

## Broadband (Fiber Optics) Study Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 18, 2021

Location: Zoom meeting

Committee Members present: Kim Maxwell, Bill Brown, Libby Borden, Nina Ritson, John DeShazo, Brett Robbins, Julie Scharnberg, Jim Jasper

Other attendees: Susan MacEachron

Meeting called to order: 6:06 PM

Major topics

- Minutes Approval
  - Minutes approved - Unanimous
- Agenda Approval
  - Agenda approved – Unanimous
- Upcoming town meeting / budget review
  - BOF meeting will be on the 13<sup>th</sup>; TBD if Fiber will be approved line item
  - Follow up meeting – likely in May – to vote on the final budget
  - Primary objective for the next 2-3 months is to drive approval of the budget (town awareness and sentiment)
  - Drive 100+ supporters to attend
    - Should we plan to call people prior to the meeting?
      - Kim to finalize a call list in early April
    - Information package to be prepared by mid April
      - Goal: Specific materials to help people understand the project
  - Details on budget / voting process
    - Total increase in town budget projected to be 8-9% (of which, Fiber plan represents 1-2%)
    - Fiber impact on town is planned to be recouped by private donations
    - Timing of final town vote could be delayed as Town waits for final details on state provided funding
    - Need to design a simple talk script for presenting the Fiber plan impact / private reimbursement at town meeting to ensure people understand the impact
    - May be a good idea to collect first year donations prior to the town meeting so we can represent that the donations are already available
- Town education / Marketing
  - Will need to prepare comparison chart on how to cobble together Comcast like experience through multiple providers

- What providers?
      - Fubo, Sling TV, Hulu
    - What is learning curve?
    - What is cost comparison?
  - Recommendation to use multiple marketing sources to reach customers
    - Continue inserts
    - Direct mail piece?
  - Marketing strategy meeting to be convened to discuss plan for coming weeks – Kim to send out invite for subcommittee
  - Getting people to switch: Lower cost and faster speed; not just a low cost offering
  - The four basic benefits
    - Divide into emotional and practical benefits
      - Emotional
        - Universal: Equity for the town; digital divide disappears
    - Reliability: The only fiber network in the town was available throughout the town black out last summer
    - Affordable
    - Future proof: Never need another service for your life
    - Civic pride? There is crumbling infrastructure in this country; this is opportunity to get together with your neighbors and make something better
  - Next Norfolk Now insert
    - Kim and Bill to discuss
- What does universality really mean?
  - Outside of connecting homes far from the road, we still need to finalize the plan for providing services to low-income homes
  - This will be tabled as it is not part of initial plan approval
- Upcoming meetings
  - **April 1, 2021 @ 6PM**

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Brett Robbins  
 Secretary