Broadband Implementation Committee

January 30, 2026 1pm, Zoom

Attendees

Tom Sevigny, Stu Palmer, Stan Conover, Bruce Harris, Laurel White, Pete Govert

Also in attendance: John Collins COO, Gerry Kirshman CEO and Mike Fox sales from Civitas Networks

Called to order 1:04

Minutes for 6/20/2025 meeting approved motion made by Stan, 2nd Pete

At a recent Ct Conference of Municipalities Tom Sevigny met Civitas Networks, an ISP (Internet Service Provider). Civitas gave the committee a presentation of what they can offer East Haddam in terms of internet connectivity. They have an installation in Shelton, CT presently.

The committee and the Civitas presenters discussed what the status of our process has been so far.

Civitas Networks is a completely different process than we have been discussing up to this past June, 2025.

> Civitas is an ISP which would make the system they offer a closed network versus the open network option we had with Entry Point. They claim to have agency with internet hubs with fiber cable that they can use to get connected to their system. The committee does not think any other service companies other than Comcast or Frontier have fiber lines in our area.
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> Another difference is in the product being offered. Civitas is a hybrid system which uses both fiber cable and wireless connectivity to provide service. Wireless connectivity is a more cost effective installation because there is no trenching. Wireless connectivity eliminates concerns about connectivity during bad weather. Wireless connections can be set from as far as a quarter of a mile from the service site.
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> There are upgrades available at additional expense, in the form of sensors and cameras. The sensors could be used in many ways. They can track ground temperatures to determine plowing or road surface treatment needs. They can measure air quality or crowd sizes, water quality or flooding, as well as a host of other municipal areas of concern. The installation around town would require no trenching as the wireless component eliminates this need.

Another difference seems to fall in the area of Emergency Services provision and municipal service provision. It seems there is an upcharge for Emergency Service coverage.

Setting coverage for all areas of the town increases costs as well. Public service areas versus private homes or business, costs additionally. Also, adding the optional sensors and cameras will increase costs as well.

Funding for this is also another major difference than what we had been working toward with Entry Point. Civitas would own the system. There would be a partnership agreement for approximately 25 years. There is no protection from Civitas selling the system to the highest bidder. We had been working on a municipally owned system, using funding from Grants both State and Federal. However, those opportunities fell through or evaporated after the change in the Federal administration. This is a private investment not private equity partnership. Civitas claims we could create a partnership that would not cost the town a lot.

This ownership component as well as concerns about municipal rights may impact our ability to use the telephone poles without additional rental fees.

Presently Civitas is quoting monthly rates at $49.99 per month. This is the rate in Shelton, CT. These rates are not based on the number of customers, in fact there was no justification for how they determine the rates at all. Civitas claims flat fees and contract free service.

Smart City capabilities are available through this application. Civitas sets up and helps to manage the dashboard municipalities use to run the sensors and cameras.

Design, installation and service will be provided by Civitas with local employees and contractors available to customers.

A new feasibility study will be needed.

Civitas will help with marketing through facebook and doorknob flyers, but expects that the municipality makes efforts to sell the idea as well. Also suggested is to consider partnering with other towns to adjust the expense over a wider range.

There is no protection for the town that would prevent Civitas from selling the network, which they own, to another major carrier, but Gerry Kirshman CEO feels that would not happen so easily. He feels that they are new into this adventure and want to keep the action to themselves.

When pressed to discover other locations their services have been installed, Civitas was evasive. They were also dismissive of any technical questioning. They have a project in Shelton, they have proposals or activity in other areas “far away from here”. When pressed again to disclose to the public during this public meeting where other opportunities to see their work could be found, the answer was not forthcoming.

The equipment used in this application/installation is 5G industrial grade.

When asked about the number of employees Civitas has, again, the answer was evasive. “A small company with many hired contractors, maybe about 50, with many of them contractors, which are they considered employees…”

Next steps for both Civitas and East Haddam

Research into the overall structure and challenges of the town, in other words to see if there is feasibility in the feasibility.

Speak with Craig Mansfield, EM Director to be sure he’s listened to this meeting to determine what the town already has to provide greater insight as to what Civitas needs to address in terms of present infrastructure and geography, maps of the town and other coverage challenges.

Tom will reach out to the Mayor of Shelton to ask about working with Civitas, he will also reach out to the surrounding towns to see if there is interest in working with us on a wider network.

Bruce made an impressive checklist of concerns and questions while listening to the presentation. This will inform our questioning going forward.

It is decided to pursue more information with Civitas. Follow through on the above check list and reconvene next month.

Meeting adjourned 2:35pm

Next Meeting TBA