



**Bristol Broadband Committee
MINUTES
Bristol Town Office, March 12th, 2020**

Members Present: Phil Congdon (Chair); Helen Costello; Mike Sirois; Alex Diamond; Ricky Levine.

Also present: Chris Hall (Town Administrator).

Chair Phil Congdon called the meeting to order at 7.03 pm.

Congdon reported on the Bremen Broadband Committee meeting of March 7. About 3 dozen people attended to hear Tidewater present their proposed ConnectME grant application. It was noted that Tidewater have not asked Bremen to contribute municipal funds in support of their ConnectME grant application. It remains to be seen if this will have a negative effect on the application's scoring. Hall asked if we should try to persuade Tidewater to add Fogler and Rock School House Roads in Bristol to their build-out plan for Bremen; this would presumably require demonstrating to Tidewater a strong level of interest from homes on those roads.

This led the Committee to discuss the questionnaire to be sent to residents and non-resident homeowners in Bristol. Congdon had drafted a questionnaire with 19 questions, which met with general approval. Costello asked to add one more option, for people to check off if they wanted broadband for purposes of telemedicine, which request the Committee supported.

There was extensive discussion of how the questionnaire can be distributed. Hard copies will be distributed on seats at the March 17th Town Meeting. It will be available to be completed online at the Town's web site, and Hall's March 'Bristol Notes' electronic newsletter will carry a link to it. There was also discussion of what it would cost to mail copies to all taxpayer addresses in the Town, or whether to target it more carefully to un-served roads. Finally there could be a paid advertisement in the Lincoln County News, either as an insert or a half-page advertisement.

The other aspect of data collection is the physical survey of the town's public and private roads to identify where cable television lines run, and see where these overlap with Tidewater fiber. Ideally, about 10 teams of two (driver and observer) could drive sections of the Town to log the cable coverage. While logging actual houses served might be ideal, it was pointed out that it is not always easy to identify a cable into the home (unlike the trunk cables along the roads), and even if a home has cable it may not be a

current subscriber. Simply recording the availability of service on the nearest pole is sufficient for this purpose.

It was agreed that Congdon will appeal at the Town Meeting for additional volunteers to assist with the survey.

Returning to the agenda, Hall reported that Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission advised it would not be a problem to by-pass a ConnectME Planning Grant and go straight to the Infrastructure Grant. Costello reported that the Island Institute' Christa Thorpe had said the same. The Committee agreed that with Tidewater writing the grant itself, it would not be a good use of time and money to apply for a Planning Grant.

There was brief discussion of whether we could also be eligible for a US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Administration, grant. Hall will ask the regional representative of Sen. King's staff to check this.

With no other business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8.02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Hall
Town Administrator