espindola made a motion to have the meetings 4th Tuesday of the month, seconded by John Seed. The motion passed unanimously. Next meeting would be Tuesday, March 26th at 7:00p.m.

Brad Perkins asked a question about whether or not this would be networking to businesses and residential.

Mr. Methia stated ultimately it was an alternative to Comcast.

Mr. Powers explained it as he understood. The Town/People would own the network – software based, where there would be different providers – internet provider would be on a web page (you choose who you want to use for your internet provider), the idea is cost is lower because internet provider doesn't have to pay infrastructure.

Mr. Espindola explained that the residents/business would own a piece of the network – whoever opts in owns it. Role of the town could be simply billing component (we agree to send out the bills) or could be billing & upkeep and maintenance (extreme) or there is a company who will manage the service of the maintenance – the town could just be the facilitator.

Derek Frates stated once bought into that home, it stays with that property.

Mr. Espindola made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by John Seed. Motion passed unanimously at 8:28pm.

Respectively submitted,



Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary