

BROADBAND STUDY COMMITTEE

Date: February 2, 2021

Time: 6:00 P.M. EST

Attendance:

Sean Powers, Bob Espindola, Alyssa Botelho, Stephanie Garde, Cathy Melanson, Derek Frates, Devin Cox, EntryPoint Networks and Jeff Christensen, EntryPoint Networks. Ms. Wendy Graves was available by phone.

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mr. Powers who welcome, and advised every one of the recording regulations. As of right now there is no recording taken place.

Ms. Melanson made the motion to accept the minutes of November 12,2020. Mr. Espindola seconded it

Vote 5-0 unanimous. Derek not voting.

Mr. Powers made the motion to accept the minutes of January 14, 2021 Vote 4- unanimous and 1 abstain
Ms. Garde seconded it. Vote 4

Mr. Christensen stated we are going to a proposed to forward the proposed Final Broadband Plan. There were some changes: Mr. Cox described the changes: The structure is next steps is the final section. The organization and structure were the same. The legal structure has more text and we have a lot more information that is related to the billings and invoices from Fairhaven residents and did a market analysis. We added the tremendous update to the survey update. Under the risk analysis we had 9 items and we added a 10th. The financial reports look the same and has same information.

Mr. Espindola stated that although we haven't all read the final draft in depth, we still have time to discuss and change if needed.

Devon stated that it could change over the next 3 to 6 months.

Mr. Espindola made the motion to submit the Broadband Study final report issued by Entry Point Networks by this Friday morning so it can be included in the packet for the Board of Selectmen meeting on Monday, February 8, 2021

Ms. Melanson Seconded it. 5-0 vote. Unanimous

Mr. Chirstensen stated he will be making a recommendation, that there is a place holder so a primary article be drafted for community engagement budget.

Mr. Espindola stated that we need to discuss the legal part of this first.

Mr. Christensen stated that what we have learned on the legal issues and what we recommend is that we draft an article establishing a municipal light plant in the may meeting. I misunderstand that there had to be 2 Select Board votes followed by a Town Meeting vote, it appears to be 2 Town Meeting votes.

Mr. Espindola stated that is what we got from Mr. Crotty at our meeting

Mr. Christensen stated that we want an article to be drafted which describes what is required to and what are the implications of that are. We need to put that in front of the Select Board on Monday and needs to pass twice which is this year and next year 2022. The opt in model. The attorney said all current concerns have been satisfied. So what town would be voting on is to establish the authority and we will make everyone understand the we will be volunteer. And it would be an opt in process.

Mr. Espindola stated that we just want to get it in for next Select Boards meeting and then we can see what happens next. If we have to go back and rewrite anything.

Mr. Powers asked if it has to be 2 annual town meetings?

Mr. Espindola stated that it does not state that in the document. The town shall not acquire such a plant to authorize by a 2/3 vote taken by ballot with the use of voting list at each of 2 town meetings called there after and held at intervals not less then 2 not more than 12 months. We will get this clarified by Town Counsel.

Mr. Espindola made the motion to recommend, the initiation a process of establishing a Electric Light plant Structure in the town of Fairhaven.

Mr. Powers seconded. Vote 5-0 unanimous.

Mr. Christensen stated we need authorization to do an RFP for a Design/Build Plan.

Mr. Espindola made the motion that, the Committee recommends that the Board of Selectmen submit the request for proposals that have been drafted to the Inspector General's Office for comments and acceptance to be able to go out to bid for Design/Build bid.

Mr. Powers seconded. Vote 5-0 unanimous.

Mr. Espindola stated that Town Community Engagement Plan, Town counsel suggested as an alternative to the Town residents paying for a lawn sign. If we establish a gift account, we could have signs paid for with donations.

Mr. Powers asked if we are still we putting in \$500 in the town's budget?

Mr. Espindola stated that is another option and we might still request that funding.

Mr. Espindola stated that the Board of Selectmen still has to approve an gift account but does not go town meeting.

Mr. Christensen stated that we should put in an article in for the \$500.

Mr. Espindola made the motion to create an article for Town Meeting for Community Engagement budget for the broad band network.

Mr. Powers seconded it. Vote 5-0

Ms. Melanson and Ms. Garde has left.

Mr. Christensen stated we ended up with 4 votes: a vote to accept the Broadband Plan to establish the Municipal Light Plant and including vote at Town Meeting and advance the RFP to the Inspector General's Office and to create a budget for The Community Engagement Plan.

Mr. Christensen stated that he will forward a memo from Wilbraham that we do need to establish, the Municipal Light plant to go forward. It gives us a clean straight forward mechanism for achieving an opt in structure.

Mr. Powers asked if they have released any Federal Dollars for Broadband Fiber specifically.

Mr. Christensen stated, yes, they have for Rural and Urban Red Line.

Mr. Christensen stated that the average cost based on the survey and invoice date.

Mr. Cox stated the survey data came back average about \$131.00 and the invoices averaged that we have received were \$179.55.

Mr. Powers stated his bill is \$92.00 and all equipment is owned by me. Just the internet.

Mr. Christensen stated that we are modeling around \$50.00.

Mr. Espindola asked Mr. Powers that when we put our packet together to go to the Board of Selectmen, when you did in the past, you sent it to Mrs. Oliveira, could you also send it to me.

Mr. Christensen stated we need to talk about the Community Engagement Plan.

Mr. Cox displayed the Community Engagement Plan and went thru what we have done about the surveys, and talked about how we can leave it out there. We need to get a lot information and education out to the community that you can. The more involvement we can have with the community the better off we will be. The more educated are about this, the more excited people will become and will show up to that meeting. I think we can position around competition, where there is no competition. Real value of speed and etc. and a more attractive price point of what they are paying today.

Mr. Christensen stated about the value we are proposing and those have questions and not really concern about their taxes going up concern about being forced to do this. The other side, what is the structure of this and what we are asking and what are committing to or not.

Mr. Espindola stated that the surveys that came back asking questions and we will continue to try to answer and answer how this will work. The cost of hiring to do certain functions, we need to start thinking on how this will work and getting a buy in. We need to start talking about these issues.

Mr. Powers asked if we have a 1 centralized billing department for the Town?

Mr. Espindola stated yes, The Collector's Office. We are not saying that the Collector's would take this on themselves. We might have to hire more employees and a new department to take this on. If we establish The Municipal Light Plan, it could be a separate department.

Mr. Cox stated that the town would have an option to outsource to a third party and manage that process.

Mr. Christensen stated that the Plan would give the Town many options. How do we get the message out before now and May? My thought is to drive people to the website. We might want to pass out flyers and do webinars once a week in April to listen in.

Mr. Espindola stated he likes the sound of that and mentions we could broadcast on local radio stations. we could also broadcast on the website for people to watch. Maybe use the water bills again circulating flyers. Mr. Frates has more information.

Mr. Frates stated we could do that and believe there is enough in the budget to tackle circulating flyers again.

Mr. Espindola asked Ms. Graves, that the article for last year would still be open.

Ms. Graves stated that the articles last 2 years. The Water bills will be going out the beginning of April. She also goes on to say as far as billing we use a billing company and they give us a discount and if your talking about the Collector's Office, we could use 1 girl and it would be kept separate.

Mr. Christens stated that the key thing is to get the articles in place. We can put together a proposed Messaging to keep it simple. 1 side of value of network. The other side is the government side not that it is being forced. The 3rd is the Municipal Light plan, we need to explain and how it relates to what we are proposing. We need to get back together in February.

Mr. Powers stated he agrees the Municipal Light Plan will be an issue. We need to really explain that part of the project.

Mr. Frates agreed with the explaining of The Municipal Light Plan

Ms. Botelho also agreed that we need to educated the people in Town.

Mr. Espindola stated we need to go thru that process and get the questions and answers.

Mr. Powers stated we do have Taunton right down the road if needed.

Mr. Espindola asked Mr. Christensen asked if other Towns have this plan?

Mr. Christensen stated there are some others towns in Western Mass. We can provide information on those. But the first 3 open access networks will be Fairhaven, Quincy and Wilbrarham.

Mr. Christensen stated what would be great for all of you, is to come up with questions and we can put them on the website as a Q & A section. We could reach out and see if they could answer some questions.

Mr. Cox stated that we could bring into this is the Individual in Idaho has a lot of knowledge and we could reach out to him and ask to be a guest speaker.

Mr. Christensen stated the Municipal Light Plan, is a low- cost long term financing for the network. No one will be forced in. Really Explain the Plan in the opt in model. He asked Ms. Botelho about how we can post things on Facebook.

Ms. Botelho stated we should proceed with caution on Facebook, we could put a link out there for people to follow and learn more. We don't want people making comments about us if we were to just start up a conversation.

Mr. Espindola stated he has some concerns about who would be responsible on watching and handling the Facebook.

Mr. Frates asked if we should make a new Facebook page that Mr. Christensen and Mr. Cox could run or just keep using the Fairhaven TV that Erin runs.

Mr. Espindola asked if we should be still be encouraging people to keep filling out the survey?

Mr. Cox stated the survey does not do a whole lot and doesn't hurt to leave it out there. It would your committees call.

Mr. Espindola stated that we could do a new survey now that we have more information

Mr. Powers asked that we should turn the heat map on after the Selectmen's Meeting.

Mr. Frates stated we still have the connect Fairhaven Site on our Broadband page and our Fairahven tv homepage.

Mr. Espindola stated he has been directing them to those pages.

Mr. Christensen stated he would put together a messaging together and keep it simple to start with. If we decide to do webinars we could keep the recording on our website for people who missed them. If we do have a budget we need to look at Mr. Cox's List and if we can get names of people in Fairhaven that are supporting the Municipal Light Plan and supportive of this project would be helpful.

Mr. Espindola stated we should start all over again with this next phase of the project.

Mr. Cox stated in the surveys we do have e-mails of most and the question is that we can separate them and if the town does have a mechanism internally on outbound e-mail correspondence with those individuals. Is that something you have internally capability of outbound.

Mr. Frates stated you would have to make a group listing contact.

Mr. Espindola stated we could subscribe to a list serve. The Town has an opt in model for a reverse 911, The fire dept has the control. We need to look into the resource the Town has.

Mr. Frates stated he would look into the option.

Mr. Powers disagree with that option.

Mr. Espindola asked if we should stay with the e-mail.

Mr. Powers stated we should go that route.

Mr. Cox stated he has the e-mails we do not have names just e-mail address. The people who put in their e-mail addresses, they kinda opt in for more information to be sent to them.

Mr. Christensen stated he would like to do a webinar in March who responded to that survey, the fiber Champions. We would really like to use their names of people supporting the project. We would be ahead of the flyer and get their names out on the network.

Mr. Frates suggested maybe doing a show on Mr. Espindola time slot. Like going back to the beginning.

Mr. Espindola stated he already has some shows lined up, but maybe we could later on. I would like to go with the e-mails if we could.

Ms. Botelho stated if we are going to do it thru G-mail and you have a excel sheet filled with all the e-mails and you can save it as CSV and then you can import it in g-mail and blast emails that way.

Mr. Christensen stated that Ms. Botelho could be in charge of that. What would be are next availability to meet again.

Mr. Espindola stated that we want to target in March and have flyers ready to go.

Mr. Christensen stated if we make the articles about comcast and rate guides on the website.

Mr. Powers agreed to the connect one.

Mr. Frates stated he agreed to the connect one not the Town's Website.

Mr. Christensen stated he would work on the website and want everyone's feedback on Q & A.

What questions do you think people are going to ask and try to anticipate and post on the website.

Mr. Espindola stated maybe we could try to schedule a time in late February.

Mr. Christensen stated maybe the 23rd or 24th?

Mr. Espindola is available the 23rd or 25th.

Mr. Christensen stated the 25th would work.

Ms. Botelho stated it should be fine.

Mr. Powers stated are we thinking about the 25th at 6:00 p.m.?

Mr. Christensen stated that we need to prep for Monday.

Mr. Espindola stated we could reach out by email about that.

Mr. Espindola asked where we do we stand on the agenda for tonight?

Mr. Christensen stated that we covered all of them except the detail of next steps. Mr. Cox will be sending the plan to the committee members and the next steps are in the document and we can talk about them now or you can look at them individual.

Mr. Powers stated that we could look at them individual.

Mr. Frates asked if we need an article to be on this May's Town Meeting?

Mr. Espindola stated that we need to define the language for the work being done by Entry Point. We need to look at the budget. We do want to put an article in for this May's Town Meeting.

Ms. Graves stated she could look at the older article and see what was spent and what would be available.

Mr. Christensen stated that would be for tonight and have some homework to get done for the next meeting.

Mr. Espindola made the motion to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. Mr. Powers seconded it. 3-0 vote

Respectfully Submitted

Lisa M. Rose,

Recording Secretary

