

Broadband Committee
Minutes
November 13, 2019

Present: Paul Looney, Chair, Dennis Marcom, Dick Hill, Steve Grenier, Rod Bouchard, Jean Kobeski **Absent:** Bob Anderson, Peggy Pschirrer

Paul called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Selectboard Office, Walpole Town Hall.

The committee agreed that Consolidated Communications submitted the only viable RFP. Others submitted letters only or just a description of services.

The group agreed that further clarification of pricing is needed. There is new subscriber pricing, but how will that change after 24 months? Does the discount go away after two years? The committee estimated what cost to the consumer would be based on the bandwidth.

The committee also wants to know what the extra cost for footage beyond 150 ft. would be.

It is unclear how much the bond for this work will be. How will CCI and the town split the cost of the project? Ownership of the backbone will determine whether it will be a taxable or non-taxable bond. Steve stated it is his understanding that town must own the backbone to bond it. Rod scheduled a phone meeting with bond counsel on Friday, November 15 to help clarify these issues; Steve will join the conversation.

This project brings broadband to the town of Walpole. Those who do not want it, need not take it. Those who are currently underserved will need to take what is being offered. The committee wants to know what impact this new service will have on DSL subscribers. Will there be a promotion for them to get off DSL and on to fiber as a new customer?

The committee also wants clarity on the Bundle Promotional Discount. Additional questions are whether CCI will get to 100% of Walpole, N. Walpole, and Drewsville, and when the town can expect implementation if the bond is passed.

Paul will call Rob Koester to set up a meeting ASAP to discuss the committee's questions. Dick Hill will join the meeting, and Paul will ask Bob Anderson to join as well. Steve suggested that the committee send a list of the questions and ask for a written response prior to the meeting; Rod agreed that having CCI's answers in writing is a good idea. Paul will compile the list of questions, send them to the committee for approval, then give them to Steve, who will compile the final list and forward it to CCI.

Rod suggested that once clarified, all costs be broken down and put on a spreadsheet.

Rod was asked to focus on the bond; Bob will be asked to focus on the elements of the contract and a contract template.

Paul proposed that the next meeting focus on a timeline and milestones. Then the committee needs to decide how to present this to the Selectboard, followed by the public.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

The next meeting is November 20 at 6:30 at Town Hall.

Jean Kobeski for Peggy Pschirrer

