

Economic Development Advisory Committee 09/21/2015

**Economic Development
Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Recorded by Sharon Rossi
September 21, 2015**

Attending: JMoran, PRenaud,
AWood, MKavenagh

7:03 p.m. Meeting Opened

PRenaud moved to accept May 26, 2015 meeting minutes. JMoran seconded the motion. Motion carried in favor.

PRenaud reported that the RSA 79-E package was submitted to the Select Board for approval. The Select Board will have town counsel review the forms. There are a few minor corrections that will be done by APatt. The application will be up on the website soon. He also reported the Select Board didn't approve our amended charter because there are still outstanding issues.

PRenaud handed out possible avenues for funding for bringing broadband to town. These are the areas that will need to be looked into more thoroughly in the coming months. We have to decide on a general plan for the town and then an action plan will have to be finalized for presentation to the town.

PRenaud has come to the conclusion that if we did further research, I would end up doing a lot of the organizing the broadband committee. We've got all the information that is available from NH FastRoads, 186 Communications, ComCast. We need to find out where we stand with FairPoint. WiValley can do a one on one specific to a residence and CMRC is willing to sell some excess bandwidth to the town through WiValley. Additional

antennas could also be affixed to the CMRC tower, furthering the potential for fixed point wireless. A fixed point wireless network could be the quickest way possible for expanded broadband in town. However, there have been issues of concern in their quality of service and reliability of speed. Another concern is if an opportunity arises to get a fiber to the premises network in town, this would render a fixed point wireless network obsolete.

AWood said WiValley broadband has 2 other up stream network links, one of whom is not bad in size, however, their reliability is also bad. JMoran commented that he had a FairPoint rep at his house and the rep said that at the junction of Route 31 and Zephyr Lake Rd, they are building a box for fiber optics. PRenaud will get more details on this.

PRenaud said CMiller gave him a feasibility study for Greenfield for wireless and wireline possibilities. We need to meet with Brian Foucher of WiValley and FairPoint to get more specific details to complete the study.

At this junction, professional grant writers may be needed to start the various applications to secure grants for broadband communication. PRenaud has been in contact with Barbara Miller who is a grant writer in Peterborough. She is interested in organizing a regional exploratory broadband committee. There has been a positive response from some Peterborough town officials. Peterborough is in the process of doing their survey which we have already completed. PRenaud got approval of the Select Board to be the Greenfield rep in attending meetings of this potential exploratory committee.

With broadband we have to know what we want to do, have a rough timeline, a sequence of events, and to know what grants, loans or perhaps, bonds to apply for. We have large sections of town that have no DSL. Some residents there have satellite, some

WiValley, some an IEC.

MKavanaugh has asked if Google or Amazon have grant money.

AWood said we aren't dense enough to get any attention from them. They tend to offer fiber to large metropolitan areas.

Fixed wireless towers are much smaller than cell towers. There will have to be an ordinance written to allow these towers and fixed point antennas affixed to existing structures. Line of sight issues will affect wireless antennas.

Weather issues can also impact bandwidth from these antennas.

JMoran said in checking out the funding, mostly co-ops are the ones to seek out. We should get something on the warrant to ask the town if they'll fund contacting the co-ops. If the town believes it is worth it for the town and possibly personally, then the warrant results will show the town's wishes.

15 to \$16K will likely cover the cost that the town will have to put up to have a comprehensive survey done by Comcast, etc. This would be for hard wiring. This would be in the action plan. PRenaud said, "As far as the direction for us to go, we'd all like fiber in the town, as FairPoint is the only game in town, they are overpriced, and reliability is an issue.

PRenaud said there are many avenues to take: wire the entire town, get something to just the center of the town, or do sections of the town. As a committee we need to decide fairly soon on a plan and what grants to pursue, and who we need to help us with these grants.

AWood said there is fiber optic to the center of town, but the problem is that a startup business cannot afford to buy bandwidth. It was suggested that PRenaud talk to WiValley to step it up to get FairPoint to counter offer. As FairPoint has a monopoly and are in fiscal difficulties, they are not fully viable. PRenaud is going to call JHunter to see what the situation is with WiValley at

CMRC. TDS has fiber going through town, we can contact them and see if there is potential there, though keeping aware that FairPoint is the incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC). Legal research will be done regarding the rights of ILECs.

MKavanaugh asked, “Do you know how the town would be affected by the telecommunication companies not maintaining the copper wires? The telecommunication companies have requested to stop maintenance of the lines because of the copper wire. What will happen to internet communications? If these companies do this, they have to provide another type of means for communication. The federal government is no longer supporting copper wire maintenance, in an effort to spur telecom companies to upgrade their networks, especially in rural areas.

AWood said we need to try and make FairPoint come up with more affordable means for startup companies, or we can try and encourage some startup business in town, in order to leverage a telecommunication company to come to us. AWood suggested that a non-binding referendum to force FairPoint to bring fiber to the whole town.

Organizational items:

- Amended charter with the Select Board
- Recruit more members
- Get the new members appointed by the Select Board
- Perhaps change Economic Development Advisory Committee to Community Development Committee
- Need a new chair for this committee: PRenaud needs to focus on broadband

A discussion ensued on the committee becoming more geared toward community development. The consensus is members joined for economic development issues, not community development. JMoran stated he would be willing to take the lead on expanding solar energy use in town, after the broadband issue is resolved.

PRenaud said he is willing to continue to do the lead on broadband, but I soon need someone else to take up the rest and run the meetings, set the agenda, etc.

Need to get more bodies on this committee, especially 'techies.' Maybe changing the title, of the committee will help get those interested in this topic, who feel the pain of a lackluster internet system, to join us. Maybe letting the townspeople know that we are staying focused on broadband for now, but have other ideas for the EDAC committee. A focus or brainstorming session by invitation to the town techies could be proposed.

AWood said we need to get FairPoint, WiValley here to talk to us about options.

AWood suggested the broadband committee meets every month and EDAC / Community Development committee meet every 3 months.

JMoran volunteered to contact TDS for information. AWood will contact WiValley for information.

PRenaud will contact FairPoint for more information. All information will be discussed at the October meeting.

PRenaud suggested that we slow down EDAC and run broadband meetings monthly. Members will make a decision next month on the organizational process for EDAC. PRenaud will meet with the Select Board after next month's meeting.

9:35 p.m. Adjournment

PRenaud motioned to adjourn.
AWood seconded. Motion carried

in favor.