Broadband Implementation Committee

November 15, 2024, 1pm, Zoom

Attendees

Tom Sevigny, Craig Mansfield, Bruce Harris, Linda Ziemienieski,

Entry Point: Nicole Cozzo, Erik Banyai

Called to order 1:03

November 1, 2024 minutes

USDA loan update

Nicole (EP) sent an email to Karen Johnson and was informed they are still trying to pull the team together. One of the members was away until mid-November.

New Member to the Implementation Committee

Tom introduced Pete Govert.

Discussion of pursuing State Grant

Tom asked the committee to vote on whether to pursue the state grant round 2. This is a rolling grant opportunity, monies will be awarded as applications are accepted and approved. A lengthy discussion followed regarding the lack of low level engineering study needed, which is one of the reasons East Haddam was denied in the first round. The DEEP Director made it clear that the town could not apply only for the funds toward this low level study. This same director has also not followed up with the committee as promised during the phone meeting Tom had with him recently.

Reasons posed:

We don't have the low-level engineering study

DEEP states the town is served by Frontier and is thus not considered underserved

The high-level design wasn't sufficient in the first application round

Application is the same as the first round

Pete asked how much time is thought to be needed to work on the application? Nicole (EP) suggested that acquiring the letter from the working partners like Quantis-the design firm

and Karen Johson from the USDA lending vendor would take a little time, perhaps tightening up our budget projections from 80% ariel and 20% underground to 90% ariel and 10% underground, working with Craig for a couple of hours to do this, getting the new calculations from Brad (EP), the time could be about 5-6 hours. Bruce reminded the committee that we would still need a 20% upfront cost. Nicole (EP) felt that Karen Johnson may be able to work that into her letter stating that financing is still being negotiated.

The decision is to table this until next meeting

Comcast Letter

Linda informed the committee that Comcast has sent a second letter to the town requesting a signature from the Board of Selectmen supporting their pursuit of the State Grants to serve 175 unserved homes in town. A letter from Comcast was rejected by the town in the first round of grants, as we were pursuing the grants ourselves. The BOS meets 11/20/2024 to discuss this letter and decide whether to sign. Discussion in the subcommittee supported signing the letter so that those unserved homes have something if Comcast wins some of the grant money in the interim of the town installing broadband. Tom will have a conversion with First Select Person Irene Haines upon her return.

Meeting Schedule for 2025

Linda informed the committee that it is time to prepare for meetings for the 2025 calendar. The committee agreed to continue with every other Friday barring holidays. Linda will review the list making corrections.

Continuing Public Information

Tom has submitted an article to the town paper to bring forward the current status of the project. Pete suggested a goal that an article be submitted at least once a month.

Next Meeting December 6, 2024, 1pm Zoom

Meeting adjourned at 1:35pm