

Fiber Committee MEETING MINUTES

March 14, 2019

All minutes are draft until approved by the Committee please check future minutes for approval of these minutes. Meetings may be videotaped; recordings are held by Green Mountain Access Television. GMATV info: PO Box 581, Hyde Park, 05655; info@greenmountainaccess.tv or 802-851-1592

Members Present: Anne Geiersbach; Carol Fano; Michael Rooney

Members Absent: Christine Hallquist; Jack Wilson

Others Present: Ron Rodjenski, Town Administrator; Jack Wool, Rob Rodriguez; Brian Davison, COO of Mansfield Community Fiber; Tim Nulty, MC Fiber CEO; GMATV did not videotape this meeting

Ron opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

1. **Welcome** – Introductions made and overview of Hyde Park committee setup to explore fiber expansion in Hyde Park and the region.

2. **Mansfield Community Fiber, LLC**

Carol handed out a map of the Comcast cable lines in Hyde Park from a 2013 data layer she obtained from a State website. Brian Davison explained that Consolidated has fiber backbone but to the door is copper only, not fiber to the door. Brian noted that the concept for Mansfield Community is to bring fiber to the door with no bottle-necking and no slow speeds during high-use times. MC Fiber would like to expand fiber faster than their young company can do it, possibly through municipal loans, private loans from users, waiting for EC Fiber, and organizing a coalition with Johnson & Hyde Park providing funds to build the fiber then leased back to MC Fiber to run / operate the system. MC Fiber has built with state-of-the-art equipment and redundancy is being incorporated into all system areas. If money was not an issue, it would take about a year to get started and 2 or so years to reach all homes. Brian noted that fiber is the best option for the hills of Vermont and Michael noted that it is inherently limited requiring continual replacement. Fiber is the best current long-term internet hardware and could be the standard for 100 years. Brian noted that MC Fiber is a small company dedicated to serving Vermonters with sustainable network. Tim Nulty explained that he has been involved with telecommunications for many years and was a founder of EC Fiber, covering 25 towns and is now very successful. MC Fiber would follow the same basic formula and at some point, the fiber systems would become public utilities. Tim noted that MC Fiber is a business with ten highly qualified company partners that would like to make a profit but with a goal of creating a great service for the community. The committee will need to make a recommendation to the Selectboard regarding serving every home and in what timeframe, and the associated costs. Fiber needs 6 persons per mile to connect compared to Comcast at 15 or more and serving more rural areas is a goal. Design, Build, Operate and Transfer (DBOT) business model is now being used to build out EC Fiber with all costs paid by the cooperative of towns or fiber utility, sometimes following the electric utility model. If the town pays for the infrastructure, then EC Fiber would lease it. EC Fiber would own the network operating centers (NOCs) and the drops to the homes because they are built out over time rather than all at once line the main fiber lines along the roads. Access to poles and acquiring the license is a key component to the build out, taking 6 months minimum to many years to acquire the license. The startup engineering is key and does become easier once the system is up and running. Tim suggested a pilot project with 10 miles of roadway with fiber, possibly from Main Street up Centerville Road. Ron asked about the use of underground and Tim stated that it can be done with sand soils. B4RN is grassroots installation effort in England. A telecom district is a possibility for two or more towns with borrowing money unrelated to property taxes. MC Fiber will send a proposal to provide an overview and Brian encouraged the town to reach out for advice as we go along. **Next Meeting** – The next meeting will be to prepare a committee status report for the Selectboard, Ron to schedule.

3. **Adjourn** – Motion by Michael to adjourn, so voted at 8:40 p.m.