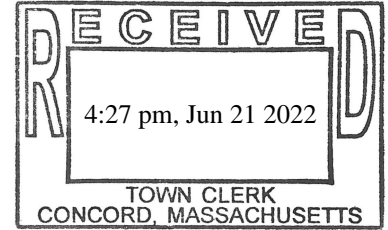


Fiber Broadband Completion Task Force - APPROVED MINUTES

Meeting Date: May 3, 2022

Chair: Mark Howell

Concord Fiber Broadband Task Force
Held virtually via Zoom, beginning at 6:30 pm.



Videos can be found at Minuteman Media Network Youtube Channel:
All meetings: <https://www.youtube.com/c/MinutemanMediaNetwork>
This meeting:

Roll call Attendance

Mark Howell	Present
Gordon Brockway	Present
David Hesel	Present
Scott Hopkinson	Present
Gail Hire	Present

Start at 6:32 PM

Conducting the meeting under authority for virtual meetings.
The meeting is being recorded.

Scott will clerk.

Discuss putting something on the calendar for May.

Scott – should we close out the report and be done ?

Revise the public draft as little or major as we feel appropriate.
Then decision makers can act on this report.

Gail agree about closing up the report.
Gail said: We should be very specific what the town manager and the select board should do.

David – thought ok to proceed. His fear was that the report would be set aside and no action taken after thanking the committee for their work.

David – what the appropriate follow up should be.

Gordon – when we were kicking this project off, lets not hurt the finances of the broadband enterprise by pushing it too hard. Hopefully we have a better sense of what is doable. Comment about the financial report. Don't know if the enterprise is profitable. We sidestep, the management of the team has responded to this. They have hired a bunch of people to increase installs. We get to know what the real demand is for broadband. We can proceed and expect the operational people to describe the financial status.

Scott: commented that he could not figure out what the financial status of the broadband and have yet to hear about what the reason and backup of the \$1.9M loan from the Light Plant to Broadband when the outstanding debt at that time was about \$890K.

Teri Ackerman - suggested that a letter of transmittal and that one way would be to provide a spreadsheet based action plan with proposed assignments to select board, town manager and others. This format is used by envision Concord and it is working well for them.

Mark at this point is to look at the changes in front of us and make a list of the changes that need to be made. This afternoon Mark provided the latest version with track changes with edits from Mark and Gail. The PDF provides some basis for those who do not have word to look at the track changes.

The email has the list of pages that Mark felt we should touch on.

NOTE: reference pages from email: (full email at the end of this document)

I have been working on both content and format changes for the report. Gail has been a big help. I have merged and accepted many of changes, there are still a lot of tedious little things to do. Tonight though I would like to make sure that we discuss the content updates reflected in the version and discuss if there any omissions or corrections to address. Particularly pages (as numbered): 9,11, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27-30, 36, 48

Gail suggested the differentiation between public utility versus a private enterprise.

Next: Mark – based on comments from Mary Hartman on page 12 and marked addressed with comments about Internet Essentials. This was aimed at clarification for that particular comment.

Page 12 – clarification on the expanding customer base would increase income to fund additional connections.

Page 17 (number 16) -Gail added a section about Chattanooga and state of fiber. Gail felt it was important to describe a very successful utility and broadband and is doing amazing things. There is a lot of reporting on this.

Scott discussed the recommendation that who ever is operating the broadband should consider and learn from other municipalities that are successful in broadband. Checking in with other municipalities should occur on a regular basis to stay up to date.

Mark added to the geographic analysis and made it more explicit where the data came from, such as the master address table.

Mark did reorder table numbers.

Gail added footnotes – page 19 in support of tables.

David – page 20 – last sentence “high confidence” - David felt uncomfortable based on experiences with Concord Green based the road program.

Discussed the constant contact email that was sent back in 2016 to sign up for notification of news on Concord Broadband via constant contact. This was the last email received to acknowledge that Scott is signed up .

Mark –what we were discussing – the citizens have the ability to influence via goals. There have not been any growth goals. If you are not measuring growth then you are probably not going to get it.

Mark feels the community needs to set the goals and then let the process work.
Mark believes that universal access should be the goal that could be funded by growth in subscription rate. It is important to hone these two messages.

Page 22 – rearranged pie chart and notes around it.

Page 25 – Gail did a calculation of possible additional revenue if affordable units took advantage of affordable connectivity program funding. \$30 per month could yield between \$133K to \$500K over a two year period depending on take rate assumptions.

Page 26 – corrections update on timing of when direct bury was done with power.

Section 6 – Finances (page 27)

Rearranged tables

Added more description of what was in the tables.

Mark what we are being told is that there was internal borrowing that was not reflected in the financial Table 4.

Discussion of the pay back of loans over less than ten (10) years may have been too aggressive.

Matt Cummings had indicated that cash was mingled between the light plant and broadband business.

Mark and team discussed the debt load, debt service load in the front end.

Team discussed longer amortization of loans to broadband that allows the broadband to grow rather than be burdened with an accelerated debt service.

Discussion at length regarding the financial information and possible recommendation to Town Manger and Select Board.

One recommendation might be good that the Financial Audit Committee or an auditor recreate accurate financials for the broadband business from origination (2013) and report results in consistent reporting method such as P&L, Cash Flow and Balance Sheet as used in the commercial public markets.

Broadband Service is offered at four tiers between \$49 and \$89

Page 33 – discussion on how to calculate for multi-unit buildings and likely 25% take rate provides present value.

Continued reviewing – next was on page 36.

Page 48 – can we add something about help landlords adding fiber – Suggest that Planning Board approvals for new construction of MDU require fiber access ?

Hire density areas in town. The push and pull often includes affordable housing. One of the things they could be doing, make sure multiple ISP should be available in higher density environments. Multiple providers could be given equal access to the MDU. Possibly the various committees / organizations like roads become partners of concord broadband to raise awareness.

Discussion on incentive for small business and internet access for businesses.

Gordon – Steve Crane prioritized broadband in down town concord.

Discussion.

Scheduling:

If anyone is willing to be a keeper for the week. Otherwise Mark will not be able to work on it a week from now. That puts us into the week of May 9, try to meet on May 12. Mark not available on 19. May 17 or push to next week. Thursday before Memorial Day is a possibility. Would like to get the final document into the hands and we need to meet one more time to approve.

Public Comment

Vince Carlson – had a chance to review the report.

You folks have done a lot of work.

You have enough material to go to the next stage which would be an action plan.

Next stage could be a business plan , 5 year plan and a 1 year and a vision plan for 10 years or more.

Notes will address different financial approaches.

Thoreau District plan and the MBTA plan that extends up to 1/2 mile from depot.

This MTBA district reaches as far as the armory within the half mile radius.

This MTBA plan could provide 1,000 units as a part of a plan.

Updated value of properties and discussion of existing wire in apartments.

Fixed wireless. Town of Wellesley MA is developing with AT&T and T-Mobile over the air access at 60 to 260 mbit/sec

Google FI – use T-Mobile – on phone get 60 – 100 mbits / sec down and 10 mbits/sec up.

PILOF – payment in lieu of franchise fee.

PILOT – paid by the electric utility

Terri Ackerman

Thanks for all the work

Amazing report

Am wondering if there is a need for fiber broadband task force part two

What we uncovered with the financials is so basic.

Lets get it audited and a business plan and figure out what is going on.

This is so basic.

Mary Hartman had called months ago and asked why the committee was not working on finances.

Mark has already indicated that the right financial skill set is needed to sort out the debt issue. Finances were not explicitly part of the task force’s charge. Mark is essentially a technologist and feels this issue needs a group with more specific financial skills.

Gordon – list of recommendations /demands – get them to be endorsed and placed into their court.

Motion to adjourn 8:51 PM

David moved to adjourn

Gail seconded.

Gordon Brockway Aye

David Hesel Aye

Mark Howell
Scott Hopkinson
Gail Hire

Aye
Aye
Aye

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Tonight though I would like to make sure that we discuss the content updates reflected in the version and discuss if there any omissions or corrections to address.

The attaché PDF includes mark-up to help point to where there have been substantive updates. We will discuss them tonight.

Particularly pages (as numbered): 9,11, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27-30, 36, 48

Red and Purple are changed/added task. Yellow Highlights needs some more input.