

**Lincolnvile Broadband Committee**  
**Minutes**  
**May 26, 2022**  
**Lincolnvile Town Office**

Members present in the town office: Josh Gerritsen, Jordan Barnett-Parker, Steven Koltai, Steve Hand, Jay Philoon, Dave Perkins

Members present remotely: Arlene Jurewicz Leighton (left at 7:00), Michael Kosowsky

Members absent: Cheryl Nevius

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Josh.

There was no public comment.

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2022 meeting was made by Jordan and seconded by Steve H. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion with Mark Ouelette, Axiom

The draft report we received didn't include certain items in the feasibility study section, which are still unresolved: construction figures from Hawkeye Consulting not yet available, and Mark doesn't know how we want to approach to LCI.

Jay said we have discussed LCI, and consensus is we need hard numbers before having a conversation with them. Jordan said it is not yet known how we negotiate; eg. do we need authorization from the select board? Steve H. said that Steven K. laid it out well at our last meeting. Dave said that if we do the due diligence of planning our own system, then we can go to LCI and say "this is what we need," and he asked that we have Axiom's help in defining contractual terms. Josh said we should present to the Selectmen that we want to talk to LCI, and then we go ahead.

Mark said that Axiom has now received three grants from the state, including Southport, where the grant was for unserved areas within a generally served area. So knowing where there are unserved places is important for grants. Axiom can provide help in addition to the work Steve H. is leading, such as examining the map of served vs. unserved that Tilson is developing for the ConnectME intelligence platform.

Steven K. asked if there had been any announcement of the rules for the next round of Maine Connectivity Authority grants. Mark replied they'll appear on the MCA website. He expects some changes on the margins, such as no longer have to check with incumbents about their plans, and that municipally-owned regional projects will be preferred.

Steven K. asked of the previous grant round, were ISPs allowed to apply without the approval of their towns? Mark replied that there was indeed no requirement for the town to

approve, but all the ISP applications without town participation were rejected. There were 22 applications and 8 awards. LCI has been awarded an NTIA grant for Jefferson.

Mark said that Lincolnville will be considered served, and we'll have to prove we have areas that aren't. He'd expect that none of the federal or state programs would give us money, but then again Southport had some similar areas and they were awarded. If we could get some grant money and save some money on make-ready, maybe the total cost could come down to \$2MM.

Josh asked if there's a model of non-recourse loan through town bond? GWI says there is -- a broadband utility district where somehow the town isn't on the hook -- but Mark doesn't believe it. GWI efforts in Northport included a match by private investors.

Dave asked when will we see the complete model for building our own system. Mark said he thought the best path forward is LCI, though he does see issues. Josh asked if volunteers can do some of the work. Mark replied that the model using local people hasn't proved itself, indeed it can cost a lot more because lots of hand-holding. It works well on islands with limited regulation. He does like the idea, but none of the other ISPs like GWI or Pioneer would.

Mark said that when he gets the final numbers from Hawkeye he'll go through the model; should be pretty close to done in two weeks. And he wants to know more about LCI before the report can be final. Jordan asked that interest rates in the next revision reflect the current rise in rates, and Mark replied that he uses MMA's bond calculator and is more concerned about the costs of material and labor -- currently rising 10% per month -- than interest rates. Bringing Hawkeye in early in the process helps.

Josh asked when should we approach LCI. Josh said he thinks the Select board expects us to have a preliminary conversation, eg. "we have a set of requirements, would you be willing to sign a contract?" and we should have that meeting early enough to be incorporated in our report. Dave asked Axiom to include in their final report what we should ask of from LCI, in addition to the cost of building our own, and then we meet LCI. It could happen in July.

Mark said the state gave extra points to any service that cost less than \$50/month for 100/100, so one thing to ask LCI is whether or not they can offer that, emphasizing \$50 is the state's number, not one we came up with. Jordan added that we have to ask more than just can you make the rate, eg. need contract terms to limit annual rate increases and set performance requirements. Mark said another question is what will it take to wire the rest of the town. Steven K. said the conversation should not be our whole group, and not include Axiom, who is a competitor. Consensus is that two members of the committee should meet with LCI. Then our committee report to the town can include a report of that meeting, a model to do it ourselves, what we learned about current connectivity, and what the grant possibilities look like. Steve H. pointed out our committee is done on September 30 so we have to deliver our report before that.

Dave suggested we form a subcommittee to investigate grants. Jay pointed out there's not much information that comes out before the grant announcement, and Jordan said we have to be prepared when the announcements are made. Steven K. said we can listen to ConnectME meetings over the internet, they only last an hour, next is June 3.

#### Discussion of telephone pole survey

Josh said four people were at Steve H.'s training on Monday. Steve H. said he has already surveyed many of the main roads through town, and asked how should we treat private roads. Mark said it can be dangerous to go down private roads. Jordan said most of the roads in Lincolnville are private. Josh said you can see where the poles are going without traveling the whole road.

Safety vests were loaned to Dave and Jay; everyone else participating has their own.

Mark suggested the survey concentrate on areas least likely to have service. Jordan said, for example, along Pitcher Pond there are lots of structures but no service.

#### Non-agenda items

Arlene said we've only had 27% participation in the internet speed test and is willing to do some outreach. Suggestions included a flyer, posters, posting in the post office and the school and the local stores. Jordan said he will contact Paul Russo at Lincolnville Central School to ask about including the speed test request in the school newsletter.

Next meeting: Tuesday 6/21 6 pm town office

Motion to adjourn was made by Jordan and seconded by Steven K. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Kosowsky