

TOWN OF MT. DESERT BROADBAND COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

December 1, 2015 / 4pm @ Town Office

Members Present: Ed Ganz, Jeff Burnham, Lili Pew, Philip Koch, John Fehlauer (via phone), Durlin Lunt and Matt Hart – ex officio; Public: Wendell Oppewall, Mia Thompson, Katrina Carter

The Committee took care of some initial “housekeeping” items:

- Lili suggested the group adopt a policy of a 90 min. timeframe for meetings. The group agreed, and decided this would lead to more productive meetings and a more efficient use of volunteer time.
- It was decided that Tuesdays would generally be the best days to schedule future meetings.
- Jeff Burnham agreed to serve as Committee Chair, Lili Pew volunteered as Vice Chair, and Matt Hart will serve as Secretary.

The Tilson Report and a recent meeting with Fairpoint was discussed:

- Durlin reminded the group that unlike other municipalities, the TMD faces the issue of a sizeable underserved and/or unserved population.
- Not noted in the Tilson report is a buildout that is in process by Time Warner in Hall Quarry. TW is awaiting permits to utilize the poles, which requires authorization from Fairpoint (who own the poles). Lili added that it is not unusual for the permitting process to take 18 months.
- At a recent meeting Durlin attended with Fairpoint, they explained the possibility of a DSLAM unit near Pretty Marsh Rd. and Indian Point Rd. which would extend their service area.
- DSLAM units could expand the current footprint of Fairpoint DSL, but additional fiber would need to be run long Rt. 3 in order to do so in Seal Harbor; the Committee felt whereas SH already has access to Time Warner broadband, this isn't a priority.
- Phil expressed concern regarding the long term scalability of a DSL solution. Wendell stated that Fairpoint offers 15Mbps service in other municipalities, but that the poor condition of some phone lines in our community might make that unrealistic for certain households.
- Jeff asked if the cost estimates in Tilson's report are accurate. Lili stated that based on her experience with Ellsworth, costs have generally fallen below Tilson's estimates.
- John suggested that in addition to checking back in with Fairpoint regarding DSL cost estimates, we approach Time Warner and Redzone to see what they might be able to offer and associated costs. GWI will also be contacted regarding a DSL solution. Wendell stated that Redzone has had a shakeup recently and might have some new options available.
- Interest was expressed by the group in exploring collaborative efforts (long term) with other communities, even though cost-savings might be minimal. Durlin stated that collaborative efforts have been prioritized by the League of Towns for the upcoming year.
- The wi-fi hotspot option suggested in the Tilson Report was not viewed as a primary point of emphasis. It was suggested that in NEH, Main Street merchants could work together to offer a public mesh network.
- The group felt further consultation with Tilson would be beneficial, especially in regards to short term solutions and assisting the Committee in dealing with Fairpoint or others.

Short Term and Long Term Goals:

- In the short term, the group seemed to be in consensus to explore how to get as many residents an opportunity for an adequate broadband connection in as timely a manner possible.
- While short term goals are being addressed, long term focus will remain on fiber.
- The Committee would like to work with other communities in exploring a long term fiber option.
- Put together a “road map,” showing what the project might look like short term and long term, associated timeframes, costs, etc. This could be presented to residents (perhaps at the Town Mtg).

Next Steps:

- Durlin will follow up with Fairpoint requesting cost and time estimates. Time Warner, Redzone, and GWI will also be contacted regarding what short term options they might be able to provide. Committee members should forward along to Durlin (and CC other members) any questions they would like asked of these firms.
- Durlin will contact Tilson regarding consulting rates. Matt will make a request to BOS on behalf of the committee to fund these consulting/advising services over the next several months.
- The Committee will work on putting together a survey to distribute to residents.
- The next meeting will be scheduled based on receiving responses to our inquiries of Fairpoint, Time Warner, Redzone, and GWI.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Hart". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matthew Hart