

Town of Mt. Desert
Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2021 @ 4:00 pm via Zoom

Members Present: Pete Cuffari, Kathy Miller, Scott McFarland, Matt Hart, Durlin Lunt (ex officio); Kendra Jo Grindle (Island Institute).

1. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded (Cuffari/McFarland) to approve the minutes as presented for the September 9, 2021 meeting. The vote was unanimous for approval.

2. Update re: invitation to join VETRO Cohort 3

Kathy reported that VETRO FiberMap invited the Town of Mount Desert to join their VETRO Cares for ME program Cohort 3. This would extend our engagement with them for an additional 12 months at no cost to the Town. VETRO has an agreement with the ConnectME Authority to make this possible. Durlin Lunt has approved the agreement extension in writing.

3. Update re: survey - combining VETRO and Google doc formats

Pete has taken the two sets of survey responses from the Google.doc and VETRO platforms and combined them into an Excel sheet, which allows for analysis by filtering responses. There is still some work to be done to conform all the responses, such as adding in villages for addresses, and noting which were provided by paper vs. online.

The results indicate most people have Spectrum cable service for their internet; there was a fairly even split between year-round and season respondents. More detailed analysis will be helpful, and Kathy reported that Megan Bailey, from the Econ Dev Comm, has offered to help with that.

There was a discussion about what is the most critical info to gather from survey, and how best to get that info out. Some guidelines included using an unbiased lens, and providing context. There was an intent to gather details to prepare for the public meeting the following week with a rep from Spectrum.

Some problems to solve with the data included determining what would be needed in any applications for funding any broadband project, and how best to present the data and conclusions to the Town. Further discussion included questions about the role of this committee in this process, with the conclusion it would be to make a recommendation on any action to the Board of Selectmen. It was also noted that the scope of any project will likely be dependent on federal fund availability.

For near-term deliverables on the data, it was suggested that we look at the satisfaction rates per residential status – year-round vs seasonal; that we ask Spectrum about the impact of summer populations on the speed of services; what are Spectrum’s plans for extending or improving services.

Kathy will follow up again with VETRO about adding the google form data responses onto their platform, without the need to input it all by hand.

All thanked Pete for his work to date on analyzing the data.

4. Community Engagement Events

Spectrum will be the guest for the next public meeting, with Melinda Kinney, VP for Government Relations joining via zoom. The meeting had been scheduled for October 19, but was moved to the following week due to a schedule overlap. She will be meeting on Tuesday, October 26 at 5:30 pm.

5. Update on consultant proposal through Hancock County vs Town

Durlin Lunt suggested we invite the administrator of Hancock County to our next meeting to outline what they'll be doing, help us decide our own path after hearing the scope of the County plan. There were some questions on how to proceed with the Casco Bay proposal, how they compare Casco Bay proposal to Mission Broadband's proposed efforts, the firm contracted by the County, and the role of the League of Towns in engaging with the county and individual towns, who may be interested in working with Mount Desert.

6. Next Steps

- Durlin will check with Hancock County staff about engaging with the League of Towns.
- Kathy will try to clean up the survey data adding village and paper/online info.
- Kathy will see about adding google data to the VETRO platform.
- Scott and Kathy will review survey responses to form questions for Spectrum.
- Kendra Jo will provide an overview of the format for the public meeting
- Town will email respondents to survey about public meeting with Spectrum

Future Meetings

The next committee meeting will be Thursday, November 11, 2021 @ 4 pm via Zoom. It was noted that will be Veterans' Day, but the group will meet regardless.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen W. Miller