

Mid-Coast Broadband Coalition (MCBC) Meeting
January 27, 2021
5:00 p.m.
Zoom (during COVID-19 Pandemic)

Minutes

1. Call to Order (5:05 pm)

Participants: Camden - Matt Siegel, Marc Ratner, Jeremy Martin; Rockport - John Viehman, Debra Hall; Hope – Duane Wright, Melissa Foster Hall, Allie Fenner; Lincolnville – Josh Gerritsen and David Kinney; Knox County - Leticia vanVuuren

2. Introduction by Debra Hall

Introduced new members from Hope and Lincolnville, and existing members.

Discussed Broadband implementation as a regional priority.

Introduced Leticia vanVuuren, with County GIS, who works on mapping and general regional planning.

Action item: Jeremy Martin to follow-up with city officials from Rockland and Union regarding joining the MCBC.

3. Elect Chair and Vice Chair

Action item: Elected Chair Deb Hall and Vice Chair Matt Siegel. One year term.

4. Organization

To date, the Camden Rockport Task Force acted in a consensus manner.

Action item(s):

Rename “task force” as Mid-Coast Broadband Coalition. Passed.

Develop Mission statement / goals.

Need Memo of Understanding to guide Coalition work.

4a. Discussion of Coalition Mission and Mission Statement

Discussed and broadly defined coalition goals, potential structures, surveys, and next steps.

Throughout the region, to provide high speed broadband.

FCC definition (2014-17) 25/3 high speed, to make available

Service dense populations and rural areas

Fiber to the home (FTTH), equitable

Be unified

Connect to the communities

“Shoot big and high”

POI: ConnectMaine, Peggy Scheaffer-Mapping not accurate

To provide:

Value for customer/residents: Cheaper, faster, better

To do:
How (the realities) vs. Vision (the dreams)
Feasibility studies

To consider:
Economies of scale
The number of takers, critical mass
Underserved areas may help with Fed and State grants
Finding a balance, averaging out density and rural
Equity in access
Similar to other utilities ~ CMP
Private vs open access networks

Regional utility
Low margin
Starting/implementation in dense areas, phase in rural
80% of cost = pathway construction, remaining 20% is fiber and associated equipment

Related article on CARES Federal and State Funding
<https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/money/mills-announces-nearly-6m-to-build-internet-infrastructure-in-rural-maine-communities/97-cda32e5d-3dea-41b3-8556-fb1b3336d06e>

Vetro mapping software for planning, network design, demand assessment, and fiber system management.

<https://www.vetrofibermap.com/>

Action item:

Obtain no cost license for Coalition use. Debra has had contact with Vetro to place the Coalition on the list for no cost license rolling out in February/March

Action items:

Contact Finley for Feb 10th present, incl. community homework assignment (Debra)
Draft memo of understanding (TBD)
Draft mission statement (John, Matt and Josh)

5. Discuss Current Efforts re Broadband in State of Maine and Mid-Coast Region

Hope will be happening a meeting regarding percentage of installation completed by LCI. Will obtain copy of grant and confirm that LCI owns the fiber installed pursuant to CARES grant.

6. Discuss Current Budget Efforts and Grant Status

Camden 15K
Rockport 15K

Can we get Rockland onboard?

Funds approved to retain a consultant

Participating towns need to budget for broadband in the upcoming budget cycle, in amounts they believe they can contribute

Research and explore grants

Debra Hall and Matt Siegel reported on their discussions with one potential consultant, Finley Engineering. A copy of a sample work product for Finley Engineering, a consultant under consideration, was provided to members of the Coalition and is available for review.

7. Report on Website, Marketing, Communications and Outreach

Action item(s):

Confirm transfer of URL from Doug Chamberlin in Belfast

Chris Stump to create a website.

(Chris is a resident in St. George and experienced in website creation.)

The Coalition's draft articles for publication have been provided to Chris and he will include in a blog along with updates on MCBC's work.

8. Future / Regular Meetings

The group set future and regular meetings.

Second Wednesday of each month at 5pm, regular meetings

Feb 10th

Mar 10th

May 12th

Jun 2nd Note this is first Wednesday of June to avoid town elections/annual meetings

Jul 14th

Aug 11th

Sept 8th

Oct 13th

Nov 10th

Dec 8th

Agenda items for Feb 10 meeting:

Finley Presentation on "Next/First Steps" in preparation for Finley estimated bid

Jeremy Martin: Update on Rockland and Union

John, Josh and Matt: Update on Mission Statement draft

Chris: Website update

Melissa: Grant info update

9. Other Matters & Adjournment

Meeting adjourned (6:18 p.m.)