

CHARLEMONT BROADBAND COMMITTEE

ATTENDING: Bob Handsaker, Mary Ellen Banks, Ken Hall, Cheryl Handsaker

MISSING: Doug White, Lora Fulton

1. Approve Meeting Notes from [5/9/2023](#)

- a. ACTION TAKEN: Motion by Mary Ellen, seconded by Cheryl. Ken: yes, Cheryl: yes, Mary Ellen: yes, Bob - yes

2. Operations

- a. Northern Ring Resiliency Update
 - i. WCF is in testing in the lab, deployment expected the week of June 12th and rolling out to towns the week of the 18th
 - ii. All towns agree that the Local Linx connection is the best bet to move ahead with the second backhaul.
 - iii. Verizon connection - the third connection. Agreed to move ahead and deploy while we wait for more clarity on the Verizon connection.
 - iv. Bob will meet with the Select Board on Monday to update them on the backhaul.
- b. Financing Update
 - i. Unibank has started the process for 15 year financing.
 - ii. Proforma financial projection looks affordable with the projected interest rates of 4.5%.
 - iii. Payments will be level on a yearly basis. The initial payment may use additional construction costs.
 - iv. Town meeting budget was passed! Yay!
- c. WCF Monthly Call, May 31
 - i. Installation costs are projected to double at the end of this month.
 - ii. Multiple factors at play:
 1. Inflation
 2. TriWire, the lowest bidder, was no longer approved to do business in Massachusetts.
 3. Flat rate pricing is significantly higher based on a 500' drop, which is much longer than has been typical. This will be reviewed to see if a more affordable option.
 - iii. How should this be communicated to the town?
 1. Impact on summer sign-up campaign?
 - a. Consider consolidation of installations to save money.
 - b. If scheduled ahead, can we batch it up?
 2. Conversion from a cold drop was not covered . Bob will follow up.
 3. Alleviate concerns related to this price hike? This will impact new customers.
 4. Bob will follow-up on the impact on the repair costs.
- d. Evaluate the fiber needs for Mountainview Drive and Potter's Road Extension.
 - i. What is our policy for new hook-ups based on the remaining fibers in these areas of town?

1. This might be a new network extension for the town,
 2. How to fairly divide the remaining fibers to new construction?
 3. Could we assess a new construction fee for any premises not in the broadband design?
- e. Storm Related Costs
- i. 18 addresses in town has expenses related to the storm, about \$7,500.
 - ii. Large storm related charge on 12 Factory Rd. Large charge for a cable splice?
 - iii. Optional work done at the request of a resident?
- f. Plume box policies
- i. Committee should come prepared to discuss and propose a policy for discussion with WCF
- g. Items for future consideration
- i. Reorganize the Broadband Committee
 - ii. Sign up campaign for broadband
 1. Is a referral bonus practical?
 - iii. Digital Equity: Explore why ACP rates in W. Mass which are below average
 1. Reach out to WCF about ACP adoption
 2. Attend the Broadband Summit in Worcester - Registration is required.

Next meeting: Thursday, June 29th at 6:30 PM

Meeting adjourned: 7:35 PM