

BROADBAND STUDY COMMITTEE

Date: November 12, 2020

Time: 7:00 p.m. EST

ATTENDANCE:

- Bob Espindola
- Derek Frates
- Sean Powers
- Alyssa Botelho
- Stephanie Garde
- Cathy Melanson
- Devin Cox, EntryPoint Networks
- Jeff Christensen, EntryPoint Networks

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mr. Powers who welcomed who advised every one of the recording regulations and thanked everyone for attending.

REVIEW MEETING MINUTES:

Mr. Christensen asked the committee if they had a chance to review the previous meeting minutes from. Mr. Espindola motioned to accept the minutes and Mr. Powers seconded the motion. Roll call vote, all in favor vote was unanimous.

AGENDA:

Mr. Cox provided an update on Survey engagement saying to date there are 507 responses, 34 hard copies. Mr. Cox said the results are staying pretty consistent with the average download speed 154mb, average upload speed 130mb and the average price \$122.42 and that does not include TV all bundle packages were pulled out. Mr. Cox reviewed the survey questions; importance of speed 71.7%, Internet choice 76% very important, Support Town building a Fiber Optic network 76.1% yes (99.8% yes or probably with more info).

Mr. Espindola asked if the surveys were coming in more steadily since being set out with the water bills. Mr. Cox said online has been consistent and we have seen 180-190 paper surveys. Mr. Cox let the committee know they are now approaching statistical relevance and by getting another 200-300 surveys they will have statistically valid numbers to work with. It is up to the Selectman to decide at what point they are comfortable with the numbers but it does show overwhelming support already. Mr. Espindola

stated to continue to keep the survey active to get more feedback and maybe taking an ad out in the local newspaper will help get the additional 200-300. Mr. Frates said they did do a press release in the Neighborhood News and they will continue to push the social media posts.

Mr. Christensen said trying to gather enough data to go in front of the Select board with a formal plan and recommendations for funding and put the plan in motion. The goal is to put together an actual timeline and engage the public in order to take the next steps. Mr. Espindola questioned if any other towns/cities have ever put a question like this on a local ballot to gauge interest. Mr. Christensen said yes 2 cities Denver and Chicago added it so it has been done. Mr. Espindola said he will look into adding it on the ballot if needed.

Mr. Christensen reviewed RFP/RFQ stating the value of doing an RFP is to go to the public with firm numbers on what they will be billed. It does not mean you will be moving forward with the plan just providing a cost. By building this into the community engagement timeline it will harden the numbers. Mr. Christensen recommended to look for a partner who will do a design and build so the Town will end up with a better price and no blame game with contractors. Mr. Espindola verified there would be no cost to the Town to do an RFP and was told that the only indirect cost would be having the document reviewed by Town counsel. Mr. Christensen said the committee needs to consolidate recommendations and decide what decisions the Select board needs to make. Mr. Espindola said based on the Broadband report review they would just need to get the Select board perspective and to do that he will need to add it to their meeting agenda.

Mr. Christensen said he is looking at a 5-6 month timeline for community engagement to implement a plan and decide what kind of activities would have an impact for example; Zoom overview meetings, social media push, and yard signs. Looking to kick this off in January. Mr. Powers asked about the Heat Map and Mr. Espindola said this would be good to use to see where we need to educate more. Mr. Cox asked if the Town has a mail list set up and suggested using that to get the word out. Mr. Frates said they could use the same system they used for the virtual Town meeting that was successful.

Mr. Christensen inquired on when the next meeting will be and it was agreed December 9, 2020 at 6:00pm. This will help with the January timeline construction to get good data to get out the Selectman. Mr. Espindola advised the committee that only if there is any financial impact would they need to have it ready for Town meeting.

Mr. Christensen stated community engagement is key. Mr. Espindola said he would like to try working with 1 individual from each precinct to engage neighbors and use the Heat map to distinguish where to start. The committee all agreed this was a good idea. Mr. Christensen stated Denver primarily used yard signs and flyers and they were very successful.

The next steps revolve around finalizing the report from the survey results, recommendations from the committee for the Selectman, and 3 main decision drivers (select open access partner/proceed with community engagement/identify construction partner and finalize cost)

Mr. Espindola said he was encouraged to see more businesses responding, 14 to date but would like to make more of an effort on that side and will need to think about that when talking about outreach. Mr. Espindola stated Ms. Melanson will be able to assist with this.

Mr. Powers questioned Mr. Christensen if like Comcast would a Town network be able to offer services such as WiFi in the Park? Mr. Christensen advised the committee that services such as this would be able to be provided.

Mr. Espindola made motion to adjourn meeting and was seconded by Mr. Powers. Motion passed unanimously and meeting was adjourned.

Respectively submitted,

Mary Lou Krosschell
Recording Secretary