

DRAFT

Cornish Broadband Committee Minutes-July 22, 2022

Board Members in attendance:

Chris Hiatt, Kevin Nelson, Mitch Davis, Steve Jameson, Shelley Brookings, Michael Fuerst, Corey Fitch (by zoom, due to illness)

Members of Public in Attendance:

Nellie Palmer, David Kruidenier, Jody Schubert

This was the initial organizational meeting of the Committee.

The charge of the Selectmen was reviewed.

The Committee discussed the currently available ISP providers to the community including Comcast, Consolidated Communications, NH Electric Cooperative, Hughes Net, Viasat and Starlink. Although all of these provide internet services, the level of reliable service differs greatly amongst these providers.

A discussion ensued about what constitutes reliable minimal high speed broadband connectivity service for Cornish.

The federal level is 25 Mbps upload/ 3Mbps download

The NH Department of Business and Industrial Affairs (BEA) considers symmetrical upload and download speeds of 100 Mbps as a minimum.

Some communities in NH have entered into broadband agreements with ISPs with symmetrical 1 gigabyte upload and download speeds.

The committee agreed, that for purposes of our investigation of options for Cornish, that the minimum service speeds should be symmetrical upload and download speeds of 100 Mbps.

The committee then discussed the criteria necessary for a review of broadband services which would include Cost/affordability, latency, download/upload speeds, data quantity, reliability.

The preferred delivery infrastructure for broadband would be optical fiber, possibly supplemented with point-to-point wireless.

The committee discussed the availability of Federal money, through Section 9901 of the American rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), for the build out of broadband services which will be administered at the state level by BEA. The funds are to be used for "Unserved Properties" in NH, which are defined as "not having access to reliable internet service, whether that be lacking service entirely or consistently experiencing speeds below 100Mbps download/ 20 Mbps upload". Currently providers are being asked to submit requests for proposals (RFPs) possibly by the end of the month.

Prior to the recent availability of Federal funds most broadband expansion in municipalities in NH was funded by municipal bonds approved at town meeting and paid for by the chosen ISP pursuant to the broadband agreement.

The committee agreed to contact the appropriate representatives at Comcast, Consolidated Communications and NH Electric Cooperative to obtain their data regarding current coverage and classes of services in town; their plans for obtaining federal funds; what services could be provided to the Town and whether they are willing to meet with the committee to discuss these matters. If the ISPs require a formal Request For Information (RFI) the committee is prepared to provide the same to them.

Kevin Noble will contact NH Electric Coop.

Shelly Brookings/Mitch Davis will contact Consolidate Communications (Jeff McGiver may be contact at Consolidated)

Correy Fitch will contact Comcast.

A question arose as to how to analyze proposals from the ISPs. Would the town be looking for a guarantee of services to every existing home or to every lot where a home could be constructed in the future?

A discussion occurred regarding the efficacy of doing a formal survey of the wants and needs of the residents of Cornish. This matter was put off until at least after initial discussion with the current providers.

A question arose as to who owns the utility poles and is there exclusivity for the use of those poles or, for example, can Comcast fiber, go on consolidated poles?

State Senator Sue Prentiss has been a good advocate for the expansion of other communities in her district. Cornish is in her district. Steve Jameson will contact her.

The committee voted to appoint Michael Fuerst as Chair and Chris Hiatt as Secretary.

Nellie Palmer was appointed as an Alternate.

The next meeting will be at the Town Offices (2<sup>nd</sup> floor), Friday August 5, 2022 at 4:30 PM. The public is welcome.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.