

Westmoreland Broadband Advisory Committee meeting  
August 1, 2018  
6:30 p.m.

Members present:

John Snowdon, Chris Ballou, JJ Prior

John Snowdon was appointed chair, JJ Prior as clerk.

Others present: Brian Faucher, WiValley; Mark Terry, Westmoreland Town Government Communication Committee

John introduced Brian Faucher, from whom the group has sought guidance early in the process of studying broadband.

Brian's company has found most success with wireless internet infrastructure, being able to provide service regardless of terrain or telephone infrastructure.

He spoke to what improvements are ongoing from major telecom companies such as Consolidated, with assistance from federal funding. Accepting that funding comes with an obligation to provide a certain level of service, with oversight by the state public utilities commission after seven years.

Brian suggested inviting existing providers to meet with the committee to discuss service to the town residents. JJ pointed out that Argent Communications' contract for cable tv will expire in two years.

John shared funding sources, including the Northern Border Regional Commission—it will include Cheshire County in the future.

After meeting with people from SWRPC yesterday, the question of "What's next?" lead to the step of commissioning an engineering study to design possible solutions.

Brian shared different funding structures: Lyme was funded by private donors, Chesterfield town meeting raised \$12k or \$15k. Harrisville's down meeting approved one-third the cost, with the balance privately raised. Dublin's selectmen paid out of surplus.

Discussion ensued of how to share resources between adjacent communities. Brian said possibilities for engineering studies could be maximized by contracting with the same designers (as Chesterfield)

Also other communities across the river (Putney, Westminster).

Brian suggested connecting with other towns that have undertaken studies to find what their courses of action have been.

Brian left the meeting.

Chris spoke to his analysis of survey data, particularly the three areas of focus: satisfaction of service, if unsatisfied, why, and levels of satisfaction in terms of location.

The committee will meet again on August 7 at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall.