

Town of Waldoboro" Maine

Minutes

Communications Technology Committee
Municipal Building 1600
Atlantic Highway
July 25, 2016

1. Sign in and Call to Order

Richard Genthner (RG) called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Present at the meeting were Bob Butler (BB), RG, Dick Glidden (DG), Richard Hofses (RH), and John Lawrence (JL).

Jann Minzy, Waldoboro Select Board, was in the audience.

2. Determination of a Quorum: RG confirmed the presence of a quorum.

3. Minutes from the July 11th meeting

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the July 11th meeting. The motioned passed unanimously.

4. Various Discussions

RG announced that the three poles under the high-tension wires on Old Augusta Road (OAR) had been set. A fourth pole, intended for the cabinet on Route 235, had not yet been set.

RG reported that Lincolnville Communications Inc. (LCI) is trying different technologies in Waldoboro, hoping to reduce the cost of the build-out in the Village. Their goal is to keep costs at or below \$35,000 per mile. Currently LCI is using active Ethernet, which requires power at each end of the lines. The replacement technology, called G-PON, uses a passive approach that does not require the outlets at the homes to have power.

LCI is looking for a place in town for a cabinet to distribute the fiber

LCI continues to work on getting fiber to Northeast Transport

LCI has expressed an interest in developing a legitimate partnership with the town for a build-out that would cover the entirety of the town's more than 100 miles of road. They are asking if the town will provide the financing. They are wondering whether, for a build-out costing up to \$4.5 million, they could make the project financially viable by charging each user \$30 per month for Fiber Optic Internet. Waldoboro would have to issue bonds to raise the financing. LCI is proposing that

the town would own the network and sell it to LCI after 20 years. LCI suggests a 30-year, \$4.5 million bond. LCI estimates the project would take about one and a half years to complete, including the time needed for obtain make-ready permissions from Fairpoint. Fairpoint owns an estimated 2400 poles in Waldoboro. We noted that organizing the make-ready on Old August Road took more than four months.

It was noted that Maine Fiber is point-to-point. They do not allow others to distribute off their equipment. And, they don't let others distribute from their own equipment.

JL noted that Waldoboro probably has no additional areas that could get enough points to qualify for a grant. For example, Finntown Road has not have enough unserved or under-served homes to qualify for a grant.

There was a brief discussion about the Franchise Agreement that Waldoboro has with Time Warner. RG said that agreement expires in 1995. Time Warner has continued operating in Waldoboro under the assumption that the town remains satisfied with the arrangement. Friendship just renewed their franchise agreement with Time Warner, which requires 24.5 homes per mile to install service.

It was suggested that the Communications Technology Committee should be proactive on the franchise agreement issue.

It was also pointed out, however, that Time Warner serves 70% of Waldoboro's residents. If we stimulate a discussion about a franchise with Time Warner, we could put off, by default, any possible town build-out arrangement with LCI.

Newcastle apparently enjoys a gigabit Ethernet service with Time Warner.

The consensus was that we should invite the following companies to discuss a build-out of the entire town of Waldoboro:

RedZone
TWC/Charter
LCI
Comcast

The purpose would be to complete a survey over the next three or four months of the options available. Should we look for fiber, only? Should we look for a hybrid solution? One approach would be to draft a letter to all of the foregoing providers with the request that they address the committee. The purpose of the letter would be to get each of the companies in the door to talk about their solutions to bringing broadband Internet to all parts of Waldoboro. The letter would not be an RFP but simply a sort of job interview to see what each company has to bring to the table.

The letter could explain the demographic and geography of Waldoboro and identify

those areas that remain un-served or under-served.

4.2 Committee's report

Google has apparently partnered with US Cellular, the nation's largest rural carrier, to provide a convergence of phone service with Internet access. TDS Telecom owns US Cellular. The combination of Google and US Cellular should give the two companies a jump on the competition by providing Web-based apps configured to replace software designed for computers.

There was a discussion about doing another survey to up-date the one we did last fall. The consensus was to hold off until LCI has completed the OAR project and more education about Fiber Optic Broadband has been offered to people in the downtown village. The new survey should focus on information about the outliers, people in Waldoboro who are more distant from centrally served areas of town.

JL mentioned that GWI wireless service in his area is still a problem. People are paying GWI \$60.15/month for 3/2 Mbs fixed wireless service, which has often not been available. GWI is blaming it on the wireless part of the system. JL has found out that the problem is the server that GWI installed at Glidden tower. The server is too small adequately to serve all GWI customers simultaneously. JL asked those watching the CTC meeting on TV to get in touch with him to coordinate customer complaints to GWI.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Butler, Secretary

Approved:

Richard Genthner

Dick Glidden

Richard Hofses

John Lawrence
