

Broadband Commission
April 26, 2021, 6:00 p.m. by Zoom
Regular Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: Chairman John Morosani called the regular meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. with John Bongiorno, Burke Gibney (Alt.), Erich Marriott, Jeffrey Zullo present.
Stephan Krucker (Alt.) joined at 6:13 p.m.
Absent: Bruce Schnitzer, Stephen Simonin

J. Morosani seated B. Gibney as a regular member and seated S. Krucker as a regular member when he joined the meeting.

J. Morosani requested a motion to add the following two items to the agenda:
Under New Business:

d) Appoint B. Gibney to the vacant regular member seat on the Commission

Motion: J. Zullo made the motion. J. Bongiorno seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Add Future Agenda Items between Announcements and Next Meeting

Motion: J. Bongiorno made the motion. E. Marriott seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: **Motion:** E. Marriott moved to approve the minutes of the special meeting on February 22, 2021, and J. Zullo seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Old Business:

A) 1st Level Engineering Study

Commissioners agreed that given the network upgrade plans the Altice/Optimum team presented to the Commission it does not make sense for the town to undertake a study at this time. The focus now will be on monitoring Optimum's progress. J. Bongiorno stressed that if Optimum receives federal funds for broadband in the infrastructure bill we should function as an oversight committee to ensure they spend the funds as the legislation intends.

B) Norfolk Broadband Plan

J. Morosani referred to the April 22 Northwest ConneCT President's Report wherein Kim Maxwell reported the \$130,000 allocated to broadband in the proposed town budget was removed from the budget by the Board of Finance. The Norfolk broadband committee may organize a referendum. If they do it will likely take place in November.

New Business:

A) Preliminary Broadband Survey Results

J. Morosani shared some initial observations from the first 205 responses recorded.

- 93.6% have Optimum
- Only 6.4% believe they're getting good service at a good price
- 72% say they work from home
- 29% have children who need internet access for virtual learning
- 31% use the internet for telemedicine
- 23% run a business from home
- 60% stream TV instead of using cable
- 52% would support a municipal fiber optic network, only 6% are opposed, 42% said maybe, I need more information
- 140 provided their email address to receive information from the Broadband Commission

J. Morosani shared initial observations from the speed test data.

- There's likely some data entry errors on the town survey so NW ConneCT data is likely more accurate
- Under the current FCC definition of broadband (25/3) the Litchfield survey shows 86% broadband, NW ConneCT data shows 82%
- Under the new proposal (100/100) 0% of Northwest ConneCT speed tests qualify for this Tier 2 service

J. Morosani observed that the cost per month data may be unreliable as many respondents likely entered their total Optimum bill, not just the internet portion.

B) HB-6442, AN ACT CONCERNING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO BROADBAND

J. Morosani discussed the important provisions of HB-6442, Governor Lamont's broadband bill. First Selectman Denise Raap testified at the hearing for HB-6442 with Lt. Governor Bysiewicz and submitted written testimony in support of the bill.

Motion: J. Bongiorno made a motion to authorize Chairman J. Morosani to ask Litchfield's state representatives to support the bill when it comes out of Committee. J. Zullo seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

C) Possible Federal Money in Infrastructure Bill for Broadband

There was some discussion of the proposed federal infrastructure bill HR2 that proposes to distribute \$100 billion for broadband, \$80 billion of it for construction, and \$60 billion of it specifically for areas that are unserved or restricted to Tier 1 service. Under this proposed legislation, Kim Maxwell of NW ConneCT anticipates Connecticut would likely receive approximately \$200 million to distribute within its own guidelines.

D) Appoint B. Gibney as Regular Member of Broadband Commission

Motion: E. Marriott moved to appoint B. Gibney as a regular member of the Commission. J. Bongiorno seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried. B. Gibney will submit a letter resigning as an alternate member to the town clerk and the Board of Selectmen will formally appoint him as a regular member at their next meeting.

Announcements: None

Future Agenda Items:

- Discuss Oversight of Optimum
- Discuss Final Results of Broadband Survey

Next Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be May 24, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The Commission will continue to meet remotely by Zoom until further notice.

Adjournment: **Motion:** J. Bongiorno moved to adjourn. E. Marriott seconded. All voted aye and the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Burke Gibney
Recording Secretary