

Broadband Study Committee
December 9, 2020

Attendance:

Chairperson, Sean Powers
Robert Espindola
Alyssa Botelho
Stephanie Garde
Devin Cox, EntryPoint Networks
Jeff Christensen, EntryPoint Networks.
Absent: Cathy Melanson

Derek Frates was also in attendance.

Minutes: November

Mr. Powers had an amendment for the speeds that appeared to be a typo. The minutes read, the average download is 154 speed and the upload is 130, however he felt it should've been a lower number. Mr. Cox stated it is usually 10-15% of the download speed, he will confirm.

Mr. Frates advised that Ms. Botelho and Mr. Frates have filed a conflict of interest with the Town Clerk, being they are on this committee but work for the Cable Department. Mr. Frates stated that he was questioning if in fact he needed to be a "voting" member as he was staff. Mr. Espindola asked him to review that option with Mark Rees.

Ms. Botelho stated she spoke to the Ethics Commission as well, and stated is a per diem employee for the Cable Department and does not get paid for these meetings.

Mr. Cox advised the amendment number for the download speed was 34.

Mr. Espindola made a motion to approve the minutes as is amended with the correct 'upload speed' of 34 and was seconded by Stephanie Garde. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote. Mr. Frates abstained from voting.

Mr. Christensen and Mr. Cox reviewed the outreach survey. Mr. Cox stated since the last meeting they are up to 575 respondents on the survey, up 75 from the last meeting. He said once over 500, they come in statistically average for a size like Fairhaven is. He said if they can get upward to about another 100 that would be a 3-4% and in a good place.

Mr. Christensen said they are in a healthy range. 95% confidence level at this time. Mr. Cox said they are coming in through the survey on-line.

Mr. Espindola said they would outreach tomorrow to update the hard copies from Ms. Melanson.

Christensen - are the #'s significant enough for you to do a presentation to the selectboard.
Bob - yes okay to move forward, already submitted a draft report
Devin cox - 475 that are entered - improving favorably to moving forward to this kind of infrastructure.. a little standout for fairhaven not even 1% at 'no I don't want to see this', fairhaven is way under at .6%.

Mr. Christensen - need invoice side of things for the Commercial side of things. Ms. Melanson stated she would help with that part of things as she is in the Business Community.

Mr. Cox reviewed the current market analysis report from Quincy comparable to Fairhaven. Paying a nickel per megabit, 3x's better than .14cents per megabit. Comparison why Verizon doesn't compare in our district; the megabit price per is a lot higher. (cost per mbps DL speed)

Mr. Christensen - discussing bond counsel letter. Same bond company and attorney as Quincy. Will figure out how to engage with counsel on fairhaven's account.

Mr. Christensen reviewed the letter and the questions that were asked.

Does town need to authorize municipal light plan? Fhvn got the same letter from the same attorney - when comparing the two letters it's very similar, that's why they are sharing the letter - a lot of overlapping language exists.

Mr. ch - if you want to be the network operator, town would have to be the authorizing municipal light plan - could build it but outsource the operation of the light source to a 3rd party.

The town would still be required to be a municipal light designation, mr. espo asked. Do you have a sense of what that it takes. Something you would want done by the selectboard & then go before the town meeting in a 2 year period. If you have a 3^d party commercial operator is the MLP (Municipal Light Plan) required? Mr. Christensen can zoom with Willberham to discuss the designation process.

Bob - is there a major cost factor, other legal issues to have Fairhaven be a designation of MNL. He would like more information on how to go about the designation.

Municipal Light Plan has an elected board.

Christensen - continued reviewing the letter/memo.

Need for RFP - for Design Build:

Wasn't in original scope for EntryPoint - has a draft done to be reviewed; detailed and fairly comprehensible. Key point - ready to provide a template to work from. Procurement process, Mr. Rees reviews - standard language would be eliminated & fairhaven would put their language into document. Property management/design to engineer component to it, construction building and working with the owners of the poles. Mr. Christensen said they have it available and would offer it to Fairhaven when needed.

Mr. Espindola asked for that timing. He stated that Mr. Rees is retiring early January. In the process of working on a screen committee for a new Town Administrator, could be 30-60 days out - not ideal in terms of this process...either catch Mr. Rees to wrap it up now, might be difficult because of the holidays and what he needs to wrap up.

Mr. Christensen can take draft document and send tomorrow to Mr. Rees - if he has the time to insert the Fairhaven language - we could have it place when we're ready to send it out. Mr. Christensen will highlight it and send to Bob, who will coordinate with Mark.

Timeline:

Recommendations on legal structure - got to clarify the Municipal Light Plan and then start the process of the structure - what the obligations of the town will be.

Refine community engagement plan - activities to pursue as town steps forward.. committee will say what are we actually going to do.. overall effort, if we do a,b,c would you sign up?

More hard data to the selectboard - creating an action plan not a theoretical plan - what are we going to do to educate the community.

Exploring network finance options, having conversations with lenders.

Engage outsource resources? Is there a budget for doing that? Is that how /direction we want to go? Not necessary, but we need to decide.

Mr. Esposito - asked if Quincy gotten to a point on how they are budgeting or resourcing outsource?

Mr. Christensen - they are 100,000 people & probably are going to outsource resource.

Entrypoint going to city council on Monday.

Conduct RFP -

Rfp for network management & open access - the system manages the network. 3 portals, subscriber portal (residents can select their ISP),

At what point do you go to RFP for ISP? (Sean)

Jeff - can start that process at any time - make sure the network is going to happen - beginning of construction, not worry a lot about it - new market for ISP's.

RFP would include how to Network design and as-builts needed.

Would advance information to Selectboard; you do a RFP to select your design network, you (takegreat??) want people to say they will sign up for this & then Selectboard would have to make that decision.. issue to construct the network, approval of MLP structure and then the takegreat issue.

Add a 4th one - Bob - ownership of the poles & that process - under the impression had to take place - some unknown there.. Christensen-design partner should be able to navigate that - if the pole owners stall, that would be an issue..

Combination of owners in Fairhaven that own the poles.

Essentially selectboard will approve the project once we got the takegrade.. then 'real deal' with a lender and do the 'makeready' (could be done in parallel with MLP) - once all done we build the network. Main variables to shape from here.

Revisiting the timeline overall - multi year process.. a refresher please.. (bob)

Mr. Christensen - RFP for design and build would give us a better # to move forward - then we can really go to the community & say this is the range we are in.. we have a better idea.

Next steps:

Back to Richard Manely - municipal light plan first

Formal presentation to the selectboard - finalize this report

Project plan - parallel path for the other items

Get the RFP organized.

While in process, put a real community engagement plan in process

All activities within the next two months - working with community engagement, work with Richard Manley & the municipal light plan. January/February. Perhaps wait to meet with the selectboard until after the information with Municipal Light Plan.

January 11th - date that the meeting

Derek - What is the selectboard actually approving? Can they stop it

Christensen - they are voting on the Municipal Light Plan - set up requirement & requirement to sustain and maintain it so selectboard can make a sound vote on that.

Bob - thought presentation to the selectboard would be a little less than formal than he thought.. if not a heavy hit (cost, etc) - thinks they need to really have the 'big picture' before going to the selectboard.. cost, community, etc. need to get that feedback first from Wilberham and bond so they can regroup & take to selectboard

Community engagement - this committee in next meeting to build a formal engagement plan - how we going to communicate & educate and then decide if a budget is needed.

Bob - re: rfp for design builds - would have those #'s and then would go to town meeting to fund?

Christensen - vote from the town would be related to municipal light plan - and fund the project.. would have to think through the timing; people are voluntarily going to sign up & they understand, improvement to the property - town will bond for it, revenue bond - revenue from the project that sustains the cost.

What is rfp going to do for us? Design build - how are they going to be paid.. bob

Main reason to do the rfp to harden the numbers.. going to be a cost (construction financing) - decision town will have to look at .. gets rolled into long term financing

So design build is not going to look for 50-60,000 up front (bob).
They'll give you a good # of what cost will be... for the construct - not money up front.

Transitioning from the report to complexity to move the project viable and move forward..

Bob - Mini schedule is necessary to move from this complexity step to operational - timeline steps - Christensen will put something together - important activity this group can be a part of - community engagement program together & then a timeline to work with the selectboard

Mr. Frates will be out for a few weeks in January - can still meet - will still be available not just in office.

Mr Christensen - will focus on getting email from Richard manley to bob. If we get info that is needed and you feel comfortable that information is detailed enough .. perhaps get us on the selectboard meeting in January.

Will try to get zoom meeting call with Wilberham in the next week.

Community engagement plan - actively think about how to communicate with people & get the word out.

Bob - will send a note out to ms. Melanson - where she has gotten with the commercial feedback and accumulation of the hard copies (surveys). Marylou is no longer with the Town - derek will find out where those hard copies are.. who will take them over

Sean motion to adjourn/bob 2nd - all in favor.