

**Town of Mt. Desert**  
**Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**July 13, 2023 @ 4:00 pm via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Scott McFarland, Kathy Miller, Durlin Lunt (ex officio) and Frank Baltzell

**Excused:** Lili Pew, Pete Cuffari

**Also Present:** Brian Lippold (Casco Bay Advisors), Christa Thorpe (Island Institute), Greg Piduch (HCPC), Kevin Langley (Acadia National Park), Elaine Eaton (Tremont Broadband Committee)

**1. Approve the Minutes of the last meeting, June 22, 2023**

There was no quorum available, so no approval of minutes.

Christa Thorpe from Island Institute was present and invited to share news of what they are doing regarding Digital Equity. Christa shared a slide presentation which will be available to the committee. She reported that Island Institute has refocused their efforts away from broadband planning with various communities to Digital Equity in Hancock and Waldo counties as part of the statewide effort, and are now engaged with Hancock County Planning Commission to work on this effort. She noted that digital equity is the goal, and digital inclusion is the work. They will be reporting on the state plan to the federal government as part of the funding process. They would welcome input on their report for Hancock and Waldo counties. There was a discussion after her presentation about reasons why digital inclusion is necessary. Christa shared an example of the town of Breman, which moved from a full fiber buildout to funding a digital equity plan with ARPA funds. A description of that activity, with engagement of the National Digital Equity Center (NDEC), is included in the county report. Christa provided some links to those local and state reports plus the NDEC:

**Overview of Hancock & Waldo Regional Digital Inclusion Planning**

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Xn95Z2IFG3spaXPByj4VSISMHGUUH8chzzzufbRHJqY/edit#slide=id.g1cfc8aa873b\\_0\\_0](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Xn95Z2IFG3spaXPByj4VSISMHGUUH8chzzzufbRHJqY/edit#slide=id.g1cfc8aa873b_0_0)

**National Digital Equity Center**

<https://digitalequitycenter.org/>

**Maine State Digital Equity Plan DRAFT**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PICbzOA9oAI1NUyAjn7TKHdSntpnHm5E/view>

**2. Update from Durlin, Casco Bay Advisors and Acadia National Park re: properties to connect w/ Spectrum**

Kevin Langley from ANP noted they are not yet ready to report on the final properties to connect to Spectrum services, but they should be done next week. He noted that Jordan Pond House could enter into an agreement for services and pay for it. Brian Lippold reported that there are two locations associated with Jordan Pond House, 2906 and 2928 Park Loop Road, and the cost to connect them will be \$80,000. That amount was a subset of the total amount since there are no poles on Park Loop Road, so it would have to go underground. There were two other addresses to consider, one was a parking lot, the other has a structure – most likely the GateHouse – which would not be covered by Jordan Pond House. Brian suggested that getting the coverage up to the main location

would bear the cost, but then adding those other spots may not be an added cost. The Park can't transfer operating funds straight to a municipality, which is why bringing in the concessioner – so they would pay for an improvement, then reimbursed by the Park. However, they can only make such improvement on land assigned to them. Those land assignments are done with the issuance of a contract, so not changeable now.

Brian asked what would be the next steps to have the concessioner fund this? Kevin said he would need to get together with his team to discuss this, and it could move fairly quickly. Brian suggested that with that approval, we would sit down with Spectrum to finalize an agreement and determine how the costs would be split between the Town and the concessioner. Durlin would like to know the total cost, and then figure out how to divide it. The concessioner will have to propose this to ANP, who will then have to approve it. The concessioner could pay Spectrum directly, so no need to exchange funds between each other. Blackwoods Campground, as ANP property, would not be getting service with this project. ANP could deal directly with Spectrum if they want to.

### **3. Update from Casco Bay Advisors re: Spectrum cost proposal and contract**

Brian suggested we could move ahead with the understanding of two arrangements - for the Town for universal coverage, plus the concessioner costs to get to Jordan Pond House. Durlin said we need to take this to the Board of Selectmen for approval. Brian will ask Spectrum to give us the breakdown between the Town and ANP and a commitment to build for that amount, which will then turn into a contract. Brian looked up previous Spectrum quotes (October 2022) and the Town contribution was to be \$214,000. Subtracting \$80,000 for ANP would leave \$134,000. Durlin believes he has \$123,700 available. Brian was confident Spectrum would accept a counter proposal of \$120,000. Kathy reported that notes from April 2023 Spectrum said the total costs to the Town would be \$150,000. Brian confirmed that number from his records, but will ask for an update from them – with no guarantee on a quick response since everyone is busy.

### **4. Update from Casco Bay Advisors re: CCI cost proposal breakdown by town**

Consolidated had factored what the cost would be for MDI total coverage, about \$5.4 cost. They said they will break it down by town, but it is still not received. Brian noted that Consolidated has a lot going on, so difficult to get to this. He also noted Consolidated has made a commitment to build fiber-to-the-home in Bar Harbor, but it's not clear if this will be universal coverage, or if they would expand to more of MDI.

### **5. Updates from Tremont Broadband Committee**

Have not met in a while. Town Manager working on arrangements with II to help fund a program for community engagement, and then getting the survey in Tremont done. Elaine wondered if there was a date for Consolidated to the whole of the Island. Brian reported there is not.

### **6. Discussion of next steps**

Brian will get a final proposal from Spectrum, with the breakdown between Town and ANP concessioner.

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

None.

**8. Next Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month

August 10, 2023 at 4:00 pm via zoom

Durlin may not be able to attend, but believes it can move ahead with the BOS.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen W. Miller

Secretary