

**Town of Fairhaven
Broadband Study Committee
April 23, 2019
East Room**

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

Absent: John Methia

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

Mr. Powers opened the meeting at 7:08p.m.

Minutes 3/26/19 – Jay Simmons made a motion to accept and was seconded by Bob Espindola. The motion passed unanimously.

Web Conference with Solarity – A web conference/phone call was had with Solarity, out of Kentucky. Mr. Espindola explained that Solarity was a consulting firm that deals with Broadband and Fiber, and they fit the mold on what the Committee is looking for.

The conference call was followed with the Committee reviewing the presentation via email. (The presentation is attached and will be referred to as “slide” page). Facilitators were Terry Barnes and Nancy Ward.

Slide #3 – Solarity Broadband Planning Approach: Think Strategically & Act Practically.

Slide # 10 – They discussed the 3 most important characteristics of a study: Balance Control, Risk and Benefit – in more detail on this slide.

They said they could do a project feasibility report to try and know what you have to work with.

Mr. Espindola wanted to know more about Community Education Plan, whereas Solarity is in Kentucky and he felt that would be something they would need to be in Fairhaven to complete.

Mr. Barnes said he understood they were to lead the effort to do a feasibility study. He said they would be the company that facilitates, and that they haven’t discussed actually doing the study as of yet. Having said that Solarity said they could do the advocacy for educating the engagement plan that the Committee could implement.

Mr. Espindola stated the Committee would need to know where to begin to advertise an RFP, and Solarity could also assist with that process.

Mr. Espindola asked about approximately how much is the feasibility study, and stated there were municipality procurement laws that had to be reviewed by the procurement officer, who was our Town Administrator.

Mr. Barnes stated they could always do a Request for Information, as it is not as binding as an RFP.

Slide #11 – Broadband Feasibility Study Elements was reviewed. These are the things that the Committee should review and understand . This includes data research, community engagement, and surveys.

Mr. Perkins asked specifically about what their marketing plan would include.

Mr. Barnes said it would include channel markets, social media, fairs in town, etc.

Mr. Barnes heard the group talk about pole attaching and stated that the first step was to discuss with the pole owners about attaching, and he said it would be a cost over time and the second step is part of the engineer/feasibility study to get the upgrade to attach to pole.

Mr. Barnes pointed out slide #15 – resources and references. Mr. Espindola thanked the consultants and stated they would also put those references on their website for the community.

The Committee discussed if everything would be in the feasibility study they could move forward, they would only have to consider MA specific laws, with state and legal aspect.

Taunton Municipal Light: Mr. Espindola stated he had a conference call with Taunton Municipal Light and their program and really learned quite a bit from them. He said they are more than willing to come and have a discussion with the group, and was looking at their schedule for May. He said the formula for cost efficiency they gave him was to take the number of road miles in Town and multiply by 30-40,000. He said Fairhaven has 105 miles in town.

Mr. Powers also stated that TML has a very interesting website that people should take a look at.

Discuss Regional Activity: Mr. Espindola reported that SRPEDD was looking at hosting a conference with different vendors regarding this subject. He would advise the Committee when it was scheduled.

Action to move forward: Mr. Espindola suggested they get Mark Rees the information on Solarity, referencing slide #13 with an amendment to add the legal description to Mr. Rees.

Mr. Espindola made a motion to get Solarity information to Mr. Rees referencing slide #13, amending to add the legal description (under assist) and convey to him to work directly with Solaris to get under a contract or do research and come back to the Committee with questions. The motion was seconded by John Seed.

On the question, Mr. Simmons asked why the Committee is focusing just on Solarity and not another avenue. Mr. Espindola stated that Solarity is the specialist in this arena and comes highly recommended and there weren't other companies out there that do strategic planning like this.

Mr. Perkins asked if this motion was so that Mr. Rees could move forward with a RFP.

Mr. Espindola stated that if they Mr. Rees' research shows to work with Solarity than they would be the "Project Managers" to get all the information that the Committee needs for a consultant, and to move the project moving.

Mr. Simmons asked if Taunton Municipal Light could help them.

Mr. Espindola stated perhaps they could but they felt they couldn't keep up with their own demand and it would have to be an open bid. Mr. Espindola stated that they should start with a project manager, like Solaris and see what direction they go in, because they might not do an RFP, but a Point of Information as previously discussed.

The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Espindola will ask Mr. Rees to do some research, explaining Solaris and the information he will pass on and report back to the Committee at a future meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 28, 2019.

Mr. Espindola made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Jay Simmons. The motion passed unanimously at 8:25p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary