



**Bristol Broadband Committee
MINUTES
Ellingwood Information Center, January 23rd, 2020**

Members Present: Philip Congdon; Dorothy King; Patricia Jennings; Mike Sirois.

Also Present: Chris Hall (Town Administrator); Candy Congdon; Alex Diamond; Ricky Levine.

The meeting was called to order by the chair at 7.01 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. *(Note that this meeting was postponed from January 16th due to snow, and its location changed due to a prior booking of the Town Office.)*

The principal business was a presentation by Alan Hinsey of Tidewater Telecom. It is Tidewater's long term intention to build out fiber to 100% of Bristol homes, but the timing depends on how Bristol will compete for scarce investment capital with other communities. Rural Maine communities generally do not have the density of housing to deliver market rates of return on capital from fiber broadband, so subsidy (by federal, state and/or municipal grants or other funding) is customary. He referred to other initiatives in the area, including Bremen who are close to filing a ConnectME grant application. It was noted that Bristol had been awarded a ConnectME grant in May 2012 which was used to place fiber on certain roads in the Pemaquid and Chamberlain areas.

Mr. Hinsey discussed the Island Institute's publication, 'Accessing Broadband in Your Community through the Community-Driven Broadband Process' as a good template for Bristol to follow. In particular, for Tidewater to have a good chance of securing ConnectME or other grant support for a fiber build-out, there needs to be an active Broadband Committee which will collect residents' signed expressions of support for expanded broadband service, and for Tidewater to make a town or a portion thereof as a priority, there should also be signed commitments to subscribe to the service if available.

Tidewater had sent a list of all residences in Bristol and South Bristol with current fiber availability, amounting to 509 residences in the two towns (approximately 400 in Bristol). They are happy to share whatever information the Committee needs, but the Committee will have to identify the homes served by Spectrum cable, the other broadband option.

After Mr. Hinsey left, the Committee discussed options and determined that working with Tidewater is the logical first preference as a way to reach 100% broadband coverage in the Town. They are the incumbent carrier with poles and infrastructure in Bristol, and share the goal of 100% coverage. Spectrum's new

owners appear to have stopped line extension throughout Maine, and any other company would face huge start-up costs.

The Committee discussed how to identify cable television lines and how to compile the data on coverage. Additional volunteers will be needed to do this in an efficient way.

The date of the next meeting was set for Thursday, February 13th, at 7 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9.00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Hall
Town Administrator