

Town of Greenfield
7 Sawmill Road, Greenfield, NH 03047
Public Benefit Hearing - Broadband
Wednesday, January 27, 2021 – 6:30 PM

Selectboard: Chairman Robert Marshall, Selectwoman Karen Day, Selectman Michael Borden

Staff: Aaron Patt, Town Administrator; Katherine Heck, Treasurer

Broadband Volunteers: Tom Bascom

Consolidated Communications: Jeff McIver, Michael Cannon

Public:

- Kathy Seigars
- Heather Wilson
- Bryan Christianson
- Cathey Sharpe
- Conrad Dumas
- Richard Spencer
- Jeff LaCourse
- Jack Moran
- 235-4317 – caller

6:30 PM: Virtual Meeting Open – ZOOM Meeting 845 442 9808 653cuG

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. Chairman Robert Marshall welcomed everyone to the virtual Broadband Public Benefit Hearing. The Chair opened the meeting and read a statement provided by the Attorney General’s office regarding virtual meetings. “As Chair of the Selectboard, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, which has been extended for the 9th time, this public body is authorized to meet virtually.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor’s Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are providing public access to the meeting by telephone. We are currently working on providing additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means, however, we are a small town and that is not feasible for tonight’s call.

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the access number posted online or by following the directions on the Meeting Instructions link from the Selectboard’s page on the website. The Website address is greenfield-nh.gov.

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting telephonically. If there are problems with access, please email the Town Administrator and he will attempt to help you in real time. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll-call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll-call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

Each selectperson noted that they were alone. The Selectboard members are each home and alone, the Town Administrator is in his office at home and is alone.

The Chair stated: "If there isn't time for your questions tonight, you can email the Town Administrator and request a response. If you have technical difficulties on your end with your computer, laptop, or other electronic device email the Town Administrator if you having trouble connecting in real-time and we'll try to be of help.

6:30 PM: Public Information Hearing

The Chair welcomed the participants and thanked them for joining the Zoom session. He stated that the volunteers have been done a great deal of work to bring everyone together. The Chair then turned the session over to Tom Bascom, Chair of the Broadband Volunteers. Mr. Bascom provided a slide show presentation on Broadband and why Broadband is important to Greenfield including:

- The possibility of impact on property values and the ability to attract new people to live in town – without Broadband or internet access people will find it harder to engage in
 - remote learning,
 - telehealth,
 - remote work.

Mr. Bascom provided an overview of the Broadband Volunteers and the work that the volunteers have provided; from a survey of Greenfield residents, to supporting an RFI from the Selectboard, to reviewing the response to the RFI, to drafting and reviewing responses to the Request for Proposal that was issued. Mr. Bascom explained that the survey showed that Greenfield is not only underserved in a significant portion of the town, but also that the satisfaction from people regarding internet access in Greenfield in general is very low overall. Some people have DSL and some of those people are happy with the service, but the majority of people are not served and have had issues with the alternatives such as hot spots and other forms of internet.

The town received three responses to its RFP: one from Consolidated Communications, one from the Matrix Group, and one from Comcast. Mr. Bascom provided a slide on the comparison between the three providers, noting that the quickest to market, with the least cost to Greenfield and the lowest fee schedule, as well as the highest investment component in the project came from Consolidated Communications.

At 7:10 pm, Mr. Bascom turned the presentation over to Jeff McIver and Michael Cannon of Consolidated Communications to provide an outline of the Broadband offering and answer questions. Mr. McIver is a Project Manager and Mr. Cannon is a Senior Director of Operations.

Mr. McIver provided an overview of the Consolidated Communications Broadband offering. He explained the difference between the fiber offering and copper line DSL that is currently in service. It was noted that Consolidated is out of DSL facilities and cannot provide any more DSL

service in Greenfield. Mr. McIver provided an honest assessment of Consolidated Communication's Customer Service. Mr. McIver provided an overview of the timeline for the installation, which is around ten months once the contract is approved (after Town Meeting).

Mr. McIver provided an overview of the possible pricing, including that there would be no contract required. If people preferred their current DSL service, they would not have to change to a different service.

Michael Cannon provided an overview of the fiber service and explained that the fiber installation provides capabilities for Consolidated that the copper plant does not provide. This allows the company to be more responsive in case of outages because the fiber break can be traced to within a foot of the break and this allows the service to be restored much more quickly. With the current copper plant, which is quite old, outages can take a long time to isolate and fix.

Mr. Cannon provided a lengthy explanation of the operations side of the installation. At the close of the presentation, residents from Greenfield asked several questions.

Karen Day (also a Selectwoman) asked about low and fixed income rates. Does Consolidated have a low and fixed income rate structure? Mr. McIver answered these questions and stated that much of the pricing structure was projecting a year or more out in advance. He provided a projection of what the costs would be by the time that Greenfield residents were ready to be up and running.

Several other questions were raised and Mr. McIver stated that he would bring specific pricing examples back to the town in the future.

At 8:15pm, Selectman Marshall closed the meeting and asked the Selectboard members for a motion to adjourn. Selectwoman Day made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Selectman Borden. On a roll call vote, the Board voted 3-0 in favor of adjourning as follows: Karen Day – Aye, Michael Borden- Aye, Robert Marshall – Aye.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chair, Robert Marshall

Selectwoman Karen Day

Selectman Michael Borden