

Broadband Study Committee  
**November 26, 2019**

Present: Chairperson, Sean Powers, Suzanne Dwyer, Jay Simmons and Robert Espindola

Absent: John Seed and Bernie Roderick

Cable Director Derek Frates was also in attendance

Consultant, Terry Barnes was also in attendance.

Mr. Powers stated they were there tonight to go over the RFP's that came in

Mr. Espindola began the meeting advising that there were three RFP's that came in. He went over the email that Mr. Rees sent him for the criteria of how the committee could choose based on the lowest proposed dollar amount, stating that if the Committee wanted to disqualify any of the RFP's they had to give good reasons to that effect. Mr. Espindola stated that all explanations were necessary to disqualify or vote in favor of an RFP that was quoted a higher price, then Mr. Rees stated that he could justify that spending. He also stated that it was at the most recent fall Town Meeting that they voted the top dollar for the consultant.

Mr. Espindola reviewed the RFP Rating Workbook, of the average amount of all the scores combined. Mr. Rees wanted to see a more descriptive of words for an explanation of why the Committee chooses the way they do.

Mr. Espindola stated he didn't want to give too much information because he saw the price points on the three RFP's, so he believes it wouldn't be fair if he gave his opinion on one vs the other based on that fact.

Mr. Simmons stated that he felt that Mr. Espindola would still be able to add valuable information through conversation.

Mr. Espindola stated that he believed the Committee would be able to make the decision but he didn't want to influence the direction of who to choose.

Mr. Simmons asked about the scoring and how each category was weighed.

Mr. Barnes said it was based on his experience of how the RFP pieces should be weighed.

Mr. Powers expressed a concern for lack of detail from one of the RFP's, ACD; and he would be concerned about what they could give.

Mr. Espindola stated that Mr. Rees could go anyway, however he wants it to be justified in writing with the Committee's concerns. Mr. Espindola stated that Mr. Rees put a few points together for review and he read them to the Committee. The points were as follows:

- 1) It is important to note that if, in the opinion of the committee, any of the proposals do not meet the minimum standard of the RFP, they should be disqualified out of the gate.
- 2) Anything that a proposal offers that was not asked for (directly or indirectly) in the RFP, cannot be held against the other proposals (because it was not asked for in the RFP).

3) We should strive to add verbiage to the aggregate scoring, based on the discussion tomorrow night. Mr. Rees said this would help justify anything other than simply going with the lowest bidder.

4) If the scoring is very tight between the proposals aggregate (say 5 points or so out of 100) then Mr. Rees would have no justification for choosing any proposal other than the lowest bidder because the committee did not feel strongly about any one over the others). If, on the other hand, there is a fairly wide disparity in scoring (say top is 90 points and second and third are around 50 points, then that would be a strong indication that the committee feels one proposal rises well above and would justify the higher cost. Again, if this seems to be the case, then it will be important for meeting notes to reflect the committee reasoning.

Mr. Barnes agreed with Mr. Powers assessment regarding ACD. He said there was in most cases, lack of detail and their majority of their experience was in wireless and the main thrust of Fairhaven's main theme is fiber to home network. Mr. Barnes also said that there was a discussion previously, if there were limits of a model that Fairhaven wanted to look at. He said that Entry point is focused on an open access network and seclusion of all other network (models). He said the open access model that Entry point discusses is an appealing model.

Ms. Dwyer stated that she felt ACD was not specific enough and had a lot of round talk, not defining what they brought to the table. She said if they were going to disqualify any of them, that ACD should be the one.

Mr. Simmons agreed. As well as Mr. Frates agreed stated that they didn't meet the standard in the Education Category, never mind the other categories. The Committee agreed they were not impressed with this RFP.

Mr. Simmons stated that based on the education piece alone, they didn't reach the minimum therefore he feels they just don't qualify.

Mr. Frates stated knowing that Fairhaven is partial to the Education piece they should've at least met the minimum or strived to meet it.

The RFP's that were received were from: ACD Telecom, Magellan Advisors and Entry Point.

Mr. Barnes stated on the fourth category (last mile options), ACD wasn't aware of what the Committee was asking for. Most of the Committee members scored them lowest in this category as well.

Mr. Frates felt that they were all on the same page.

Mr. Simmons stated that ACD lacked in information across the board.

Suzanne Dwyer made a motion to disqualify ACD based on the discussion and concerns they have and was seconded by Mr. Frates. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Barnes stated his role was to be present if the Committee had questions about the RFP's.

The Committee continued to discuss the other two RFP's, from Magellan Advisors and Entry Point.

Mr. Barnes stated he was impressed with the financial model on Magellan, and they are probably the open access model.

Entry Point has experience currently with open access, as Magellan does not.

Ms. Dwyer said she liked Entry Point for the education piece as well as grant writers to help with the capital part of things. She scored high on Entry Point, and ranked them higher because of these two things directly.

Mr. Frates said he liked the open access model through Entry Point.

Mr. Powers said it was good to see a company a few steps ahead of us, that being Entry Point. He thought both companies were really good.

Mr. Simmons stated on the Education part he felt maybe Magellan had more numbers of people qualified in the process than Entry Point.

Magellan is a billion-dollar company and would have more investors, people qualified.

The Committee discussed a little about current situation with the existing carrier and what way consumers would want to see someone new.

Mr. Espindola stated he was hearing that the two other RFP's were both qualified and the Committee sounded like they liked both.

Mr. Barnes stated that Entry Point gave the data that they would provide if chosen to look at other models.

Mr. Frates recommended reaching out to a company in Quincy who is using Entry Point now and see how they feel about them thus far. He said it might not change their minds, but might add some clarity.

Mr. Espindola stated they could ask Mr. Rees to give them some time to check references on both companies. He said they could wait until December to make a decision, but wouldn't know how the dynamic would change adding the two absent members.

Mr. Powers said his question to Quincy would be just basic, how do you like Entry Point so far? Are they good at calling back, receptive, etc.

Ms. Dwyer stated are they sticking to the plan they outlined, are they receptive.

Mr. Simmons felt that someone should call references on both.

Mr. Espindola stated they could tell Mr. Rees they like both the last two companies, however the Committee would like to get references on both and the one that he selects, would most likely be the lowest cost appropriated one.

Ms. Dwyer said she could look into the companies as well.

Discussion on who should be contacting the reference checks, whether it be Mr. Rees or one of the Committee members. Mr. Frates suggested that maybe Mr. Espindola contact the references as he understands it a little bit better.

Mr. Simmons stated he would do some google searches on the companies that are referenced. He suggested people just print out the information.

Mr. Espindola stated that it's okay that he advises Mr. Rees that the Committee feels strongly for both companies if they work out through their references and then he can choose the lowest priced as he would.

Mr. Barnes said he felt confident in either company.

Mr. Espindola stated that if the Committee had any feedback if they wanted to share with everyone as a whole, they could forward it by email and not discuss it.

The Committee agreed that Mr. Rees could make his commitment to one of the companies if all references line up.

The Committee discussed what meeting date would be best in the new year.

Mr. Simmons asked what the next step of another meeting is.

Mr. Espindola stated that the Committee would work together with the new consultant. The fourth Tuesday in January is January 28, 2020 at 7:00p.m. All agreed with that meeting date.

Mr. Barnes stated once the company is elected, they should do a kick-off meeting with this Committee to prepare a presentation of what/how everyone should be expecting out of them, finalizing their statement of work. He felt that they should be in person at their kick-off meeting. The Committee agreed that Mr. Powers, as Chairperson would make those arrangements with that person(s).

Mr. Espindola thanked everyone for their commitment in reading all the proposals and thanked Mr. Barnes for his service to the Committee.

Jay Simmons made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Suzanne Dwyer. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A. Pacella  
Recording Secretary

Documents reviewed:

- RFP Responses from ACD Telecom, EntryPoint Networks, Magellan Advisors
- Fairhaven Broadband Feasibility Study Summary (Terry Barnes, Consultant)