Broadband Implementation Committee

March 13, 2026 1pm, Zoom

Attendees

Tom Sevigny, Craig Mansfield, 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 1:19

Difficulty in recording technology resulted in an AI generated transcript. Minutes from this meeting were transcribed from this AI generated transcript and certain information may be missing or incorrectly noted within the AI transcript.

Minutes for 1/30/2026 meeting approved motion made by Stan, 2nd Laurel

Discussion with Civitas

Compliments to the skill set of this committee were given by Mike Fox (Civitas). He claims that a situation analysis of the landscape and population has been completed by Civitas and suggests we skip the broadband direction we have been focusing on and instead focus on a SmartCity network. SmartCity works on all Broadband applications and can be used for monitoring all kinds of situations-weather, traffic, bridge activity. In addition, they can offer us technology for accessing WiFi and phone use during events in areas that don't support that normally. Ultimately, East Haddam, according to the Civitas representatives, does not have the population density to support a full broadband infrastructure at a cost effective price point.

Craig suggests that price point is a more important piece in selling the upcharges of SmartCity for public safety.

Pete asked if there were rate changes forthcoming.

Bruce asked whether our terrain could offer technical challenges.

Cost concerns are discussed. When Civitas was here in January the committee was working towards a $50-$75 customer rate, Civitas can not match this. They are closer to $100. Civitas also claims their network is using less fiber cable and more digital and wireless connectivity nodes and transmitters, so ultimately the cost is less over time. Civitas suggests East Haddam partner with other surrounding towns to amortize costs.

Challenges of finding affordable, reliable internet are discussed. Teaser rates of the monopolies are discussed. Patchwork of services, for example, Craig has FirstNet service for Emergency Service monitoring, others have added a StarLink service on top of the other internet services they receive from the monopolies. These additions are also additional costs to having reliable internet.

Civitas talks almost exclusively about the monitors they offer for SmartCity applications rather than municipal broadband services for the entire community. In fact at one point Mike Fox (Civitas) says “Broadband is a byproduct of the SmartCity infrastructure.”

Laurel leaves the meeting.

As far as deployment of broadband, Mike Fox suggests that East Haddam may be looking at a hybridized formula, where Civitas runs the SmartCity and certain monitoring and event WiFi and other broadband service would come from “Frontier”.

Bruce asks about technology of the wireless nodes Civitas uses to transmit internet, with concern focused on the difficult terrain, trees and great distances between transmitters, the use of telephone poles or towers.

Jerry Kirshman (Civitas) claims their devices can penetrate trees, works well in bad weather-using a recent snow storm to indicate successful strong service throughout.

Mike Fox (Civitas) Civitas does not do installation of the structures needed for deployment.

Bruce notes that without partnership with another town working with this product is not financially feasible.

Discussion about partnerships. Lower Connecticut River Valley COG (towns south of Middletown) and other communities that were shut out but the State of CT DEEP Grants being awarded to the monopolies rather than municipalities may be sources of partnership.

Craig points out that the communities that surround us have equally as challenging topography and limited population density.

Jerry Kirshman (Civitas) suggests talking to East Hampton. Pete says they have a greater population than East Haddam and also mentions that having a monitor on the bridge would benefit so many. Here, Jerry Kirshman says he is “working with Haddam on this”. The committee should take note of where Civitas is working as they have repeatedly demonstrated a lack to answer when asked. So far Shelton and now Haddam have been mentioned. Craig says that he is setting up a system that people can check on the bridge, similar to what East Haddam used in the past.

Jerry Kirshman (Civitas) states he was on all of the calls with the State DEEP that members of this committee also attended and he was able to hear about the challenges of our topography.

Tom will talk with members of CT River Valley COG to see if there is interest. He says there is a dedicated member to COG that is exclusively researching broadband. Jerry Kirshman(Civitas) suggests that if one or more communities were to partner, it may kick off the start of this expanding.

Discussion of Town budgeting concerns as we are starting budget season, the last application we explored(EntryPoint) was estimated to be a $15-17 million dollar investment to run fiber all over town. Jerry Kirshman (Civitas) states he would love to give a number but can guarantee a lower cost than fiber.

Pete suggests the committee work with both CT River Valley COG and East Hampton to see if there is any interest. Tom suggests he can reach out to other Selectmen in other towns to see if

there is interest. Discussion of setting up a Zoom with Civitas and the other parties if there is interest.

Stuart asks about service interruptions over the river and pole use. Jerry Kirshman (Civitas) answers that wireless service is not interrupted over the river and that pole use can be attained with permits. Note to the committee, we learned in the last discussions with EntryPoint, poles are owned by Eversource, if the usage is municipal in nature, poles are usable to hang wires and cables. However, the devices Civitas uses to transmit are wireless and tiny with very low voltage required for power. They do run on battery backup. Any poles, including lighting poles, and all existing structures can support these transmitters. Specifically, the power to run these transmitters is 48 volts DC, at a level of 10-20 watts. These can be mounted anywhere and are typically about the size of a thick cellphone. They are hardwired to the house, to the modem or directly to the router. Sensors, used for the SmartCity applications, are based on what they are monitoring.

Civitas leaves the meeting and discussion continues

Tom has spoken with the Executive Assistant to the Mayor of Shelton, one of the towns Civitas has serviced, and said she will contact him with more information next week as to their experience. She told Tom that there was a town meeting and Civitis gave a report of the program since installation. This will be part of her report next week as well. Pete asked about the cost to Shelton, Tom said that answer will also be part of that report. Shelton's greater downtown is up and running and they are installing in stages.

Craig states he had notes from our previous meeting in which Civitas informed us the transmitters (nodes) need to be every quarter of a mile. In a more populous area many people can be served on that one transmitter, moving out into the greater areas of lesser density, more transmitters serving fewer people. Tom states that Moodus is flat and the most densely populated part of town, they will see greater service coverage per device.

Tom states that the dedicated person to CT River Valley COG for broadband has expressed interest in the past, and will ask if other area Selectmen have expressed interest to that person.

Bruce wants to ascertain whether Shelton is pursuing a greater installation or if they were only looking for the SmartCity support in their downtown. He and Tom reinforce that East Haddam is seeking community broadband for everyone in town. And Tom also points out that the SmartCity tech is available from many sources. Referring back to EntryPoint, Bruce reminded the committee of the drive that Nicole from EntryPoint did with former First Selectperson Haines around the town to reinforce the challenges our topography offers. An aerial map does not do justice to these challenges.

Craig would like to find out the square mileage of the area Shelton installed.

Bruce would like to know if CT River Valley COG is pursuing the State Grants on the next round if they are offered.

Tom reminded the committee that after the failed round of Grants recently, many of the towns that were rejected, began to speak with each other. They shared notes of what they had in terms of the application process and the fact that although each community had low level studies and the other "required" initial steps they were still rejected.

Next Steps

Tom will connect with the Executive Assistant to the Mayor of Shelton, CT River Valley COG, Hamden.

Pete will chat with East Hampton to glean interest there.

Craig will forward a transcript to Laurel for transcription of the minutes.

Meeting adjourned 2:45pm

Next Meeting TBA

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurel White, Secretary Broadband Implementation Committee