

Francestown Broadband Committee

Update: 9/14/2020

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What have we been doing?

The Goal

- Extend broadband access to every address in Francestown using zero tax dollars.

The Strategy

- Investigate two paths in parallel
 - State and/or Federal Grants
 - SB170 Bonding

What have we been doing?

Attending and Participating in Meetings

- SNHPC (Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission) monthly meetings as alternate commissioner
- Monadnock Broadband Group. Formed from SWRPC (Southwest Regional Planning Commission) of which we are not a member, but they invite any participation. State legislators attend these meetings as well.

What have we been doing?

Networking!

- Carol Miller - Director of Broadband Technology, Division of Economic Development, Department of Business and Economic Affairs, State of New Hampshire. She has her finger on the pulse of what's going on in NH with Broadband.
- Hancock Telecom Committee – Regular contact with chair Tim Theberge. Closest to Frankestown broadband demographic mix.
- Other towns – Mason, Greenfield, and others, mostly unserved.
- Mission Broadband – Network consultants
- State and Federal legislators and/or their office staff. Jeanne Shaheen, Jeanne Dietsch were quickest to respond and most helpful so far.

What have we been doing?

Talking to Providers!

- Comcast
- Consolidated Communications, inc.
- TDS (Bennington, Deering, Frankestown, Lyndeborough)
- Granite State Communications (Deering, Weare) TBD
- WiValley (WISP)
- Matrix Design Group (fiber) - TBD
- Hub 66 - TBD

What have we been doing?

Chasing Grants! So far, failures 😞

State

- NH CDFA (Community Development Finance Authority)
 - We are not considered a poor enough town for their grants. Planning and implementation grants.
- CARES Act Emergency Broadband Fund
 - 50 Million Allocated, only 14 was able to get spent due to December timeline

What have we been doing?

Chasing Grants! So far, failures 😞

Federal

- EDA (Economic Development Administration)
 - Need 20% match up front, can't ask for in provider RFPs
 - Need to focus on creating businesses/jobs.
- USDA Reconnect
 - must be 90% unserved
 - Providers can apply for piecemeal deployments possibly
 - There have been 2 rounds, another may open up for 2021, TBD
- USDA RBDG (Rural Business Development Grants)
 - Planning grants. New program opens in the fall, need to justify job creation
- RDOF (Rural Digital Opportunity Fund)
 - Reverse auction providers can ask for \$ in eligible census blocks, weird blocks of land that may not make sense today, there are a few in town. Providers can't talk till it's done in October.

What is Left? SB170

SB170 Refresher – Chesterfield like model, no tax \$, public/private partnership

- Town sends RFI to providers with 60 days to respond
- Providers respond to RFI
- Do a survey like other towns have done to gauge interest
- Map out served/unserved areas
- Send out RFP to providers sharing RFI and Survey information, providers have 60 days to respond.
- Town spends a month or two negotiating with and deciding on a provider if a solution fits.
- Must be voted on by 2/3 at town meeting, or special town meeting.
- Town Bonds for money equal to what it would take to supply the unserved infrastructure to the pole. Provider responsible for connections to home.
- Bond is payed back by provider via subscriber fee (approx. \$10/month +/-) over 20 years.

Note: There is no commitment from the town until a deal is finalized. Can withdraw at any time.

SB170 Progress to date

- ✓ RFI sent to providers
- ✓ RFI response – from Comcast and CCI
- ✓ Do a survey like other towns have done to gauge interest
- ✓ Map out served/unserved areas
- Send out RFP to providers sharing RFI and Survey information – Edited and ready to go
- Negotiate with and decide on a provider if a solution fits.
- Vote on by 2/3 at town meeting, or special town meeting.
- Town Bonds for money equal to what it would take to supply the unserved infrastructure to the pole. Provider responsible for connections to home.
- Bond is payed back by provider via subscriber fee (approx. \$10/month +/-) over 20 years.

Proposed SB170 Timeline

- September 2020 – Send RFP, response due in 60 days
- November 2020 – Receive RFP Response
- December/January 2021
 - Negotiate with providers and choose if acceptable solution
 - Public hearing for town with provider of choice
 - Talk to bond banks
- March 2021 or before
 - Either vote at town meeting or hold a special town meeting

MAP DEMO

- Francestown Maps