



**Town of Whitingham
Broadband Committee**

MINUTES OF May 27, 2020

The Whitingham Broadband Committee (WBC) held a regular meeting on Monday, May 27, 2020 at 5:30pm via Go-To-Meeting conference.

Committee members on the Go-To-Meeting conference: Wayne Corse, Phil Edelstein, Doug Fruge, Mike Mandracchia, Doug Amidon, Olivia Kennett, Michael Patton

Others on the Go-To-Meeting conference: None

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda.

Phil Edelstein called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

None

WRC Fiber Feasibility Study

The Committee had an open discussion about the WRC Fiber Feasibility Study which indicates that a fiber network passing 15,000 buildings and having a 30% take rate is viable. WRC recognizes there will be competition from other internet service providers such as VTel and Starlink as well as competition for available funding. Clearly, there is more broadband funding potentially available than ever before. The Deerfield Valley CUD (DV CUD) was formed and includes 10 towns. Since the study was published, it was decided by the various stake holders that the DV CUD will expand to include all of Windham County. As a founding member of the CUD, Whitingham will have some advantages over towns that join later. The study indicated that if the DV CUD is able to obtain funding the build out will begin in the most unserved towns which are Stamford, Readsboro, Whitingham, Halifax, Marlboro and Wardsboro. DV CUD meetings are open to the public. DV CUD now has a website which posts all meeting agendas, remote log in links, minutes and other information. <https://dvfiber.org/>.

Vermont Emergency Broadband Plan

The plan indicates that 23% of homes and businesses, ~70,000 addresses lack broadband currently defined as 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. The plan also assumes VT will receive additional federal funding to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. There are several funding scenarios with costs ranging from \$85M to \$293M to achieve the plan's goals both short term and long term. The plan will consider various broadband technologies besides fiber.

Discuss Whitingham fiber path forward; with CUD or alone

At this time the best path forward for Whitingham is via DV CUD. One of the advantages of the DV CUD route is Whitingham would not be liable for any debts incurred by the DV CUD. Whip City Fiber decided not to meet with the DV CUD at this time as the company is booked thru 2020 building fiber networks in 20 nearby MA towns. Whip City expressed an interest is working with Whitingham alone but this will not be explored now.

Mr. Edelstein adjourned the meeting at 6:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Edelstein