

Broadband Committee
Minutes, December 18, 2019

Present: Paul Looney, Chair, Rod Bouchard, Bob Anderson, Dick Hill, Steve Grenier, Dennis Marcom, and Peggy Pschirrer
Guest: Rob Koester, Vice President, Consolidated Communications, Manchester, NH.

Mr. Looney called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The December 11, 2019 minutes were approved as presented.

The Boardband Committee had emailed Mr. Koester a set of questions to serve as the basis of this meeting.

Mr. Koester began by saying yes, \$1,856,100 was the cost of the project and the figure we needed to bond. Consolidated Communications Inc. (CCI, hereafter) will cover any extra costs.

Comcast has not responded to any of the Committees requests: RFI. RFP. This means that we count all households as underserved.

How will we treat customers who are already served by CCI? Those subscribers may change over to the new network or remain with the old service.

CCI will get in touch with customers asap after Town meeting. Businesses such as Bensonwood has a T-line. CCI's commercial team will coordinate migration for business customers.

Questions were asked about a twenty or thirty-year contract. Mr. Koester stated the operating agreement has to say beyond the bond period, hence the thirty-year agreement.

Mr. Koester has made the corrections in the draft contract as suggested by the Committee. He is working on another contract which will serve most towns. It will have attachments such as an operating agreement.

The Committee suggested that CCI attorneys sit with Bond Counsel to discuss whether bonds will be or can be non-taxable or will they have to be taxable. What are the requirements.

Bonding requires a series of public meetings; one has already been held at which minutes were taken. Dates were set for the next two meetings: January 11, 2020 at 10 a.m. in Town Hall and February 12, 2020 at 6: 30 p.m. in Town Hall. Both the Committee and Mr. Koester will make power point presentations and answer questions at the January 11th meeting.

Both meetings will be called by the Selectboard of the Town of Walpole. A notice for each meeting will be in the Keene Sentinel as well as on the Town's usual posting places.

Peggy presented a copy of the Warrant Article she had drafted. It includes the amount of the bond only. Bob Anderson questioned why it did not include the whole budget number as the Chesterfield warrant had. Peggy stated the bond would stand by itself as the first item on the agenda for the Annual Meeting in Town Hall. The warrant will be reviewed by Bond counsel as well as the DRA before publishing. The Town Budget will be a separate warrant article. One is not dependent on the other.

The Committee will meet in January – definitely on January 8th and possibly on January 6th. A phone call will be arranged with Bond Counsel when she is available.

Peggy Pschirrer