

Town of Mt. Desert
Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2022 @ 4:00 pm via Zoom

Members Present: Frank Baltzell, Pete Cuffari, John Fehlauer, Scott McFarland, Kathy Miller, Lili Pew, Wendell Oppewall, Durlin Lunt and Matt Hart (ex officio)

Guests Present: Scott Adkins, Hancock County, John Dougherty and Mike Elliott, Mission Broadband.

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Dec 9, 2021 meeting and the Jan 13, 2022 were both moved for approval, seconded, and unanimously VOTED for approval.

2. Other Business

John Dougherty of Mission Broadband asked to join our meeting and was invited to provide an update from Hancock County Commissioners. Mission Broadband was hired by the County to review mapping across the county. They have a survey on the County website to capture individual location information. They are talking to providers about mapping to determine where there is service and where there isn't. They are also talking to individual towns to learn what projects are going on, and to get an understanding of what service looks like county-wide. Kitty Barbee is also working for the County on the financial issues connected to federal money coming to the county, to see about using American Rescue Plan funds to help with broadband. They must determine if the County process for fund distribution will match the ARP rules. They are looking at the areas of education, work, telehealth, etc. as they relate to broadband. They are interested in learning what our town is doing.

Scott Adkins, Hancock County Administrator, spoke about their survey and the mapping they plan to do. They will not be putting their mapping data on a VETRO platform.

They were asked if the County plans to provide a backbone of fiber, and they responded that is not the plan so far. They asked if they could use our survey info, and the committee said yes. The County has not finalized how they'll operate. They are trying to be equitable with county funds. Spectrum now says they'll do FTTP. When our town is ready to contact the County, there is no particular application form, they are ready to help, but don't plan to interfere with the town or our own advisors [Casco Bay Advisors]. The County will play no role in connecting our town with other towns. We should check in with them again when we're further along in our planning.

3. Update on Casco Bay Advisors data collection

There was a discussion about Casco Bay's work collecting specific data on each location in Town. There was agreement to let them have access to the Town's property database if helpful, including any VISION property mapping; it was suggested we get out some publicity about their work going door-to-door, including a photo of the truck they'll be using if available; there was a suggestion that COA may have some open access GIS mapping data that could be useful.

4. Update on VETRO Care for ME Program

Kathy provided a short demonstration of the mapping services available to the Town via the VETRO Cares for ME Program. Frank and Wendell should both be added as potential users.

5. Letter in Annual town Report

Scott had drafted a letter for the committee to review. All agreed it was well written and to the point. We could add a few details on what the committee did over the year, including the public engagement sessions, survey, etc.

6. Next Steps

There was general agreement that until the Casco Bay work is done per their proposal, the next steps will be difficult to define. There was a question about what criteria the committee will use to make any recommendations, and agreement that we will be relying on Casco Bay for data and recommendations, and we will need to factor in associated costs.

7. Other Business

There was a discussion about grant writing for planning or construction funds, and a question of whether the Town would need to hire someone to do that. There was a question about using County Funds to hire grant writers to get other funds. There was a suggestion to connect with Mikki Sumpter for any contacts to do grant writing, based on her earlier work in Ellsworth.

8. Future Meetings

The next committee meeting will be Thursday, March 10 @ 4 pm via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen W. Miller