

MINUTES

SELECTMEN'S/ASSESSORS' MEETING TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021 ONLINE INTERACTIVE 6:30 PM

Selectmen Present: John Shepard (Chair), Adam Fuller, Josh White, Martha Johnston-Nash, and Bill Lombardi

Others Present: Jay Feyler, Gail Hawes, Christine Simmonds, Catherine Meyer, Abraham Knight, John Gibbons, Greg Grotton, Jim Justice, Richard Ranaghan, and Bonnie Martinolich

- 1. Call Selectmen's Meeting to order:** 6:30 p.m.
- 2. Public Comment:** No Public Comment
- 3. Approve minutes of Tuesday, March 2, 2021, and March 11, 2021:**

Motion by Selectman Lombardi seconded by Selectman White to approve the March 2nd minutes. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: Fuller, Shepard, White, Lombardi, and Johnston-Nash. All approved.

Motion by Selectman Johnston-Nash seconded by Selectman White to approve the March 11th minutes. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: White, Shepard, Fuller, Lombardi, and Johnston-Nash. All approved.

- 4. Approve Treasurer's Warrant dated Tuesday, March 16, 2021:**

Motion by Selectman Johnston-Nash seconded by Selectman Fuller to approve the warrant. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: White, Shepard, Fuller, Lombardi, and Johnston-Nash. All approved.

- 5. Review the Bond Preliminary Official Statement – POS:**

Bonnie Martinolich from PretiFlaherty's Business Law Group and Richard Ranaghan, President of Northeast Municipal Advisors were present to emphasize the importance of the document and asked that the Select Board review for possible questions or concerns.

- 6. Approve the Farmers Market use of the Common for the ensuing season:**

Motion by Selectman Fuller seconded by Selectman Johnston-Nash to

approve the Farmers Market on the Common for the 2021 season. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: White, Shepard, Fuller, Lombardi, and Johnston-Nash. All approved.

7. Appointment of Committee members to the Broadband Committee:

Motion by Selectman Johnston-Nash seconded by Selectman Fuller to appoint Michael Ross, Kimberly Grindle, and Renee Flanders to the Broadband Committee. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: White, Fuller, Lombardi, Johnston-Nash, and Shepard. All approved.

8. COVID-19 updates – Office Hours:

New extended office hours will be 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (instead of 3:00 p.m.) Monday through Thursday.

Starting Tuesday, April 8; open until 6:00 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of the month.

Dependent upon the Maine CDC Guidelines; starting June 1, back to regular hours with facemasks, social distancing, and a maximum of three people in the lobby.

9. Other Business:

- a. Review and accept the Workers Compensation Fund Resolve Form: N/A
- b. Review the Local Food Ordinance and move to forward to the Town Attorney

Motion by Selectman Shepard seconded by Selectman Johnston-Nash to forward the Food Ordinance to the town attorney for additional review. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: White, Fuller, Lombardi, Johnston-Nash, and Shepard. All approved.

Jay stated that Representative Bill Pluecker asked to use the Common for a meet and greet on April 1, 2021.

Motion by Selectman Lombardi seconded by Selectman Johnston-Nash to approve a meet and greet on the Common for Bill Pluecker. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: White, Fuller, Lombardi, Johnston-Nash, and Shepard. All approved.

10. Town Manager's Report:

Jay was extremely impressed with the POS meeting and is quite happy that Richard Ranaghan was hired for the job, stating that the funding could be beneficial to the town in several different areas.

Jay stated that Sandy Patrick has resigned from her position as the Recording Secretary for the Board of Selectmen to pursue new endeavors. He thanked her publicly and expressed his appreciation for her dedication over the past few years.

11. Committee Reports:

a. Broadband

The Committee met with representatives from LCI / Tidewater on March 9th to discuss LCI's plans for expanding its fiber network in Union, and how they might structure an arrangement that would result in complete buildout over the entire town.

Highlights from the meeting, plus certain background information on road miles and address counts in the town provided by Jay and Jim Murphy:

- When the currently-in-process fiber runs are completed, LCI will have about 24 miles of fiber in Union (our calculation, not LCI's.)
- There are 66 miles of public roads in Union, and another 17 miles of private roads. Population density on the private roads (houses per mile) is just as high as it is on the public roads. Implications: LCI's network currently covers a little over a third of the public road miles.
- Very few residences and businesses along the fiber runs have been connected. Connections to homes and businesses are backed up. Extending the fiber runs appear to be taking priority.
- LCI's model for network buildout appears to be to seek grants for network expansion in towns where it has a presence. Grants are currently limited to specific areas that are "underserved"; i.e., where available Internet access speeds are lower than 25 megabits per second (download) and 3 mbps up. Very few places in Union meet this criterion.
- LCI has never worked in partnership with a town to build out its network to cover the entire town, with the town subsidizing LCI's capital as an inducement.

Meeting of the Coalition: The Midcoast Internet Coalition met on March 10th. It appears to be coming together as a cohesive group with a common goal and a common approach. Eight towns have signed on as participants in the Coalition. "Participant" means the town has accepted what are called the Guiding Principles... a description of an open-access municipally owned network... as a vision of where the Coalition is heading. It does not imply commitment (yet!) but they plan to discuss the Guiding Principles at their next Committee meeting, and they will be on the Board's agenda for acceptance on April 6th.

The Coalition met with Pioneer . . . another ISP . . . to discuss experiences in similar situations, primarily with the Downeast Broadband Utility.

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Highlights:

- Pioneer's base plan is 100/100 mbps, priced at %59.95/mo. 1Gbps plans are available.
- Regional development has major benefits, including economies of scale.
- Deal early with high-cost pockets. In rural (lower density) areas, advance subscription rate is much higher, and early installs create "buzz" which spreads fast.
- Need to inform the citizens and start soon.

Committee Meeting on 3/30

The Committee is getting a clearer picture of the alternatives. Next Committee meeting will be focused on formulating explicit options, with pros and cons, for wider discussion.

Other:

- Guiding Principles will be on the Board's agenda for April 6th.
- Need to appropriate \$15K in the town budget for the next phase, as a placeholder.
- * if the town decides to go with Tidewater, they will likely need a local match for grant applications.
- * if the town decides to go with the Coalition, they will need to bear our share of the engineering study (network design and costing.)

Midcoast Community Internet Coalition – Guiding Principles

- Establish a regional utility district through interlocal agreement as permitted by State law.
- Build a Fiber to the Premises (FTTP) internet network to provide cheaper, faster, and better high-speed internet access.
- Ensure that the network is open access, inviting multiple providers to deliver services to residents and businesses which will offer a range of products, pricing options and competition.
- Establish a minimum symmetrical speed of 100 Mbps for download / upload to be provided by any service provider leasing the utility's dark fiber network with the capability of providing symmetrical 1 Gig for users choosing that option.
- Provide universal access to all residences and businesses within the geographic region of the utility.
- Best in class customer support with locally managed and operated offices

b. Food Ordinance: No report

c. Aging in Place in Union:

Bill reported that about 40 residents signed up for the St. Patty's Day luncheon.

12. Selectmen's Report:

Adam, John, and Martha all thanked Sandy and wished her well.

Martha reminded everyone that the first TCC Committee meeting will be held on March 17th at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

13. Future Agenda Items:

Set a date for a Road Workshop meeting

14. Adjourn:

Motion by Selectman Lombardi seconded by Selectman Fuller to adjourn. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: White, Lombardi, Fuller, Shepard, and Johnston-Nash. All approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Patrick
Secretary