

Broadband Committee Meeting
September 28, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
Veterans' Hall

Present: Bill Daniels, Maryann Lauretti, Wendy O'Brien, Jonathan Shreckengost, Doug Smith, Andrew Wallace

The meeting opened at approximately 7:15 p.m.

Andrew Wallace stated that instead of being a formal Town committee, the Broadband Committee would be a group of volunteer citizens which would not be subject to posting meetings or having to submit minutes. He explained that he had met with Henry Underwood of the SW Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC), which has assisted Fitzwilliam, Westmoreland, Chesterfield, and Rindge in their transition to broadband services. Andrew noted that there are currently two broadband providers in Richmond, Consolidated Communications and Charter.

Andrew stated that the first step would be to create a "RFI," a request for information regarding the services provided from the area providers. He also noted that grant monies through the federal government of \$100,000 has been earmarked by the Selectmen for the development of broadband. The funds must be used within 3 years.

Andrew suggested that the group select a chair. Also of importance is someone who is good at presenting in a public forum, especially someone who would be good at selling the broadband idea. The group selected Doug Smith as Chair.

Andrew noted that several area towns are in the process of developing broadband proposals. Winchester is further along in the process, while Swanzey is just beginning. He noted that Henry of SWRPC has suggested working with Swanzey regarding a shared fiber network as it might reduce the overall cost.

The following step would be to create a request for proposals (RFP) that would come from the Selectmen's Office. In looking at past projects, Andrew pointed out that Westmoreland would be the closest example.

Maryann Lauretti volunteered to visit the Town's Tax Collector to determine how many residences there are in Richmond. Wendy O'Brien volunteered to take notes for the Committee.

The Committee then discussed the timeline for the project. Andrew suggested that the final proposal should be in place by November 2022, to give time for bond hearings and public forums. The goal would be to have the warrant articles ready for the 2023 March Town Meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, October 14 at 7pm at the Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy O'Brien