Broadband Implementation Committee

Public Meeting #1 of 3

10am Municipal Office Complex

Irene Haines introduces the Committee and welcomes Entry Point Representative Nicole Banyai

Nicole presents PowerPoint

Questions Posed by the Audience: Questions are paraphrase where needed for brevity

Ernie Malavesi: Isn't all fiber (service) symmetrical?

A: Technically yes but the service providers are not offering you dedicated lines of service. They offer "upto" a certain bandwidth, but you are sharing this with 60-100 other homes.

EM: Is your product a hybrid of copper and fiber?

A: No. 100% fiber cable

EM:If a driveway is exceptionally long, or has a difficult install, how will those extra expenses be handled?

A: The number of people who sign up as "interested" will allow the group to move forward to the next step, which is to start to secure funding through grants and low interest loans. As far as each customer paying differently, that will not be the case. All subscribers will pay the same monthly rate.

EM: How do we guard against a low-baller competitor beating us to the punch(to getting fiber installed)?

A:You can't and they will be competing. But you can make a decision, a choice to invest in a community owned network, where you control locally. An open access network will invite competition, keeping pricing competitive versus a monopoly like Frontier or Comcast, which hooks you in with a super low rate, then drives the pricing way up after that enticement period is over while at the same time, offering poor service.

EM:How about Redundancy? If a contractor for instance knocks out the fiber line, right now I can make a call and someone is there to repair it in an hour. How will our smaller network be serviced?

A: Maintenance and Operations will take care of this. All issues of design and mapping will be completed during the Engineering and Design phase which happens after the financing phase.

Audience Member: Who are you (Entry Point)? What is in this for you?

A: A history of how the designer of this software lived in a remote area of Idaho with no or poor internet service. He decided this was unacceptable and created and innovated the idea that fiber can connect everyone. He is the CIO (Chief Investment Officer)of the company and wants everyone everywhere to be able to have reliable affordable internet, like running water or electricity, it is an essential service.

AM: Are you under contract right now and if so for what? Consulting, Investment?

A: Yes we are contracted right now for Discovery.

AM: Will conduit be used for underground service?

A: Yes

AM: This will be a town maintenance service, we have all experienced town follow through issues and have differing levels of confidence in town reliability. Who will we contract with for Infrastructure?

A: This service will be outsourced. RFPs will go out to bid, asking all the necessary questions. Or the town can do the work if it chooses to. Either method is acceptable.

AM: All internet is connected by NODES, where is our NODE going to be?

A: This will be determined during the Engineering and Design phase. Right now it is too early to say. (Please see minutes for the 7pm meeting, this was answered.)

Irene Haines: Can you address the benefits of Municipal Gains and what that means to a municipal non-profit and access to the poles (telephone poles)?

A: Theresa can speak better to this point but basically it means that East Haddam has the opportunity to run municipal service lines on Eversource poles by state statute. This is a huge savings to our development plans. Also during the Engineering and Design phase the fiber will run along the same paths as the other services are presently running, both on poles and through conduit underground.

Mary Augustini: Will this be the same cost in taxes as we pay now?

A: The fee you saw here(in the presentation) $70-75(estimation) per month is all inclusive. Taxes are included in the rate.

MA: How will the fiber get to my house, can it just lay in the ground? My underground power just lays in the ground, it was run over 40 years ago, there was no conduit.

A: There is a defined path to your home, fiber is an enclosed cable not raw line, it can follow the same path as your present services.

MA: Will they dig a trench?

A: This can't be answered until the Engineering and Design phase. Microtrenching is also an installation technique.

John Olin: This is a financing question, the cost to the town, federal funds for getting broadband to people.

A: The applications will include the BEAD grant which is federal funding for rural broadband access, there are advocates at the state level, joint partnership opportunities, non recourse financing, The feasibility study gives us rough estimates of start up and costs. The overall estimated expense for this project is $13-18 million. The town can set up a non-profit that can

then apply to low-cost loan opportunities, the town is not bonding this or there are no special PACs. The town can then purchase the infrastructure later after the initial install is paid off. This will be addressed in the FAQ section of the website in greater detail. As this is an ongoing project more and more details will be addressed and answers more fully explored with each phase we accomplish.

Joe Pandolf:If we choose our own providers (ISP) does that mean they respond if there are issues? So instead of the network provider we rely on the ISP?

A: It depends on the issue. If the ISP goes down, just go to the dashboard of the service screen and unsubscribe to that ISP. Then choose another ISP, sign in and in 30 seconds you're up and running again. We will send out alerts to say if an ISP is having trouble. You can also call the ISP to discuss the issue if you choose to. They can try to walk you through whatever might be causing the issue. But if the issue is the VBG (the little computer that drives this software) you can call Maintenance and Operations to get a new box which will then get configured to your home or business. Also we may have some of these on hand here in the MOC.

Virginia Colter: If the internet is out how do you switch?(ISP)

A: VBG is connected to a network and is not reliant on the internet for service. These boxes stay with the home or business to which they are configured. They don't move or get returned when you move.

Dave Johnston: If you want to have 2 providers running into the house do you need to run more CAT5 cable through the house?

A:Bruce Harris answered this question. Run Fiber to the house and then CAT5 from the juncture or go wireless.

DJ: There are 169 towns in Connecticut, how many do you service?

A: None. But they are working with 5 towns in feasibility studies for open access. Brookfield, Ridgefield, New Fairfield, Wilton and East Haddam.

DJ: Have you visited those populations to see what their interest levels are?

A: We are just finishing the studies, most are behind East Haddam. But Ridgefield is at the RFP for Engineering. They decided to skip the education step like we're doing here. But our survey we did about 9 months ago showed overwhelming interest in learning more about this. Ridgefield is funding and bonding this to get the hard cost numbers now.

DJ: Do you have other states with customers?

A: Sherburne, NY is live now. We can talk to them and get insight into their experience. But remember every install is different. They are handled differently in terms of funding, and ownership. There is no prescribed way to do this.

Ken Tosi: The financing of $13-18 million with loans and grants and no liability to the town, how do you get your money back after the investment?

A: The $70-75 (estimation)per month covers all the costs. There is no additional cost above that, taxes are included.

KT: But someone will still own it

A: In the long term the town buys it back. Revenue coming in to pay later.

KT: So it's a 25 year plan to buy it back?

A: Yes, interest rates and such will determine how long but at least 10-20 years

KT: What's to stop the owner from raising rates over time like other providers?

A: The contract

KT: How long is the contract for?

A: The time the town needs to buy it back, the contract should be written that way.

Ernie Malavesi: Do you still need a VPN?

A: No. Through the network direct fiber you can create your own VPN, but at this stage this is too technical a discussion, you can turn it on and off and works the same as Comcast

EM: What is the time frame to build out? 3years? 5 years?

A: 2-3 years objectively. Sherburne, NY, which is half the size of East Haddam, will be finished from start to completed build in 1.5 years. It doesn't include every single residence but does include every road. Drops will be installed as needed going forward.

Irene Haines: How does the network pay for those who want to wait to install? How do new drops get figured into the cost going forward?

A: It is already built into the cost.

Amalia Shaltiel: What happens when trees fall on lines?

A: Fiber is more resilient. It is much stronger than telephone and electrical lines. Craig Mansfield the Emergency Services Director says he had fiber go down and still work even with power losses. This software is designed for rural America, for emergent situations so they can stay connected.

AS: The box (VBG) doesn't need electricity?

A: It does, but it doesn't need the internet to work. (This answer will be further explored and responded to by EntryPoint and will be addressed on the FAQ page of the website)(Also see the 7pm minutes for further, yet still incomplete information)

AS: Can the box have a battery to be protected from power loss?

A: See 7pm minutes

AS: Can cellular service run through this network?

A: EntryPoint will have technical team answer this at a later date.

Bruce Duvey: What is the website address please?

A: Easthaddamfiber.com

Irene closed the meeting and announced the 2 further meetings being held today at 12pm and 7pm.