

Meeting Notes (Update)

Economic Development Committee – Broadband Working Group

October 20, 2022

Attendees:

Committee Members - Martha Howell, Renee Gray, Denise Rule Nancy Harrison (Zoom),
Influencers/Supporters – Jason Doyle, Timothy O’Neill, Janet Weston

Frame Strategies – Rebecca Herrigle, David Loughran – via Zoom

Maine Broadband Coalition – Myles Smith, Joe Olivia - via Zoom

Island Institute – Christa Thorpe – via Zoom

- Frame Strategies will be working with MBC and the various communities on marketing and outreach of the broadband initiatives.
- At Myles request, given the diverse group and the hybrid meeting arrangement, brief introductions were made.

Agenda:

- **Review minutes of September 29, 2022 meeting.** Approved by all as read.
- **Financials:**
 - Money in hand - \$1,678 from initial Connect ME grant of \$2000.
 - Island Institute Grant status – \$3000 rec’d. with the balance to be used for marketing efforts through MBC
- **MCA Grant Prep**
 - October 14th Connect the Ready webinar – Martha and Denise commented that the Connect the Ready webinar was over our heads and not very helpful in preparing for grants.
 - Kick off Zoom w Mark report from October 17th
 - MOU with Axiom – Christa has samples and Myles will also “look around” for samples.
 - Match further reduced to \$500 per pass, but let’s think – Myles suggested that we hold the “good news” in our back pocket at the Public Meeting on the 26th, and keep the “ask” high – be conservative with assumptions. Christa suggested similar thought. We will work with Rebecca and David on how to deal with public opinion.
 - Digital Equity – offer @\$30 level – Martha feels that Mark seems to be comfortable working with this and will provide further pro formas. We should share with Select Board.

- Take Rate/Pay back pro formas – Mark will provide further pro formas.
 - Poles, PUC Insurance – Renee reported that MMA does not cover the insurance and referred her to another company. Renee spoke with a rep from the company, downloaded the recommended documentation, completed the Town’s portion, forwarded to Kim for review, the docs will need to be signed and sent for quotes. Kim is dealing with the poles.
 - When to apply for bond? - Considering the timing of events it may be better to consider LOC between grant award and bond bank window for application.
 - Next steps for us. – Continue progress on all of the above. Grant application deadline is November 9th. Mark suggested that the committee and he be in touch a couple times a week to ensure that we meet the deadline.
- **Outreach and Marketing**
 - Next Informational Meeting
 - October 26 – thanks to all for getting the news out.
 - Testimonials – confirmed with Tim and Jason.
 - When is next Public Info Meeting – November 16th @ 5:00 PM
- **Marketing Firm** – Frame Strategies (associated with MBC and Island Institute) – Rebecca had some specific questions (below) for us and we took turns responding. This will help develop messaging and target audiences.
 - What does success look like?
 - What are key issues that people have brought u most and why/
 - Do you have local small business owners or teachers or another opinion leader who might resonate with residents who would be willing to write p-eds or LTEs?
 - What kind of communications help would be most helpful for the committee?
 - Can people sign up online? Or can they sign up using a post card?
 - Some of the thoughts and ideas that came out of this discussion include: Emphasize that a municipally owned system will generate revenue; focus on the ability to work or attend classes, or game from home; enlist RE agents to add to sale points for home buyers/sellers; high speed reliable internet may bring more families/business to town; pricing will be competitive or better; contact the school admin and ask if they would be willing to get involved with the initiative also to send information home with the students; get the message out to seasonal residents; emphasize that hook- up fees are waived for early subscribers and the “match” enhances our chances of being awarded the grant.
 - What have we done so far – Renee posted the option to sign up early online on the Town website and FB; Denise has requested data from Elaine Abbot at SCEC regarding the youth broadband survey; Rhonda has agreed to write op-eds/LTEs.
- **Next Meeting** – November 10th at 2:00 PM