

Westmoreland Broadband Advisory Committee meeting  
July 10, 2018  
6:30 p.m.

Members present:

John Snowdon, Chris Ballou, JJ Prior

John Snowdon was appointed chair, JJ Prior as clerk.

Others present: Steve Robbins, Amy and Jeff Steinberg

Steve Robbins spoke to his experience and internet needs. He has a background in web publishing, and is a resident of 20 years on Poocham Rd. He's exactly 3 miles from switching station, and has DSL connection with poor service.

Has had service performance up to 1.5 Mbps, but currently has no connection. Operates a business requiring reliable internet connection. His phone line has splices well predating his ownership.

John recommended attendees visit the FCC website to learn about the \$4.5B wireless infrastructure grants. An app is available called FCC Speed Test. FCC defines high speed internet as 25 Mbps download, and 5 Mbps download on mobile with 1 Mbps upload.

Currently Westmoreland is ineligible for grant money due to supposed strong cell service. Towns can challenge that by measuring download speeds with three different mobile providers. The county is preparing to purchase phones for this testing purpose.

Discussion ensued about availability of unlimited mobile data plans and speeds.

Jeff Steinberg spoke to his experience requesting Pine Tree Cable to connect to his house some years ago. The company would not provide service. He and Amy expressed interest in supporting any efforts to improve service for the town.

The committee then began looking through the survey data. Some highlights include collecting data from 224 survey respondents, representing approximately 30 percent of the households in town. Of those surveyed online, 80 percent expressed being "somewhat satisfied" with their internet service or below. Ninety-two percent of respondents fall below the FCC-defined speed of "broadband" at 25 Mbps. For those respondents unsatisfied with service, the top issues were download speed, connection reliability, and cost of service. John shared that SWRPC would be interested in seeing our results. JJ pointed out it would be public record.

The group discussed preparing a presentation for the selectmen of the survey results. We will aim for the August 16 meeting. Committee members should share the definition of broadband, present a summary of findings, and JJ suggested researching and sharing three possible solutions that other municipalities have undertaken or explored. John will contact Chesterfield, Jaffrey, Peterborough to find out what they have explored. Chris will continue to work through the data. JJ will work on presentation for the selectmen.

The committee will meet again on July 18 at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall.

Update 7/18: Meeting will be August 1 at 6:30 at Town Hall.