Broadband Implementation Committee

Public Meeting #3 of 3

7pm Municipal Office Complex

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

Nicole presents PowerPoint

At this meeting Nicole has had a chance to drive around town in the daylight and see exactly the type of location we are to put into account for the process of developing this infrastructure. Reinforces that internet is an essential service. Covid hit this home and she asks us to ask ourselves as consumers, do we feel that internet is an essential service? Connectivity for all means equality to access, municipal ownership makes this affordable, reliable and gives enhanced emergency security. Open access invites competitive pricing. Dedicated fiber lines means synchronized 1G service continuously.

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

Colleen Shaddox: Speak to Long Term price stability.

A: 1. If you look at it as a quasi-utility with price controls.

2. Once the infrastructure is paid off the costs go down. There will still be maintenance and operations costs.

There are no streaming services, just internet and whatever you can connect to from the internet, like VOIP for phones.

Theresa mentions Frontier's business model, they get you to come in at a low rate then the prices soar. This is an opposite model. The price starts out reasonable and then goes down. The money estimates we use are coming from the feasibility study. If enough people sign up as interested we can move to the next phase of securing financial backing.

Todd Gelston: Internet is not a luxury. Who owns the system?

A: Community owned network. Joint partnership with Entry Point or another financier makes funding better, with the municipal gains rights we have to use the telephone poles.

TG: You are essentially building a public highway for public use with public funding.

A: No, only those that buy in.

TG: Who do we call with issues?

A: Maintenance and Operations, which will be outsourced with RFPs.The VBG (Virtual Broadband Gateway) is not a router and there may be extra devices kept at the town hall if they are needed.

TG: EMF concerns

A: You can hardwire

TG: We have serious service issues with the providers currently (example Comcast, Frontier)

A:There is a quality of service you are in control of with a municipally owned network. Also, you can switch ISP providers in 30 seconds, the hardware (VBG) is replaceable

There are many ways to build out a network. There is no one correct way. For the installations Entry Point has completed there are no service issues yet.

The costs are all built into the estimated numbers of $13-18 million for infrastructure, plus maintenance and operations costs of $25 per month and the ISP cost of approximately $10 per month, they calculated this to work out to $70-75 per month per customer. A greater take rate reduces the costs for everyone.

TG: The grant will also reduce the rates.

TG: What is the time table for this.

A: After the education phase, with enough of a take rate (60%), we can secure financing and apply for grants to start engineering and design phase they are optimistic that by summer we might have shovels in the ground.

Craig Mansfield spoke about internet phone service, called VOIP (Voice Over Internet Provider). Lots of answers can be found on the website FAQ page.

Micheline Gugliotti: Do you have builds you have done that are local to East Haddam?

A: No, none actually built in Connecticut, but in Sherburne, NY, which is half the size of East Haddam and is very rural like us.

Craig spoke about having infrastructure to tie in and that we are 2-3 years from the build out.

Dave Cassenti: If the goal is 100%, or 60% that we wish was 100% what is the minimum we can have as a take rate to qualify?

A: We got 500-600 survey answers, after expecting only 200-300.

DC: What happens if a home decided to sign on after the initial installation? Will there be additional costs to install after the fact? Will they trench?

A: It is situation dependent, there may be no charge that can't be known as this stage.

Colleen Shaddox: It took Comcast 1 month to hook up. It is an asset to real estate, increases home value, attracts potential buyers

Michelle: Is it just internet? No phone?

A: Through a smart TV you can get HULU, Netflix, Internet TV, for the phone you can use VOIP. You need to think about it in terms of cutting the cord of cable. Ultimately all cable will be replaced with fiber.

Maureen: I'm concerned with elderly users. My dad is 91, he can't do all of these things on his own.

A: The seniors at the 10 am meeting lead with some very challenging questions. They are more astute that we give them credit for. But for those that find this challenging, the Senior Center has support people and family and friends can pitch in to help as needed.