MINUTES
BROADBAND EVALUATION COMMITTEE
MONDAY, JULY 12, 2021
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
MEETING ROOM 1
VIA YOUTUBE LIVE
7:00 P.M.
SPECIAL MEETING

1. **Meeting called to order** by Acting Chair Judith Dobai at 7:00pm

Members Present: Jon Biller, Judith Dobai, Michael Gilroy, Tom Hays, and Thomas Sevigny (via teleconference)

2. **Approval of Minutes from Special Meeting of June 28, 2021**- A motion was made by Jon Biller to accept the minutes, motion was seconded by Tom Hays. Motion was passed unanimously

3. **Discussion of strategic priorities for a Municipal Fiber Network:**

The committee discussed possible strategic broadband priorities to recommend to the Board of Selectmen. The following priorities were discussed, but not adopted:

Proposed Strategic Priorities for a Municipal Fiber Network[1]

1. **Foster Competition & Choice** – The Town will seek to promote initiatives that will increase the number of service providers and types of services that are available to East Haddam residents.
2. **Improve Affordability** – The Town will seek to promote policies and initiatives that will reduce the cost of internet access by 20%-25%.
3. **Solve the Digital Divide** – The Town will seek to promote policies and initiatives that will make internet access universally available and affordable.
4. **Promote Abundant Bandwidth and Improve Network Speed & Reliability** – Town leaders will seek solutions that move from the current practice of treating bandwidth as a scarce commodity toward policies and programs which treat bandwidth as an abundant resource. In addition, town leaders will seek to promote network attributes that will increase reliability for residents, businesses, and anchor institutions in East Haddam.
5. **Foster Innovation & Economic Development:** The town will seek to ensure that local businesses have access to infrastructure that will foster innovation, economic development, and growth. It is the goal of the town to leverage broadband resources to retain current businesses, attract new businesses, and stimulate their growth. In addition, the town will seek opportunities to utilize broadband capabilities to support public safety & education.
6. **Establish Local Control over Essential Infrastructure** - The economy is now an information economy and the importance of digital infrastructure continues to grow. The Town of East Haddam has an interest in ensuring that East Haddam residents and businesses have robust digital infrastructure and promoting initiatives that will give the Town greater influence over this important infrastructure. In building these systems, the Town seeks to provide resilience in the event there is a natural disaster or other public safety event.

4. **Discussion of guiding principles for funding of a Municipal Fiber Network**

The following are proposed guiding principles for the business model that were discussed, but not adopted, by the Broadband Committee:

Proposed Strategy Funding Considerations

[1] The Committee based these strategic recommendations off the *Quincy, MA Broadband Master Plan* which was presented to the City of Quincy in December 2020

A. Nobody will be forced to participate in this program. Subscription will be on a voluntary, opt-in basis.
B. Participants will be responsible for operation, maintenance, and reimbursing construction and start-up costs.
C. The ongoing operation of the network must be self-sustaining and is not intended to be dependent on any kind of subsidy from the Town.
D. The Town may contribute to get the network started – but any contributions from municipal finances will be paid back by subscribers over time.
E. The Town is encouraged to seek out regional partners and other municipalities to share resources and lower costs.
F. A robust plan must be in place for outages, emergency repairs, and maintenance for the network.

DISCUSSION: The committee agreed to investigate legislative opportunities, reach out to other towns further ahead in progress, and be prepared to discuss the next steps at the July 26 meeting.

5. **Audience of Citizens** – None

6. **Adjournment -** A motion was made by Tom Hays to adjourn the meeting, motion was seconded by Thomas Sevigny. Motion was passed unanimously. Meeting Adjourned at 7:44pm

Meeting may be viewed on YouTube in its entirety:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OphI8kDjozE