

SELECTMEN MEETING

6:00 pm

Tuesday January 10, 2023

Fayette Central School

ROLL CALL OF SELECTMEN Lacy Badeau, Brian Holman, Jon Beekman, Toby Pond, Michael Carlson

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE Simon Thorne with Consolidated Communications, Steven Gold, Mark Bender, George Boff, Dan Kimble, Richard Hicks, Marty Maxwell, Rachel Adams, Richard Polsinello, Mark Jarrell, Chris Lynch Matrix Design Group Director Business Development, New England Division , Bob Capers, Holly York, Candace Jackman, Brent St. Clair, Noah Ward Rubin, Jeff Rubin, Robert Black Jr., George Joseph, Bob Weimont, Ed Juris, Katie Juris, Town Manager Mark Robinson, CEO/Recording Secretary Jessica Leighton

PLEDGE Stated

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

23-01 Fidium Broadband Presentation

Simon Thorne from Consolidated Communications was present to speak about Fidium's efforts and what they have done in the town of Chesterville, and what is possible in Fayette. There was grant funding that allowed Consolidated to build out fiber internet in Farmington, Temple, parts of Chesterville, and parts of New Sharon. There isn't enough density to build out fiber in Chesterville and New Sharon without supplemented funding. This grant was a result of the Connect ME Authority

Jon Beekman asked the total percentage covered by the grant. Simon would have to research these numbers. He knows Consolidated did have to put funds into the application as well, but will get back to Mark in regards to how much.

Simon gave a visual presentation on Fidium Fiber Internet. Prices start at an introductory rate of \$35 per month and are tiered upwards from there based on speeds.

Marty Maxwell asked if there was a timeline at all to get into Fayette. Simon said that without grant funding he has no future timeline for Consolidated/Fidium to expand into Fayette.

The question was posed if those who are near the Chesterville town line, if they are able to hook onto the line. Simon would have to look into specific addresses.

Simon explained the difference between Fidium and Consolidated Communications. Fidium is a strictly fiber network that has to be fully built out. The goal was to "separate from the DSL legacy." Distance and weather don't effect Fiber internet, the line has to be physically severed to not function.

George Joseph asked if Fayette was discriminated against due to size, whether by the grant or by ISPs. Simon spoke about the grants that are available today. He thinks that it is beneficial for towns to come

together to apply for grants. He explained how the state requires Consolidated to put forth money, and why they encourage towns to contribute funds.

Mark clarified that the nearby build in the greater Farmington area was initiated by the Maine Connectivity Authority.

George Joseph asked about joining up with a town that doesn't abutt Fayette. Simon says that you do not have to form a coalition, but he thinks that Jay and Livermore are feasible possibilities.

Lacy asked when the next round of grant applications will happen. Simon believes March at the earliest. He also says that Fayette doesn't need to go with Fidium, but that he does believe Fidium would be able to get fiber built in the town quickly once approved.

Jon Beekman asked what the opportunity for more success is if the town were to contribute. Simon says no more than \$150 per location is necessary, but it does have your grant application weighted more favorably. Simon emphasized that Fayette is unserved, versus underserved.

Richard Hicks says that he can't get service in Lakeview Estates through Consolidated, because they are completely tapped out of hookups. He wondered if the Town can get grant funding for Starlink, as that is reliable for him.

Mark asked when they could bring fiber to the home if the town committed funding and they were awarded the funding today. Simon said the beginning of 2024 to be safe.

Michael Carlson asked how long a build out would take in Fayette. Simon guessed three months or less. They started Farmington at the end of October, and they are wrapping it up this week.

Chris Lynch from Matrix was present to listen to the presentation, and Mark invited comments from him. He stated that he was enthusiastic hearing that Fidium had been denied for two, as Matrix already has an application in for Fayette and hasn't heard back yet. In the grant application they have included funding for the application fees, and funding to assist in meeting a \$30 monthly fee. He is optimistic that they are in the list of finalists for receiving the grant. Mark asked Chris if they get this grant, what will the timeline look like for Fayette. Chris says the pole attachment process will be the biggest challenge, so it would still be early 2024. Fidium will contribute \$700 per location, Chris said that in the current Matrix application, they have committed \$2000 per location. Mark Jarrell noted that Fayette may have lost points by not contributing funds, but asked Chris Lynch how likely it is that they will get this grant approved. Chris explained the two tiers of applications, municipal funded versus private funded, but wasn't sure where they were in the process, but is hopeful that Fidium has heard feedback that they were denied for two.

Mike Carlson asked if the clarifications the MCA asked for were specific to Fayette. Chris explained what it was that they clarified. Jon Beekman asked if he recalled what the pole attachment costs were, Chris thinks it's about \$400 per pole with about 33 poles per mile.

It was discussed that there was no contribution from the Farmington area towns for this fiber build, despite Mark being told in the past that towns needed to "have skin in the game" to have grant applications approved.

23-02 Final Approval and Signing of February 7, 2023 Special Town Meeting Article

Discussion: Mark encouraged the board to add another question for additional funding for Broadband funds, so that there is potential that the ARPA funding could be used for something else. The board discussed.

John asked if we could pose a ballot question to commit to the \$118K and send a letter to the MCA stating that whoever receives the grant, Fayette will provide the “skin in the game.”

Lacy thinks no matter who gets the grant application, we still need this question in front of town meeting to give the Board authority to spend the funds on anything.

Toby thinks we should continue with town meeting because we don't know how the grants will shake out.

Brent St. Clair asked if the Select Board could spend x amount of dollars anyway, Mark said the funds have been earmarked for funding. He suggested another possible question asking for the town's authorization to transfer \$50,000 from surplus for the purpose of Broadband.

Mike Carlson motion to keep the warrant article as is and add a second question to request that we transfer \$50,000 from the surplus fund balance into the broadband account. Seconded by John Beekman. No further discussion. VOTE: 4 – 0 – 1 absent (Pond)

23-03 Meeting Times

Motion to continue 6 p.m. start time for all future Board of Selectmen meetings made By Lacy Badeau seconded by Jon Beekman. Discussion: Mike asked if we could make the 6pm meeting time for winter, and for summer meetings to be at 7pm. Lacy amended the motion to reflect that the 6pm and 7pm start times will correlate with daylight savings. VOTE: 4 in favor 0 opposed.

23-04 Warrants

Motion to approve Town payroll warrant #14 made By Brian Holman seconded by Mike Carlson. VOTE: 4 in favor 0 opposed.

23-05 Minutes

Motion to approve Board of Selectmen minutes for December 13, 2022 made by Lacy Badeau seconded by Michael Carlson vote 4 in favor 0 opposed.

Motion to approve Board of Selectmen minutes for December 27, 2022 with corrections made by Michael Carlson seconded by Lacy Badeau. No vote due to lack of voting members.

23-06 Selectmen Comments

Lacy hopes that the Planning Board will come to a Selectboard meeting so that they may have a discussion regarding solar. CEO Jessica Leighton will try to get the board to go attend the February 7th meeting. More discussion regarding solar was had, including Brent St. Clair reporting on what his Facebook group was saying.

Selectmen Committee Reports

School Board: Mike Carlson wasn't able to attend the meeting, but he knows the board accepted the insurance settlement for the boiler, but now Tara wants to form an ad hoc committee regarding the boiler. Lacy asked if there was a way to know if a repair will work. Everyone agreed that no one will know if the boiler still works until it is fired up.

Lands Committee: Brian reported that the committee did a tour of the East Road property and it went well. The next meeting is the last Wednesday in January.

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT

It's been a quiet two weeks, we have some people who have been ill, but got through the holidays. He thinks the public works crew has done well. Bamford Hill and Sandy River Road are the two roads that need the most repair. He did have a conversation with Kate Dufour about federal issues the towns had about emissions restrictions on emergency vehicles. Tomorrow at 1pm there is a hearing in Augusta regarding discontinued roads. Our letter to the committee did make it into the committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:44 pm made by Jon Beekman, seconded by Lacy Badeau. All in favor