

The Midcoast Internet Coalition (MIC) meeting streamed from and recorded by The Town of Camden, including LiveStream, Broadcast on Town of Camden YouTube Channel.

**Midcoast Internet Coalition
Meeting June 16th, 2021, 5:00 p.m.
Zoom (during COVID-19 Pandemic)
Minutes**

1. Call to Order

Participants:

Chair: Debra Hall (Rockport); Vice Chair: Matt Siegel (Camden)

Representatives:

Camden: Marc Ratner (SB); Jeremy Martin, Planning Director;

Cushing: Craig Currie (SB)(Guest)

Hope: Melissa Foster Hall

Lincolntonville: Josh Gerritsen (SB); Jordan Barnett-Parker (SB); Steve Koltai

Northport: Ann Frenning Kossuth; Brady Brim-DeForest

Owls Head: Jacob Post; Kim Slawson (Guest)

Rockland: Ben Dorr, City Council;

Rockport: Denise Munger (SB)

Searsmont: Peter Milinazzo (SB);

South Thomaston: Cliff Dacso

Southwestern Waldo County: Bob Kurak (SB) (Guest)

Thomaston: Zel Bowman-LeBerge(SB); Brian Doyle, Econ Dev Director

Union: John Gibbons (Guest)

Other Guests:

David Allen, VP of Network Operations (OTELCO)

Tracy Scheckel, Marketing & Public Relations Manager (OTELCO)

2. Action Item – Motion to Approve May 12th, 2021 Minutes –

Tabled. To be approved at the July meeting. Minutes for May12th will be forwarded.

Report by the Leadership –

Chair Debra Hall, Denise Munger and Vice Chair Matt Siegel reported on activities since the last MIC meeting.

- Voter results in Thomaston, Rockport, and Camden. Articles approved in all.
- Strong corporate opposition, disinformation campaigns
- Requests for feasibility study / inclusion in MIC / inclusion in Phase 1

3. OTELCO Presentation

Representative Tracy Scheckel from OTELCO discussed their expansion plans in Thomaston, Rockland, and Camden.

150/150 \$49.95 year 1 / 59.95

500/500 \$59.95 year 1 / 69.95

1 gig/1 gig \$69.95 year 1 / \$79.95

Plus \$10 tech fee

Bundle options to be available

Three areas to build in: Camden, Rockland and Thomaston

12 weeks prior, Otelco.com / builds to sign up customers

Discussion how the objectives of our group could be met by OTELCO, specifically, open access, universal access, minimum of 100 symmetrical with 1 Gig symmetrical available to any home or business.

Otelco: No open access, no universal coverage. High density only, building "our business model." No anticipated build in Rockport as it does not meet their density formula.

Otelco: Happy to discuss a financial collaboration public/private

Otelco: No install fee, built into construction costs. Dave Allen, engineer at Otelco, 200-500' is basic, beyond 500' consumer needs to contribute / reach agreement.

Otelco avoids developments with underground utilities.

Denise Munger: Otelco on muni owned network? David Allen: Open to the conversation.

Matt Siegel: Not open access? Tracy Scheckel: No.

Post Otelco Debrief:

John Gibbons: Why was Otelco invited to the meeting?

Debra Hall: Otelco asked to speak to the group and we wanted everyone to be aware of their anticipated build. She noted that appearing before the MIC was probably preferable to ISPs going to individual Select Board meetings and presenting to officials potentially less knowledgeable about the questions to be asked.

Jacob: ISP wants control from an engineering POV, diagnostic of system is essential
Must look at low level hardware, to make sure ISP partners are happy and reliable

Steven Koltai: Policy suggestion: The MIC should have a policy on inclusion of ISP guests for similar presentations. We have a business model, open/muni owned.

Ben Dorr: The policy should be that we allow all to present, add faces to competition and potential collaborators. We should be a "Welcoming group."

Melissa Hall: Support everyone speaking, asking pointed questions, establish relationship.

Debra Hall asked if anyone opposed having this open policy and there were no objections.

There was general discussion among the group as to whether the Otelco anticipated build plans in any way changed their commitment to MIDC and moving forward in accordance with our Guiding Principles. The response was universally no, but that if anything we need to accelerate our plans.

4. MIDC Update, Regional Utility –

Town status update

Camden, Rockport signed on as charter muni, filed articles of incorporation

Bylaws, procedural outlines, being created

1st draft will be distributed to all stakeholders, SB, town managers and MIC member reps

Based on DBU and existing muni and quasi muni (ex. transfer stations) for what works

Initial BOD will be Camden, Rockport and Executive Director

AXIOM, Phase One Feasibility Study –

In Lincolnville, proposal available to all, shared earlier

- Legal structure update / timing
- Axiom Technologies feasibility study / network design
- Pre-subscription / ascertain take rate – stats, next drive, to design based on other models, cull information and find best method

Find examples and put together in doc assess models that are there.

Examples, number of questions, direct mail, in series of three mailers, voter response in lieu survey, knock on door, \$ request \$19.99-\$99.00 deposit for service.

Debra Hall: Pre-subscription needed for lenders as part of finance package, 1300 voters

Community vs commodity is fundamental to our efforts.

5. Project Funding Updates

Seed Money (public and private investment):

Funding steps and timetable

- ConnectME Planning
Grant Application filed for
\$20K
- Knox County Commissioners
Meeting June 8th Review, team effort
Follow-up letter to County Commissioners, set up workshop session in July or August

Maine State legislature

Updates Guiding/pending

legislation

- LD 1235 - Bond Issue \$100,000,000 (ConnectMe Authority), held over until next session
- LD 1432 - Update Gigabit Fund, wording changes, looking to have muni's eligible
Relevance: A repository of the ARPA fund +, leverage opportunity
- LD 1484 - Enhances ConnectME, in an amendment Establishes Maine Connectivity Authority, more robust entity
Side Bar Note: ConnectME new standards: 50/10 as underserved and 100/100 as the build standard

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) funding update
- On the horizon (maybe): American Infrastructure Plan Potentially another \$100 million (as per Senator King)

MIC “Coalition Update”

Individual Town Updates (3 min each). North to South:

- Vinalhaven: SB ended plan and disbanded their BB committee (surprising as observed by MIC members since they had so much public support).
- Northport: Ann, Shelly Patten, Select Board joined MIC, adopted the Guiding Principles, want to speak to MIC about building out those portions of Northport that are not covered by the GWI plans.

6. Finance

Digital Frontiers (MBC), panel on muni utility and their funding models, helpful to inform

[To watch Digital Frontiers Part One](#)

[To watch Digital Frontiers Part Two](#)

Establish Finance Committee

With feedback and models from above financial institutions, seeking members

7. MarComm Committee: Branding, Marketing and Communications

Josh Gerritsen, Steven Koltai, Cliff Dasco, Joe Sternowski, Matt Siegel, Ann Frenning Kossuth

Marketing: Ground campaign, rack cards and doorknobs

Public outreach: Let’s Connect Open House in Thomaston

Social Media: Facebook Midcoast Internet page

<https://www.facebook.com/Midcoast-Internet-102078928721044>

Earned Media Resources: Courier Dan, Susan; Free Press; Bangor Daily News

LaurenNow available: MI Two pages, FAQ one sheets, PPT slide pack for presentations

Need to get these materials on the website (Josh)

Next up: Media creation “Let’s connect” campaign

“Cheaper, faster, better...no taxes”

Committee seeks new members and a committee chair

8. New business

John Gibbons: Intent of pre-subscription / take rate, working in parallel with feasibility study

See first examples in next few weeks

Knox County – recap, follow-up

Brian Doyle: Opportunity to approach them again.

John Gibbons: Must keep trying, objections on our schedule, did not say no, business model, in support Audra Caler, working behind the scenes

Craig Currie: Richard Parent is our rep. This is the 1st time Cushing has ever sent a letter

from all SB members.

Denise Munger: Knox County commissioners not on board, a disconnect, they label MIC as a lobby group, need to work.

Brian Doyle: A unified front to County, along with Homeless Coalition

Jeremy Martin: \$5mill to affordable housing is not going to impact the issue and is not a proper use of ARP funds, keep educating and follow-up

Debra Hall: We will keep working with County and sending materials

Jordan Barnett-Parker: Direct contact from prominent businesses

Brian Doyle: Never once in the history of Knox have they had that much attention

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Please note: Future / Regular Meetings for 2021

The group set future meetings for the second Wednesday of each month at 5 p.m. as

follows: Jul 14 th	Aug 11 th	Sept 8 th
Oct 13 th	Nov 10 th	Dec 8 th

Reference guide, names to know, and industry contacts:

Axiom Technologies

Mark Ouellette, President and

CEO Bernstein-Shur, Attorneys at Law

Phil

SaucierConnectME

Peggy Schaffer, Executive Director

Liz Wyman, Attorney, Maine PUC

Jasmine Bishop, dire Telehealth MaineHealth

Susan Corbett, Dir National Digital Equity Center

Downeast Broadband

Utility Dan Sullivan

Eaton Peabody , Attorneys at Law

Bill Ferdinand and Dan Pittman

GWJ

Fletcher Kitteridge

Kerem Durdaq, President and COO

Island Institute

Nick Battista, Chair of the

Board Kendra Jo Grindle

Katahdin Broadband

Kyle Leathers, President

LCI

Randal Manning, VP

Alan Hinsey, Dir. Sales and Marketing

Maine Broadband Coalition
Adam Butcher,
Director
Clara McCool

Mission Broadband
John Dougherty, VP and General Manager

Pioneer Broadband
Tim McAfee, CEO and Chief Engineer

State
Representatives
Rep Paige Zeigler
Rep Vicki Doudera
Sen Dave Miramont

Federal Representatives
Adam Lachman, for Sen Angus
King
Chris Rector, for Sen Angus
King
James Erwin, for Sen Susan Collins
Cameron O'Brien, for Sen Susan
Collins