

Lincolnvilleville Broadband Committee
Minutes
July 14, 2022
Lincolnvilleville 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, Michael Kosowsky

Members absent: Cheryl Nevius

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Josh.

There was no public comment.

Motion to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2022 meeting was made by Jordan and seconded by Dave. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Axiom feasibility study

Josh asked if the committee feels the report is complete. Dave said yes, but would like operating costs broken out. Jordan said it is comprehensive and clear. Michael said it's where we thought we were, but now someone else has said it.

Josh asked if we should we try to build a municipal system. Dave said we have a long-term planning capacity; don't assume it's over, in particular if the price ever drops back to \$3M. Jay said given the current environment, put it on hold. Josh said we have the blueprint, and we could do it if a donor came forward with a \$2M donation. Jordan said we're pursuing the most likely solution, and we should take it through as far as we can on our own.

Josh shared that at the next to last select board meeting, he told the board we want to send two people to talk to LCI. In the board discussion that followed, some select board members said use the selectmen on our committee, others said it should be up to our committee to make the selection. Josh said we will provide a plan to the select board and discuss it in executive session.

Steven K. asked if we need to make a report at this point. Josh responded no, we should give our final comments to Axiom and at our next meeting put our own comments together and send that to the select board. Dave Kinney told Josh he has received the Axiom bill and asked if we have received the final report. Steve H. said Mark will create a map. Our pole survey has confirmed the Tidewater fiber map with the single exception of the extent of coverage on South Cobbtown road. Josh asked if once we've transmitted the report and selected the two people and looped in the select board and the legal folks, does it become just a select board task -- really a contract negotiation -- or should we be part of it? Steve H. said that there's so much nuance, wouldn't we

want the select board to meet with us? Jay said we have a lot of work to do in the details of our negotiating strategy, eg. what are our fallbacks, and there's a lot going with MCA like a \$20M fund for last mile that might help in our negotiations.

Steven K. said in terms of process and sequence, we've already agreed we will talk to LCI and we'll promote a public/private partnership approach, but a lot will depend on the rules MCA develops and on grants. We can say to LCI where we think MCA is going, what are the dates, deadlines, and timelines, what has to be in the application, and how it will be scored. We can't yet have a substantive conversation; the best we can do is say "we want to do this with you once the details are available." Dave said we want to include in the conversation our goals, for example pricing and bandwidth. Steven K. responded that those will be criteria set by MCA; it will therefore not be the Lincolnville Broadband committee setting pricing and bandwidth limits, it will be that state setting them.

Jordan said the goal of the first meeting is to gauge their interest, and Josh said we want to know if they can be flexible about cost, speed, and availability. Michael added that we want to mention that there's hope that drops will be subsidized. Steven K. said we tell them we know there's \$150M at the MCA that they're making rules for and we're awaiting clarity. We'd like to jointly apply for as much of this as we can; we don't want to do it alone and we don't want you to do it alone. Next MCA meeting is 8/12. Jay added that we have to be ready, as it could be first-come first-served, so we want to establish a relationship now. Steven K. added that in some towns, ISPs have applied on their own, received grants, and the towns ended up with no input. Jay asked how did LCI get a grant for Hope? Response was LCI and Hope applied together, with perhaps one concession, reducing the contract length.

Josh asked if it is the sense of the committee that we do not meet to air grievances or ask for concessions. Consensus was yes.

Michael asked do we know anything about symmetry/asymmetry in the LCI fiber infrastructure? Steve H. said they use Calix equipment and it can offer symmetric connectivity, but LCI doesn't enable it.

Josh turned back to Axiom's feasibility study. Dave said they need to add a bit about operating costs, include our pole study, then we accept it, give it to the select board without any comments (pending our discussions with LCI), and pay Axiom. Arlene added we should include updated speedtest data. Consensus was to accept this approach.

Josh said he'll talk to select board about an LCI conversation, meet with the attorney, and then schedule a first meeting.

Motion that we recommend that Steve Hand and Josh Gerritsen represent the Lincolnville Broadband Committee in initial discussions with LCI was made by Dave and seconded by Steven K. Motion passed 7-0 with Jordan abstaining.

Discussion of pole data collection

Steve H. said pole collection data is complete. Mark has the data and he'll have one of his people map it and tie it to 911 database. Jay said that Stephenie MacLagan at MCA said that the FCC is going to accept data from the Tilson/MCA broadband intelligence platform, so speedtest data is important. Steve H. said five sources of data will be fed into the Vectro data, and MCA data is one of them.

Further discussion of Axiom feasibility study

Mark Ouelette joined via Zoom at 7:01.

Josh reviewed for Mark that we want a few things added to the report and then and we'll send it to the select board: a paragraph discussing monthly operating costs and the pole study. Dave added we'd also like more information about the expected operating costs for system like this.

Steven K. reviewed for Mark our thoughts for the first LCI meeting: simply explaining that as the rules are shaping up, it looks like there's a strong bias for public-private partnerships, and that speed and cost will be among the elements used to score applications. As rules become known we'd like to go down this road together. Jay added that the rules that are most advanced at this time are for the last mile. Josh said the select board will discuss this at their next meeting. Mark said he can be available to explain the report to the board and to participate in other meetings.

Arlene asked what happens when our charge ends on September 30. Josh suggested we recommend a new charge in our final report. Arlene said we want the committee to continue to exist so we can apply for grants, and we want to follow up on the digital equity plan, which dovetails with the town's new comprehensive plan. Steve H. said paying for a digital equity plan was approved at the March 28 select board meeting. Steven K. said there will be multiple rounds of MCA applications, so unless the select board wants to apply themselves, they will want the committee to persist. And we should ask the select board to reach out to Susan about the digital equity plan, and when they do they'll want a committee to review it. Consensus was it should be our committee that reviews the digital equity report.

Next meeting: Thursday 8/11, 6pm, town office

Motion to adjourn was made by Dave and seconded by Jordan. The motion passed unanimously.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Kosowsky