

Minutes of May 20, 2022 Broadband Committee

Town of Winchester, Vilas County

Chairman Jim Hochstetter called the meeting to order at 2:04 at the Winchester Town Hall and on Zoom. Present were: Jim Hochstetter, Dave Lull, Nicholas Newton, John Grimmer, Nancy Johnson (via Zoom). Guests: Craig Gowgiel and Lori (?) Winchester residents. Absent with notice: Gary Engstrom

Old Business:

Meeting recording was set.

April meeting minutes were not approved.

Any action to take with the PSC or Brightspeed: Not much can be done by the committee. The PSC will not comment or provide updates on pending applications which are slated to be approved at the end of July and Brightspeed cannot start any work until the Lumen acquisition is approved which is slated for later in 2022.

Any new information on current state of CenturyLink fiber network in Winchester. Dave Lull was unable to obtain current information from his contact at CenturyLink.

Website update: John indicated that a link to the PSC grants has been added along with information on the Affordable Connectivity Program. Google slides presentation has also been updated.

Resident Craig Gowgiel asked if the committee was aware of or given examples of other heavily wooded communities like Winchester who are using an aerial fiber solution for broadband. His concern is the load being put on poles and the weather impacts during winter, strong storms etc. None have been given and it was believed that Brightspeed has not implemented a solution like this anywhere yet. Bottom line is for Winchester, if the acquisition of Lumen assets by Brightspeed is approved later this year, this is the solution that will be offered.

Correspondence or other items:

Discussed what actions if any that the committee can take at this time. The timing of approvals of the grant and acquisition are such that we don't have any news to share with town residents. Even though we are in holding pattern waiting for these decisions, we will continue to meet as a committee but on a less frequent basis.

Winchester resident Lori (?) questioned how the acquisition will affect current CenturyLink customers. The committee confirmed that residents will still have internet but through a different company and that high speed fiber would be implemented in some town areas.

Next meeting date is Friday, July 29 at 2PM at the Winchester Town Hall and Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40.

Respectfully submitted by:

Nancy Johnson

Committee Secretary