



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
P.O. BOX 725
FITZWILLIAM, NH 03447
(603) 585-7723 Fax: (603) 585-7744
Email: fitzwilliamnh@fitzwilliam-nh.gov

BOARD PUBLIC BENEFITS INFORMATION MEETING MINUTES
December 9, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Mr. Baker opened the public meeting at 7 p.m.

Mr. Baker shared that this was a Public Benefits Information Meeting as required by Senate Bill 170.

Those in attendance in person were: Daniel Baker, Chair Board of Selectmen, Robyn Bates, Selectman; Volunteer Broadband Task Force members: Dana Pinney, Kim Heald; Consolidated Communication Inc. representative: Rob Koester; Debbie Favreau, Town Administrator, Lori Nolan, Land Use Coordinator, and Sheryl White, Secretary to the Board of Selectmen.

Those in attendance via Zoom were: Selectman Brian Doerpholz, Volunteer Broadband Task Force member Paul Owens, Representatives from Consolidated Communications Inc.: Jeff McIver and Mike Cannon; Barbara Briggs, Brad Roscoe, Carl Goldknopf, Cheryl Pinney, E. Howard, Erik Durmer, James Rodger, JC Woodward, Sarah & Jason Drew, James, Tom Moran, Kevin Woolley, Ray & Diane Tremblay, Liz Coll, Gary Heald, Amanda Schafer, Patrick Tully, Kyle LeGrand, Suzanne Gray, Adam Blake, Jeff, Douglas Batchelder, Bonnie Wickland, Elizabeth Baker, Jacob Evangelista, Dave Hunt, Jayson T., David Turnbull, Beth Lorenz, Marcia, Dick Goettle, phone numbers: 585-6842, 508-328-6665, 313-7602, 585-7270, 585-9204, 585-3732, 762-8817.

Mr. Baker introduced the Volunteer Broadband Task Force members, Dana Pinney, Paul Owens, and Kim Heald. Mr. Baker noted that the Task Force had a presentation showing their process to date. Mr. Baker also noted that there would be a presentation from CCI, as well. Mr. Baker welcomed and thanked Jeff McIver, Project Manager, Mike Cannon, Sr. Director of Operations, and Rob Koester, Vice President of Product Management for putting this together.

Mr. Baker asked that all questions be held until after the presentations. Mr. Baker asked that participants state their name before asking their questions.

Mr. Baker reviewed the right to know law and also gave the phone number, meeting ID, pass code and web address to join the meeting via Zoom. This information was also previously posted on the Town's website and the Post Office. Mr. Baker noted that this meeting is being recorded via the Zoom platform.

Mr. Baker turned the meeting over to Mr. Pinney. Mr. Pinney explained how he had initially found out about a local town bringing Broadband into their town. He contacted the Town and attended the meeting. Mr. Pinney had conveyed the information that he had learned to the Fitzwilliam Board of Selectmen. At the time the Board of Selectmen were involved in steeple repairs and a solar project, which consumed a lot of their time. The Selectmen along with Mr. Pinney attended a Broadband meeting. Mr. Pinney reached out the Paul Owens and Kim Heald and they approached the Selectmen about this project.

Mr. Pinney turned the meeting over to Ms. Heald, who began the Volunteer Broadband Task Force presentation. The presentation is attached and will remain a part of the official minutes.

Ms. Heald reviewed the participant protocols for the meeting. Ms. Heald shared the posts that had been on the Fitzwilliam Community Facebook page regarding internet issues. Ms. Heald gave an overview of the 2012 Fitzwilliam Master Plan. Ms. Heald shared why the Task Force is looking into Broadband and how residents and town businesses are currently served.

Mr. Pinney explained that until recently there was no path forward regarding Broadband. SB170 allows the Town to partner with private providers to build the network. The bill contained the steps that must be followed. Mr. Pinney discussed the map the Task Force created with the data that was received, which shows served, underserved and not served areas in Fitzwilliam. SB170 allowed the Town to send out an RFP. The RFP was sent to 11 companies and 3 responses were received. Consolidated Communications Inc. (CCI), Argent and Matrix. The Task Force met with the three providers. The Task Force recommended CCI and on September 23rd, the Board of Selectmen selected CCI as the provider to provide Broadband to the Town. Mr. Pinney discussed how increasing internet speeds can increase the value of a home. The public benefit is three times the cost of the bond. Mr. Pinney reviewed the other benefits besides the financial benefit. Some of those benefits are Education – remote learning; Telehealth; Town offices; and Police Department communication. The bond is 1.839 million and SB170 requires that a network to unserved areas be built. Mr. Pinney

shared that the cost to consumers is a fee of \$10.50 if they switch to CCI. Residents do not need to switch to CCI if they are happy with their current provider. This fee will pay the bond for 20 years.

Mr. Pinney mentioned that an information meeting would be held on January 9th and a public bond meeting would be held on February 9th. Mr. Pinney shared that until the number of subscribers covers the cost of the bond, CCI had agreed to cover the difference.

Mr. Pinney turned the meeting over to Rob Koester, Vice President of Product Management for CCI. Mr. Koester shared that he is based in Manchester. Mr. Koester introduced CCI representatives attending via Zoom - Jeff McIver, Project Manager, who is also based in Manchester and Mike Cannon, Sr. Director of Operations, who is based north of Manchester. Mr. Koester began CCI's presentation. The presentation is attached and will remain a part of the official minutes.

Mr. Koester shared that this was a proven business model and that a year ago Chesterfield was done. Harrisville, Walpole, Rindge and Westmoreland are going through the process now. The target is mid to late February. Mr. Koester reviewed their bid that was submitted to the Town. Mr. Koester discussed fiber; their process for installation and maintenance; fee paid to the Town to pay off the bond for the length of the bond, whether CCI has one subscriber or the whole town; infrastructure fee is reviewed every couple of years; bond payments go down a little every few years; the rate will go down and will never exceed the rate of \$10.50; there are no installation fees; the bond is \$1.8 million and will come down, as CCI received some funding from the FCC. Mr. Koester mentioned that the Town would bond for around \$1.8 million and it would be adjusted once FCC funding is received. Mr. Koester shared that the Town would need to get a bond attorney, which CCI would pay the cost of the bond counsel and would be at all of the informational meetings. The amount of work that the committees put into this work, is a lot. Mr. Koester shared there would be 4-5 phases and the planning sessions would be held with Town staff. CCI would provide a website that gives updates for residents. Mr. Koester noted that a resident may incur an installation cost if they don't already have a conduit. Pricing will be the same as the price across NH.

Mr. Pinney asked if there were any questions.

Question: Adam Blake asked who is going to own the fiber line?

Answer: Town would own the network that they funded. The assumption is that after the 20 year period is done the Town would bid out the network. This would not prevent another vendor to come in and build a network over the top of it.

Question: Sarah and Jason Drew asked if CCI is only paying the bond interest, who pays the bond principal?

Answer: CCI would pay the entire bond payment, both interest and principal.

Additional Question: Star Link got \$86 million from the FCC – what happens if people go with them instead of CCI?

Answer: CCI would still be providing the bond payment.

Question: Erik Durmer – How long will it take to complete the process for the whole Town?

Answer: Town vote in March, Bond issued in July, funds distributed the middle of August. As soon as the Town vote is positive, CCI starts buying material. Once bond financing is complete, they would start construction. It would take until November or December. Expect the first customer to have service in January 2022.

Question: Carl Goldknopf – Does system have VOIP?

Answer: Yes, it will support any voice service.

Question: Patrick Tully – What assurance do we have for providing quality customer service over the duration of the 20 years?

Answer: CCI would continue to work on this and they are implementing options – expanded website for self care, a large IT effort, trouble shooting, going through a training process for fiber and giving new tools for customer service.

Question: James – does the cost of the service include phone?

Answer: CCI data price only – add what you currently pay for voice would be added to that cost. VOIP – between \$15-20 per month, would include long distance. The prices on the presentation was for data only.

It was noted that fiber service is fundamentally different than copper in many ways. With a copper connection, there is a little voltage remaining, can use a battery backup for their phone service to continue to run.

Question: Jason Drew – How much money did CCI get from the FCC?

Answer: CCI doesn't know exactly the number and would take that number off of the cost of the bond and this would take the number down. The action is closed and CCI is still under a quiet time and can't discuss. CCI would come to the Town once the figure is known.

Question: Paul Owens – StarLink is new technology – what is the CCI take on StarLink?

Answer: CCI doesn't know enough yet and there is so little that is publically available. Impacts would be the way the constellations are put together, number of satellites and being in low earth orbit. The maximum for them would be 1gbps and CCI's platform has the ability to grow to 10 gbps.

Question: Doug Batchelder – is StarLink affected by heavy cloud cover?

Answer: CCI shared that satellite TV service was impacted during the recent weather. Mr. Koester doesn't know about cloud cover. Anything that affects the satellite would affect StarLink as well.

Question: James – Will funds from the FCC lower the \$10.50 subscriber fee?

Answer: Once CCI finds out the final number, they would expect a little reduction.

Comment from Jason Drew – StarLink is currently 150 mbps down with 3 mbps latency – no degradation with speed with clouds. The cost is \$400 for installation and \$99 per month.

Mr. Pinney shared that Chesterfield's service has been up and running and asked if Brad Roscoe would be willing to discuss. Mr. Roscoe shared it has been 100 mbps service – reliable and robust – only outage has been state-wide outage. Mr. Roscoe noted the people that are the happiest in town are the realtors. Homes that they couldn't sell before are being sold, and Broadband has made a difference with house pricing. Mr. Roscoe shared that CCI has been a great company to work with. They have the whole process worked out and he shared that Fitzwilliam would be as happy as Chesterfield.

Mr. Pinney shared the comment from Patrick Tulley – if we vote for broadband – the consumer would have three providers to choose from – if not, would be stuck with DSL.

Mr. Pinney turned the meeting over to Mr. Baker. Mr. Baker thanked CCI and the Broadband Task Force for their work. The Task Force has been a great help to the Selectmen. Mr. Baker apologized for the technical difficulties tonight.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Baker called for a motion to close the public meeting.

Ms. Bates made a motion to close the public meeting at 8:35 p.m. Mr. Doerpholz seconded and the motion passed. 3-0

Submitted by:

Sheryl White
Secretary to the Board of Selectmen

Daniel Baker, Chairman

Robyn Bates

Brian Doerpholz
Board of Selectmen

The Fitzwilliam Board of Selectmen host:

Connect Fitzwilliam: The Future is Fiber

The meeting will start at 7:00pm

A Public Benefits Finding Meeting
Prepared for the Residents of
Fitzwilliam

December 9, 2020

Meeting Participant Protocols:

- There will be an opportunity to ask questions and/or provide comments at the end of the presentations.
- Questions/comments can either be entered into the “Chat”, or can be addressed through the “raise your hand” option if you prefer to speak.
- When dialing in via phone, pressing *9 will activate the “raise your hand” feature. State your name prior to asking your question.

Posts from Fitzwilliam Community Facebook (2019)

“Is anyone having trouble with their Internet?”

“This is the most common post ever... We all know it doesn't work here. I gave up a long time ago.”

2012 Fitzwilliam Master Plan

A little history:

- **A Community Forum was held in 2006.** Residents indicated that the lack of High Speed Broadband Internet coverage was a serious concern.
- **A Telecommunications Committee was formed.** The Committee surveyed existing services in town and concluded that only a small fraction of households had service. The Committee contacted Verizon to extend DSL and the request was declined.
- **In 2010-2011 the New Hampshire FastRoads, LLC was created.** This caused the authors of the plan to conclude that “The future of Internet in the Town of Fitzwilliam looks a bit brighter today than it did just a couple of years ago.” Except, this was never completed, let alone expanded.
- **A survey was done in 2007, and reported on in the Fitzwilliam Master Plan in 2012.** Eight out of ten residents (83%), either strongly favor (70%) or somewhat favor (13%) high speed internet service. In addition, relative to Town infrastructure, it was concluded that, “Fitzwilliam residents are strong supporters of technological additions while showing little support for other additions.”

2012 Fitzwilliam Master Plan Continued

Among the recommendations made by The Historic Fitzwilliam Economic Development Association and the Planning Board in 2010 to support economic development were:

1. **Insure that the Capital Improvement Plan includes planning for future infrastructure changes that support economic development.**
2. **With the goal of providing the technology services necessary to support economic development and educational success, develop a realistic plan for reliable broadband and cell service in town.**

SCOPE: Why are we looking at this?

- Discontent with internet expressed extensively on Facebook
- Anecdotal evidence of internet problems through public discourse
- “Check Up” on progress of goals in 2012 Master Plan
- Expand home and commercial business development.
(increase tax base)
- Increase or maintain property values

Where are we today?

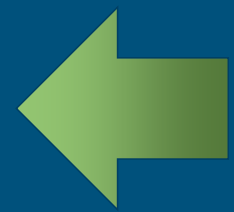
Town residents and businesses are served largely by DSL provider Consolidated Communications (84%) or cable tv provider Argent Communications and WiValley (6%).

Others utilize satellite internet or various 4G cellular providers.

DSL service over copper phone lines is limited by distance from a “central office” switch box, which are distributed throughout town.

Cable internet connections are copper coaxial cable with shared bandwidth between neighbors, resulting in decreased speed when more people are online.

FCC defines broadband as...



25 Megabits per second (Mbps) download speed or greater



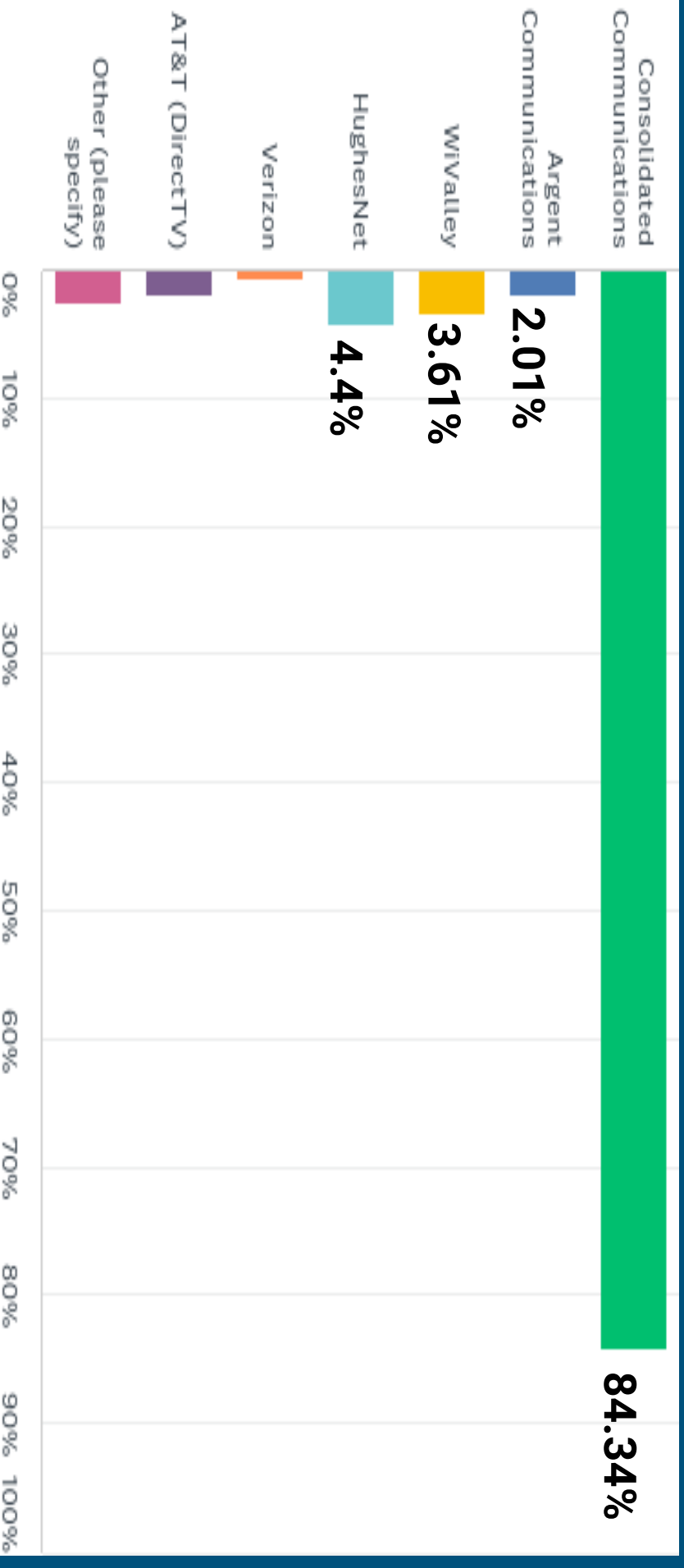
3 Mbps upload or greater

As of 2017, the FCC estimates nationwide 59% of home wireline connections meet or exceed this benchmark.

Netflix recommends a 25 Mbps speed for streaming its top quality video, while Amazon says you'll need at least 15 Mbps. (Consumer Reports, 2019)

Who is your current Internet provider?

% of Respondents



SB170

**Now allows us to move
forward towards a
Connected Fitzwilliam**

(Became effective July 29, 2018)

NH Senate Bill 170

Allows municipalities to pay for “financing of improvements” to broadband infrastructure for “locations...unserved” with a bond approved at town meeting.

Note: SB 170 does NOT require a fiber solution. It only requires a solution that provides = or > than 25/3 service

This bill requires that the Town sends a Request for Information (RFI) to current internet providers. They were sent to CCL, Argent, and WiValley. (2/13/20)

Information received from the provider responses showed that 68% of their service does not meet the FCC-designated download speed to be considered broadband.

We created an interactive map of the town showing served and unserved addresses.

<https://tinyurl.com/FitzwilliamServiceMap>

NH Senate Bill 170 then Requires:

That the Town send a Request for Proposal (RFP) allowing providers to craft and pitch a solution to provide service (Sent 6/8/20)

An RFP was sent to:

- Argent
- Comcast
- CCI
- GWI (Maine)
- First Light Communications
- Matrix
- Otelco (Maine)
- Spectrum
- Wi-Valley
- Eustis Cable
- Hub66

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Town received proposals from:

- CCI
- Argent/Eustis
- Matrix/Millennium

Request for Proposal (RFP)

- Upon receiving and reviewing proposals, the Fitzwilliam Broadband Voluntary Task Force met with each provider to ask questions and clarify details. The Task Force then prepared a comparative analysis to evaluate the responses.
- SB170 states: “A municipality may select a proposal ... which meets or exceeds the anticipated needs of the community.”
- The Task Force recommended that the Select Board accept the proposal from Consolidated Communications, Inc.
- The Board chose CCI as the provider that they will work with moving forward.
9/23/2020

Public vs. Private Benefit Findings:

Senate Bill 170 requires the Town to show that the benefits of installing a broadband network in the Town outweighs the cost of the bond.

Those benefits may include both financial aspects and quality of life improvements.

*Documentation on the effects of Broadband availability on Home prices is available from An ongoing nationwide study at the University of Colorado at Boulder studied the effects of Broadband availability on home property values. This is published in *Applied Economics* which is a professional journal in the area of Economics.

“High-speed Internet Access and Housing Values”

Gabor Molnar, Scott J. Savage & Douglas C. Sicker

Pages 5923-5936 | Published online: 19 Jun 2019

Source: City-Data.com

Market Value Calculation

| Current Speed | % Effect on Valuation | # Households | Multiplier x Town Household Property Value | Property Value Increase |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|--|-------------------------|
| 0-20 Mbps | 3.70% | 519 x 190,872 | 3.7% x 99,062,568 | \$3,665,315.00 |
| 25-50 Mbps | 1.20% | 637 x 190,872 | 1.2% x 121,585,464 | \$1,459,026.00 |
| 50-100 Mbps | 0.60% | 272 x 190,872 | 0.60% x 51,917,184 | \$311,503.00 |
| > 100 Mbps | zero | none | | |

Public Benefits \$ 5,435,844.00

Source: Avitar Assoc. of NE

Assessed Value Calculation

| Current Speed | % Effect on Valuation | # Households | Multiplier x Town Household Property Value | Property Value Increase |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--|-------------------------|
| 0-20 Mbps | 3.70% | 519 x 155,681 | 3.70% x 80,798,439 | \$2,989,542.00 |
| 25-50 Mbps | 1.20% | 637 x 155,681 | 1.20% x 99168797 | \$1,190,025.00 |
| 50-100 Mbps | 0.60% | 272 x 155,681 | 0.60% x 4,134,500 | \$254,070.00 |
| > 100 Mbps | zero | none | | |
| Public Benefit | | | | \$4,376,950.00 |

Public vs. Private Benefit (Cont.)

By improving the speed, reliability and cost over existing service, the town residents and businesses will benefit in the following areas:

- **Economic Development:**

Town residents will have a stable, high speed network allowing them to telecommute, create and manage Commercial/Home businesses, as well as allow the Town to entice companies to locate along the Rt 12 and Rt 119 business corridor (thereby expanding the tax base of the Town).

- **Education:**

Students will be able to participate in remote learning, complete school-based assignments if they have a reliable, faster network available at home.

Public vs. Private Benefit (Cont.)

- **Safety:**

The Police, Fire, and Highway Departments, will have a faster, more reliable communication link in the event of an emergency.

- **Town Offices:**

Faster, more reliable service allows better communications with State agencies, i.e. DMV

- **Public Access:**

Town residents who do not opt for service will be able to access the Internet at the library.

Public vs. Private Benefit (Cont.)

- **Health:** COVID-19 has accelerated the need for reliable broadband for telehealth and to transfer personal medical data.
- **Quality of Life:** A reliable, high speed broadband network will attract families to our community, allow residents to stream a variety of movies, television programs, Internet-based educational videos, video conferencing (Zoom, FaceTime) recreation (Gaming, 4K TV), plus share photos, etc. with distant family without buffering or interruption.
- **Town Desirability:** Today's homebuyers insist on having high speed Internet access. Selling your home will be easier if a high speed fiber optic network is available in the town.

Highlights of CCI Proposal

- Creates a 1g, FTTP network that covers 100% of Fitzwilliam (100% fiber)
- Requires the Town to bond \$1.839 million to build the unserved areas.
- CCI invests an additional \$1.285 to construct a network in the served areas in Town
- CCI will manage the network and assess end user fees not to exceed \$10.50/month to recover the cost of the bond. You only pay this fee **IF** you subscribe to the new service.
- **THIS WILL RESULT IN ZERO TAX IMPACT TO THE TOWN.**
- CCI will pay the town an annual fee allowing them to operate and maintain the network. This fee will cover the payment for the life of the bond.

We Get There by Bonding:

- Requires obtaining a \$1.839 million Municipal General Obligation Bond from the NH Bond Bank July, 2021 offering
- To do this requires 2 Public Benefit Meetings, a Public Bond Hearing, and a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of the voters present must vote in favor of the bond Warrant Article at March 9 Town Meeting
- Once network is installed, CCI raises the funds to pay the bond via a not to exceed \$10.50/month user fee for the 20 yr. life of the instrument
- CCI pays an annual fee to the Town for the right to operate and maintain the system
- Until the subscriber base is sufficient to cover the bond cost, CCI will make up the difference
- Again, **NO TAX IMPACT ON THE TOWN** and **ONLY SUBSCRIBERS PAY THE FEE.**

This project provides:

- Fiber to EVERY home
- NO TAX IMPACT to the residents
- Allows for CHOICE of provider

SB 170 requires that a Bond Article pass by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of the voters present at Town Meeting (RSA 33:8-a). Town Meeting March 9,

2021

Come and vote yes!

Fitzwilliam, NH

**Broadband
Expansion
RFP Overview**



Agenda

- Meet the team
- Bid Review
- Implementation Plan

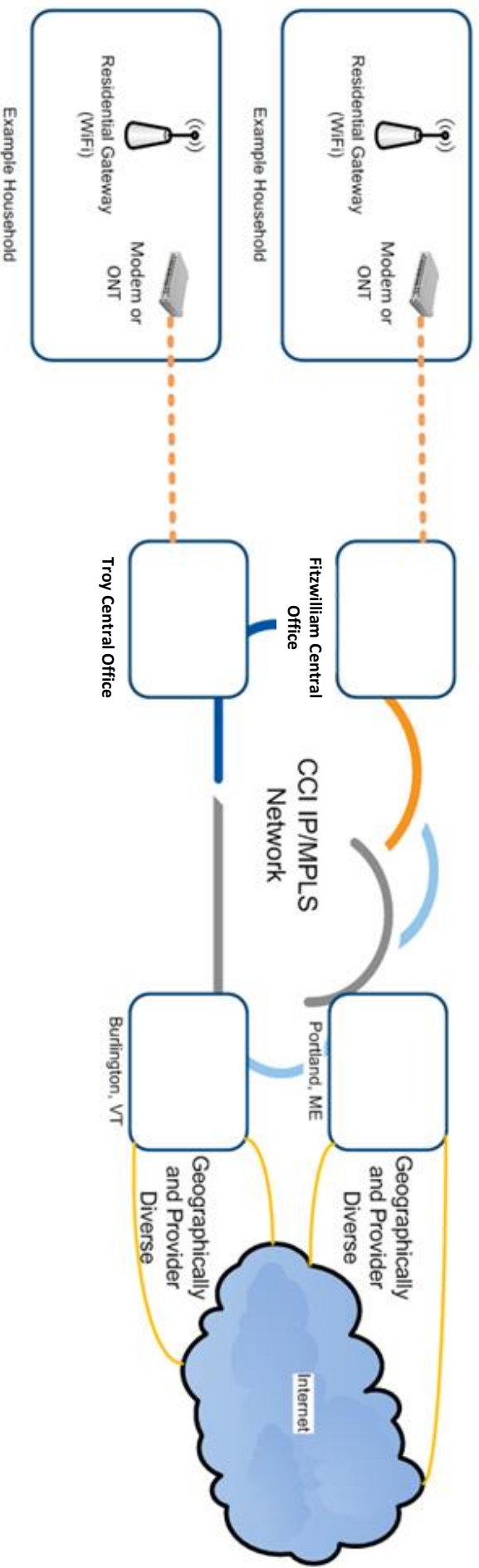


Implementation Team

- Jeff McIver – Project Manager – 10 years
- Mike Cannon – Senior Director of Operations – 36 years
- Rob Koester – Vice President of Product Management – 20 years



Network Design



Bid Composition

Key Deal Points

- Initial Infrastructure fee @ \$10.50 assuming standard bond interest rates
- City owns funded network and provides exclusive access to Consolidated for ongoing maintenance and operation
- Consolidated pays the town an operating fee which offsets the bond principal and interest
- Infrastructure fee reviewed and reset after biennial review with Select Board
- Consolidated responsible for end user install costs



Bid Composition

Town Funded Network Cost = \$1,839,500

Consolidated Funded Customer Connection Cost = \$1,284,950

Total Completed Cost = \$3,124,450



Implementation Plan

Pre-Vote

- Assist with information gathering to support bond council
- Support and presence at town informational sessions
- Support and presence at town budget meetings
- Presence at town vote



Implementation Plan

- Phased Design
- Planning session with town staff
- Regular, written status updates
- Cohesive launch plan in conjunction with city staff / broadband Committee
 - Pre-sign up website / direct mail
 - Town events / ribbon cutting
- Coordinated, road by road installation plan



Sample CCI Project Communication

| | Fiber Built % | Splicing % Complete | Testing Complete | Ready for Install |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Job-102 "Orange" | 98% Complete | 10% | Not Started | Not Started |
| Job-149 "Yellow" | 100% Complete | 50% | Not Started | Not Started |
| Job-150 "Red" | 100% Complete | 25% | Not Started | Not Started |
| Job-151 "Green" | 100% Complete | 10% | Not Started | Not Started |
| Job-152 "Purple" | 100% Complete | 30% | Not Started | Not Started |
| Job-153 "Blue" | 100% Complete | 30% | Not Started | Not Started |
| Job-154 "Light Blue" | 100% Complete | 90% | Not Started | Not Started |
| Overall Completion | 98% | 38% | 0 out of 7 | 0 out of 7 |



Town Landing Page

www.consolidated.com/dublin

Residential

Internet TV Phone Bundles Home Security

DUBLIN - UPGRADE TO THE FIBER LIFE!

Get ready for a Fiber Internet Service Expansion - Super-fast gig speeds at super-low prices.



Current Status

Benefits of Fiber

Eligible Locations

Internet Plans

What to Expect

FAQs

Fiber at Work

Dublin, connect to 1 Gig Internet starting this December!

Consolidated is delivering fiber internet to Dublin and we're excited to show you our progress. Super-fast speeds with a more reliable connection, at even more affordable prices.



This is BIG! Learn more about what you can expect in your community as we're building the network. You can also complete the form on this page to sign up for updates on our progress. We'll keep you in the know so you can be among the first to have your new fiber internet service installed.

Pre-Register for Service and Get Updates

Complete this form to receive updates about our progress on the new all-fiber network. We'll contact you when we're ready to take your order.

NEW OR EXISTING CUSTOMER?

NEW EXISTING

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN?

RESIDENTIAL SMALL BUSINESS

FIRST NAME *

LAST NAME *

SERVICE ADDRESS *

CONNECTING
YOU
BETTER

The Fiber Life is fantastic

Installation Practices

- No customer cost for in-home installation which includes:
 - Installation of fiber from pole to home
 - Optical Network Termination (ONT) at home
 - In home installation including wireless router with 802.11 A/C WiFi



Pricing

Sample Fiber To The Home Pricing

| | 15 Mbps | 50Mbps | 100Mbps | 1Gbps |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Base Rate | \$60.89 | \$73.54 | \$87.34 | \$102.29 |
| Promotional Rate Example | \$52.95 | \$63.95 | \$75.95 | \$88.95 |
| Infrastructure Fee | \$10.50 | \$10.50 | \$10.50 | \$10.50 |
| Total Price | \$63.45 | \$74.45 | \$86.45 | \$99.45 |

- Total price based on current two year term commitment rates
- Includes wireless router charge fee and all other fees
- Taxes (if applicable) not included
- No Data Caps, FREE Installation, 30-Day Money-Back Guarantee



Questions

