

Minutes

Broadband Working Group

February 22, 2023 3:00 PM

Members Present and Zoom: Martha Howell, Denise Dalton-Rule,
Renee Gray, Nancy Harrison.

Guests by Zoom: Jason Doyle, Myles Smith

- I. Notes of last meeting 2/14/23 were briefly discussed
- II. Financial Report
 - The group asked Renee to follow up with both Maine Connectivity and with Island Institute to request an email or note with specifics on how the remaining funds may be used and how long they remain available.
- III. Maine Broadband Coalition-Community discussion
 - Martha updated the group on the new zoom group set up by MBC to discuss our various situations and strategies. We can learn from them, as several have set up BUDs and have been at it for years. This is a strong advocacy group. The guest at the recent call was Terry Hayes from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank who was very encouraging both as to their support, their work with MCA, and the funding available.
- IV. Where do we go from here?
 - Recommendations from Mark Ouellette (Axiom)
 - Martha spoke with Mark before he left on vacation. He encourages us to remain in the game as there is money available in various forms. He will look at the idea of combining with Edmunds/Trescott, though he strongly believes this is not the best way for us to go.
- V. Exploring alternatives
 - Positive and Negatives to Town ownership—we don't want to be subsidizing the big corporations.
 - Talk to Downeast Broadband
 - Even talk to the Consolidated or Spectrum as a last resort, but wait until after MCA grant round?
 - Whatever we decide, we must keep in mind the timing, and the quite possible need to go back to a town vote before moving forward.
- VI. Put energy into Digital Equity, signing people up for Affordable Connectivity.

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- The group discussed ways to reach those who might benefit. Myles noted that material is available on the federal website. However, the MCA is putting together materials and ideas working with a nonprofit named Information Superhighway that will provide good packets of information. It is important to get folks signed up for this assistance to show the interest in town for the overall project.
- The group suggested discussion with LCOC and with SCEC about setting up a table at the food pantry and thrift shop to hand out data.

VII. Other steps to take now

- Attend MCA meetings in March to prepare for next round
- Attend MBC Community zoom meetings to network
- Attend, listen in, to the legislative Broadband Caucus. Next is 2/22 at 6pm and notify our representatives. Renee texted both Bucket Davis and MaryAnne Moore. Martha had already emailed Anne Perry.
- Attend the MBC event in Millbridge regarding Digital Equity on March 31 at 5PM

VIII. Next meeting **Wednesday March 8 at 3 PM**