

Broadband Commission
June 28, 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, Stephen Simonin, Jeffrey Zullo present.
Absent: Erich Marriott, Bruce Schnitzer, Stephan Krucker (Alt.)

Motion: J. Zullo moved to add item 5.B to the agenda under New Business to discuss Optimum's plan to reduce upload speeds. J. Bongiorno seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: **Motion:** S. Simonin moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on May 24, 2021, and J. Zullo seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Old Business:

A) How do we report broadband survey results

J. Morosani shared a Powerpoint presentation of the broadband survey results and reviewed the findings. Observations on the survey answers:

- Litchfield is an Optimum town. Approximately 85% of households are customers.
- Only 5% of customers are happy with their Optimum service. This is a low bar for potential customers.
- Good internet service matters to almost all residents.
- Only 7% of people say they are opposed to a Town-owned municipal utility. 43% favor it and 49% would like to know more about it.

Observations on the speed test results:

- Under current FCC definition of broadband (25/3) both mail-in survey and Northwest ConneCT survey show 83% have 25/3 or better.
- Under the new proposed 100/100 standard, only 20% of Litchfield would qualify as broadband.
- The Northwest ConneCT data shows Optimum is much faster than Frontier. Optimum averages 113 mbps vs 4.4 mbps with Frontier.
- The 1 gigabit symmetrical service that Optimum says they will upgrade to would be a substantial upgrade for every Litchfield user.

Members discussed how to report the results to the community. First and foremost, we need to report to the Board of Selectmen. J Morosani will plan to make a presentation at the Board of Selectmen meeting on July 20th. There was discussion of holding an informational session via Zoom during the next Broadband Commission meeting to share information and answer questions about broadband connectivity with members of the public who wish to attend.

B) Revised Litchfield Broadband Commission Mission

J. Morosani shared the original Litchfield Broadband Commission mission.

The mission of the Broadband Commission as established by the Board of Selectmen in the Resolution Establishing a Broadband Commission at their Special Meeting on January 22, 2021 was as follows:

The Mission of the Broadband Commission shall be 1) to review and evaluate the broadband network currently available to Litchfield residents, 2) to determine what the Town's future requirements for broadband may be, and 3) to determine the best option(s) for the Town to ensure that Town residents have access to a broadband network that is adequate for current and future needs. Upon completing its study, the Commission shall deliver its recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.

J. Morosani proposed revising the mission to delete the last sentence and add 4) to represent the Town of Litchfield in discussions with Optimum over their efforts to upgrade the Optimum hybrid fiber-coax network to a fiber to the home network, and 5) to collaborate with neighboring towns on the discussions with Optimum. The Broadband Commission will report its progress to the Board of Selectmen periodically.

Members agreed it makes sense for the Commission to continue its work and propose this expanded mission to the Board of Selectmen. **Motion:** J. Zullo moved to add items 4) and 5) to the mission statement and present the proposed revised mission to the Board of Selectmen at the July 20 Board of Selectmen meeting. J. Bongiorno seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

New Business:

A) TBD based on agreement on revised mission

If the Board of Selectmen agrees to revise and expand our mission as proposed, then the Commission will determine how best to try to collaborate with neighboring Optimum towns and figure out next steps.

B) Discuss Optimum's plan to reduce upload speeds

S. Simonin explained what he has heard about Optimum's recent announcement. Optimum wants to drop upload speeds from 35 mbps to 5-10 mbps so they can be competitive with Comcast. Steven thinks Optimum wants to do this to make customers more likely to sign up for fiber to the home (FTTH) 1 gig service. He has a call in to Esme about this and hasn't heard back yet.

Next Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be July 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Burke Gibney
Recording Secretary