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**Minutes**  
**August 05, 2021 6:30p.m.**  
**Town of Fairhaven Broadband Study Committee**

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Affiliations	Name	Present
<b>Fairhaven Staff Appointee</b>	Derek Frates	Yes
<b>Committee Members</b>	Bob Espindola, Select Board representative	Yes
	Sean Powers, Chairman	Yes
	Alyssa Botelho	Yes
	Cathy Melanson	Yes
	Nicole Antonio	Yes
<b>EntryPoint</b>	Devin Cox	No
	Jeff Christensen	Yes
	Bruce Patterson	Yes
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Kelly Camara	Yes

**Minutes:**

Mr. Espindola opened the meeting at 6:37p.m. All committee members were present.

Mr. Espindola discussed whether there will be a Fall Town Meeting; he does not believe one will be held but could change. Further discussion captured below.

Mr. Christensen introduced presenter Bruce Patterson from EntryPoint to speak on the engineering proposal. Mr. Espindola presented background details for the committee.

Mr. Espindola discussed The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the funds which would be allotted to towns. Fairhaven has received a 50 percent installment of \$841,000 and will receive the other installment next year. There are multiple projects in competition for these funds. A committee has been formed within the town staff (town administrator, department heads, accountant) and have been submitting project proposals. Going forward, the committee will prioritize that list to utilize incoming funding. Additionally, there will be funds coming in from the county that could potentially reach over 3 million total; this funding has similar time limit requirements. In the case of the Broadband initiative there are multiple grant opportunities available. The committee will research these opportunities and decide which ones are compatible with the engineering proposal and present the greatest benefit. Mr. Patterson clarified that the engineering proposal would enable the town to be eligible to apply for certain grants.

Mr. Christensen further added to Mr. Espindola's statement on funding that the committee has gone to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) at the state level in regards to design builds and were told the Municipal Life Plan (MLP) must be in place prior to design/build approval with the OIG. The committee is looking for a mechanism to validate or contradict if the town is eligible. Mr. Patterson is to present on the engineering study for validation on cost and grant opportunities.

Mr. Espindola discussed the article funds the town voted to support, which still has \$30,000 left to cover these projects. If committee agrees on EntryPoint the next step is a vote at the next town meeting.

**Engineering Proposal:**

Mr. Patterson detailed EntryPoint has completed the design model, but has not completed the cost model. The model will be in GIS 3D map space (including a mapping layer) and will include all addresses, and lot sizes. EntryPoint would use parcel drawings (data received from the town) to complete a feasibility design. These designs are paramount for receiving grant money.

The costs estimated with these studies presents with reasonable assurance you are within plus or minus 10% of cost at time of analysis. This being 10% on material count, but market could change on supply costs. Design will be detailed with route of main fiber.

EntryPoint has partnered with Biarri. Biarri has done national fiber design for system build in Australia and New Zealand. They have honed and refined the software design platform. They are efficient with designing a fiber system. They have projects across the US and are competitive in price. In general, they are cheaper because they use efficient software.

Mr. Espindola asked Mr. Patterson to share the EntryPoint Feasibility Design Work Order with the committee. The scope of work breakdown includes data inputs and outputs, analysis of data given for cost analysis, project management, bill of materials, and labor estimates. The committee has to agree on Complete Architecture Playbook (CAP) before design.

Mr. Espindola confirmed there are 8,105 premises in town. He also asked if project allows for adding cross connections to existing fiber loop. Mr. Patterson confirmed EntryPoint project will include design to every home through software to gauge finished product. The study will take approximately 2-4 weeks, but no definitive start date has been established. Mr. Patterson has spoken with vice president in regards to study duration; will get better idea of estimated start date.

**Open Item:** EntryPoint to provide estimated start date.

#### **Fall Town Meeting:**

There was a brief discussion on the timing of the next Town Meeting. No conclusion was reached. Next Town Meeting is To Be Determined.

Mr. Christensen suggested to the committee to present costs with grant money included to taxpayers; this will increase chances of the town voting for it.

Mr. Powers asks Mr. Patterson for what EntryPoint has delivered to other communities.

**Action Item:** Mr. Patterson to provide committee with examples of what EntryPoint has delivered to other communities.

#### **Grant Opportunities:**

Mr. Espindola has reservations about committee spending time pursuing a grant with low probability, especially since it is hard enough to get grant writers. He stated not to focus on the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) grant at this time; adding the 17 August deadline is not feasible.

**Motion:** Ms. Melanson made motion for no action on NTIA grant, Mr. Powers seconded; vote was unanimous.

Mr. Christensen stated we should evaluate the American Rescue Plan (ARPA). The Infrastructure Bill (IB) proposes \$65 billion for Broadband projects and \$42 billion for traditional cable projects. Mr. Patterson emphasized the focus for these bills will be for the underserved and unserved, with focus on reliability and speed. The bill is designed for fiber-oriented projects. He also stated they will be looking for collaboration between state and local government. Each state will be rewarded 100 million, which is decided by a population or need formula. Each state is required to establish an administrative plan. To be granted IB funds, the project should be a 5-year plan with collaboration between local and state entities. If Fairhaven can confidently present to the state a researched plan which would greatly increase the chance of receiving money.

Mr. Espindola stated Fairhaven has already spoken with a State Representative. It is important to keep in mind that Fairhaven is required to update their wastewater treatment facility in the near future. This is a priority and will be a great expense.

Mr. Patterson elaborated on Infrastructure Bill requirements; towns will need to match 25% of what they are rewarded. Mr. Espindola wants to leverage the \$1.6 million awarded by designating a certain amount with grant money. This would present a good case for a town vote.

**Motion:** To request town to move forward with contract that was presented by EntryPoint's Work Order that has been reviewed. This project will be funded by the original article for the Broadband feasibility study. Motion made by Mr. Powers and seconded by Ms. Melanson; passed unanimously.

**Action Item:** Mr. Espindola to coordinate moving the contract forward with Town Administration.

**Post meeting note:** The following link provides an overview of the Infrastructure Bill referenced in the section above. [https://www.beyondtelecomlawblog.com/an-overview-of-broadband-provisions-in-the-infrastructure-bill-as-of-july-30-2021/?mc\\_cid=7c15f05f50&mc\\_eid=967a5d5e06](https://www.beyondtelecomlawblog.com/an-overview-of-broadband-provisions-in-the-infrastructure-bill-as-of-july-30-2021/?mc_cid=7c15f05f50&mc_eid=967a5d5e06)

**Next meeting:** Next Broadband Study Committee meeting is scheduled for 9 September.

**Review/Approve last meeting minutes:**

**Motion:** Ms. Melanson made motion to approve 24 June minutes and seconded by Mr. Espindola; vote unanimous.

**Motion:** Mr. Espindola made motion to approve 7 June minutes and seconded by Mr. Powers; vote unanimous.

**Motion:** Ms. Melanson made motion to adjourn meeting and was seconded by Mr. Powers; meeting adjourned at 7:56p.m.