

Town of Mt. Desert
Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes
June 22, 2023 @ 4:00 pm via Zoom

Members Present: Frank Baltzell, Pete Cuffari, John Fehlauer, Kathy Miller, Durlin Lunt (ex officio) **Excused:** Lili Pew, Scott McFarland

Also Present: Brian Lippold (Casco Bay Advisors), Christa Thorpe and Brianna Cunliffe (Island Institute), Kevin Langley (Acadia National Park), Jon Ipe (Explore Us), Greg Piduch (HCPC)

Since Scott McFarland was not able to join us, Pete Cuffari chaired this meeting.

1. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of May 11, 2023. It was VOTED to approve.

2. Update from Durlin Lunt re: Acadia National Park properties to connect w/ Spectrum

Jon Ipe of *Explore Us* joined the meeting at the request of ANP. *Explore Us* runs the concessions in the Park, including at Jordan Pond House. The funding mechanism for the ANP to pay their share of connections continues to present problems, but it could be done more easily through *Explore Us* as a private vendor, who could then get coverage on the land under their control. It still needs to be determined which ANP properties will finally be included in the connection process, or where it is not needed. We still need that information to get a final price from Spectrum and approval from the Board of Selectmen on the final cost. Durlin said he believes there is still \$128,000 left of the ARPA funds to put toward this but will confirm with the Finance Director. ANP can identify the buildings to connect, and *Explore Us* will be able to provide funding for properties on their land assignment. The Jordan Pond House is a critical location and need. This will leave other properties on Park land unconnected, since they don't have a payment mechanism at this time. Brian suggested that once those properties are identified, we reconnect with Spectrum, who may be able to negotiate a way to include them. *Explore Us* also wants to know what their total cost would be for this, and again it comes back to the Spectrum offer. Brian will need addresses or GPS coordinates from ANP and *Explore Us* to finalize the plans.

3. Update from Durlin re: Spectrum cost/proposal and funding possibilities

Topic covered above.

4. Update from Brian Lippold, Casco Bay Advisors, re: CCI proposal

Brian spoke with CCI earlier in the day. They said the cost to build out the entire MDI island, all four towns, is \$11.4 million. They would expect the towns to contribute 50.87% of that amount, or \$5.8 million. He has been pleading with them to break that number down by town, and he is hopeful to get that. He noted the price quoted was with the condition that ALL towns would be engaged. If not, it would be a different price. He recommends that we consider that none of these towns will be eligible for grant funding for the purpose – no state or federal subsidies. However, if Hancock County still has funds, those could be used, but may not cover a large portion of it. CCI is not sharing information about when they would build it on their own,

without subsidy. He also thinks that 50% is a high percentage, and we should consider negotiating down to about 25% - but we would need to demonstrate broad and strong community support for such an investment. They are considering investing in some portion of Bar Harbor, but they are not forthcoming with more precise locations. As part of the dark fiber negotiations between Bar Harbor and CCI for municipal connections, CCI also committed to FTTH in Bar Harbor, but there is not clarity on where or how much. There is FCC funding for a small obligation in western part of Bar Harbor.

5. Updates from Tremont Broadband Committee

No one from Tremont was available, so no report.

6. Discussion of Next steps

Finalizing the Spectrum arrangements

Kathy suggested the committee move on to digital equity work

7. Other such business as may properly come before this meeting

None presented.

8. Next Meeting – 2nd Thursday of each month

The next regular committee meeting would be Thursday, July 13, 2023 @ 4 pm via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen W. Miller

Secretary