

BROADBAND COMMITTEE  
Minutes, September 4, 2019

Present: Paul Looney, Bob Anderson, Dick Hill, Rod Bouchard, Dennis Marcom, Steve Grenier, Peggy Pschirrer Guest: John Snowdon, Westmoreland

Paul Looney opened the meeting at 6:30 pm. He introduced John Snowdon from Westmoreland who chairs the Broadband Advisory Committee (WBAC)

Mr. Snowdon reviewed the work of the Westmoreland Committee which started seventeen months ago. He indicated he would send us a copy of their RFP with the names and addresses of the companies they are writing.

- WBAC met with Consolidated in Jan 2019
- Wrote a Request for Information (RFI) which came back in 57 days.
- Determined that 89.8% are underserved; 11% served
- Never heard from Comcast
- Called Jay Kahn who reported legislators never considered a company would not respond to an FI – have no enforcement. New legislation will include retroactive penalties...???
- Argent Communications wouldn't return calls/emails
- Sending RFP's to Argent, Comcast, Spectrum and Consolidated. Consolidated will respond.
- Westmoreland Cable Contract with comcast expires in 2020??
- North Walpole holds contract with Cable. Walpole need to determine expiration date
- Every town needs to share information
- Carol Macky works for Consolidated
- Carol Monroe is in Dublin
- Carol Miller.....?
- Other companies in Maine are Otelco, GWY and Y Valley
- Matrix – Chris Lynch, privately held, builder of fiber networks, made a proposal to Westmoreland. May be affiliated with First Light
- Matrix- all assets go into an LLC which can be purchased in three years then owned by Town. Westmoreland would need an 800,000 plus bond.
- Need someone to bid beside Consolidated; have reached out to Comcast
- SB 170 does not guarantee fiber
- SB will mail RFP; used 80% of Chesterfield's work
- Poles must be ready; fees for adding lines on a pole
- Eversource is putting battery backups in Westmoreland
- \$720,000 to buy space on a pole
- Consolidated owns poles in Walpole; replacing current poles with taller ones. All towers connected to Consolidated

- Westmoreland found a survey useful – mailed it to 734 addresses – single sheet-written or emailed Used Survey Monkey- cost about \$700. Sent everyone speed test
- Thirty-one percent responded – didn't ask for names
- Could figure out which road responder was on?
- All on-line in Westmoreland's web site; survey confirmed Consolidated numbers
- Business/resident/ home business – 93% Consolidated; 5% Argent
- Speed reliability of customer services
- Consolidated took over Fairpoint; is not taking care of copper lines which are now 50 years old. New equipment all fiber. Copper still used for fire alarms
- Westmoreland has 42 miles of road; 14 miles of state roads; 734 addresses; 1700 population
- Walpole has 70 miles of road; ?? of state road which are Prospect, County, Rt 123, Rt 12, South; population about 3870
- Westmoreland – started having town meetings- next one is Sept 14 at 10:00 am
- RFP due October 15
- Devise Millmet – Bond lawyers
- Kahn's new legislation to allow Towns to work together
- John Snowdon left the meeting at 7:50 pm

Westmoreland needs bonding information

Check Homeland Security – is there money to upgrade in communications

RFP – Steve Grenier and Dennis Marcom will work on RRP

Need to add maps to RFP; should it include miles of Class V roads?

Dick Hill will determine number of underserved as well as property values

Can we ignore Comcast? Are surveys required?

The aim is to be ready for March 2020 Town Meeting

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm. The Committee will meet every Wednesday beginning September 11 at 6:30 pm

Peggy Pschirrer