

# MONADNOCK BROADBAND GROUP

## AGENDA

**April 1, 2021**

3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://bit.ly/2QBaN7T>

**Meeting ID: 844 2988 6367**

**Passcode: 625424**

**Join by Telephone: 1-646-558-8656**

**I. Welcome & Purpose of Session**

**II. Funding of Public Private Partnership Projects**

*A brief discussion dedicated to the possibility of American Rescue Plan Act stimulus funds or an upcoming State program (such as the one proposed through [SB 85](#)) to support proposed projects or bond payments.*

**III. Review of Candidate Topics and Key Points from March 15<sup>th</sup> Discussion**

*A chance to review and add candidate topics to the attached list and summary as well as determine which items should be discussed first.*

**IV. Rolling Up Our Sleeves**

*Group discussion on the topics identified in agenda item III.*

**V. Next Steps**

*Determine strategies for moving forward, coordination, collaboration, etc.*

**VI. Adjourn**

## Candidate Discussion Topics Relative to Public Private Partnership Agreements

As Proposed by Monadnock Broadband Group Members

Key Points and Remarks from March 15, 2021 Meeting

### 1. Defining “town wide” and addressing future development.

- Some communities used the road mileage and road listing mentioned in their RfP
- Attendees considered “all existing and future addresses”
- It was pointed out some addresses will be served by infrastructure with its “head end” in a different town
- Don’t forget to accommodate “off-grid” locations
- Dublin used “universal access” (aka every premise in town); Harrisville used “all town residents and businesses”
- CCI<sup>1</sup> has verbally committed to providing service where poles or conduit exists
- “All presently served areas” has merit because it is more expansive than residences and businesses (don’t forget about other organizations, places, properties)

### 2. Determining ownership and maintenance following bond payoff.

- Key questions/concerns for each community to think about: Will the network be wanted afterwards? Will it be obsolete? What about ownership in the case of default, merger? This is covered in the [Rindge example shared with the Group](#).
- Chesterfield’s contract turns over ownership to CCI after bond is paid off, however, the most recent five contracts assume local ownership. This approach allowed a different type of bond to be used (non-taxable), however, in the end the Bond Bank bundled the five bonds as taxable.
- Maintenance is currently addressed by a master service agreement that coincides with term of bond.

### 3. Listing specific town-owned network/components.

- The general understanding is the town will own distribution fiber on poles (even in unserved areas). CCI will own splitter cabinets, optical line terminal in central office, drops from the street to each premises, equipment in house, backhaul, and routing equipment in the central office. Past agreements address the ability to transfer ownership to whomever would take over (in cases of default). A potential issue exists in that the proposed town-owned fiber will be “overlashed” or physically tied to other CCI infrastructure.
- Proposed language uses the phrase: “Consolidated will keep accurate books”, however, there is nothing to address how changes and updates will be made over time (e.g. equipment replacement).
- Communities should pay attention to how the listing may be different for “more served” towns (such as Troy with ~25% unserved)?

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<sup>1</sup> CCI or Consolidated Communications is mentioned most frequently as they were the most prevalent internet service provider discussed during the meeting. They have completed similar agreements with six Monadnock Region communities to date with up to fifteen more poised for the 2021 calendar year throughout the State.

- 4. Language defining quality of service (e.g. “up to” vs. “no less than”).**
  - Attendees discussed a preference for “no less than” in the context of upload and download speeds.
  - Attendees learned ISPs can “over provision” a line to run faster than advertised to help meet expectations. There remains a concern that a potential new owner would interpret these standards differently and not in the favor of community expectations.
  
- 5. Maintenance and modernization responsibilities of both fiber and copper (especially in the longer term).**
  - Communities are concerned about how copper phone/DSL lines will be maintained and continue to be available. Likewise 911 service via phone offerings over fiber-optic connections.
  - In case of FiberCast, attendees learned that their voice over internet protocol (VOIP) lines will act the same way as copper lines do.
  - Attendees discussed the need for language that addresses resilience of the new network during power failure.
  
- 6. Subcontracting and concern about quality of service/work (incl. traffic control, construction).**
  - Ideas: CCI supervision/inspection (on-site), background checks, insurance; Mechanism to report issues like traffic incidents.
  - Concerns about people being prepared, doing quality work, (esp. home visits)
  - There is language in service agreement about independent contractors - Item 15 in Rindge agreement.
  - Some towns will require CCI to hire local PD for traffic control.
  - Point out to town counsel reviewing agreement.
  
- 7. Defining the pricing to consumers and variability over time.**
  - Currently no mention of it and there are no State limits on increasing prices
  - Harrisville example: “in line with those in other parts of NH...”- Under “ownership of work and proprietary rights” & “subscriber connections.”
  - Detailed pricing is not present (router monthly cost, one-time cost)
  - Proposal had pricing and is an attachment to the contract.
  - What about introductory period? Fitzwilliam’s pricing dropped between proposal and contract/agreement (also in Greenfield). CCI may be moving toward a standard pricing schedule.
  - What about package pricing?
  - What options are there for price protection?
  - Concern about what changes in network ownership could mean to consumer pricing.
  - What other add-ons will be on bills (for example Universal Service Fund).
  
- 8. Helping low-income residents and others with a less costly speed tier such as through FCC’s Lifeline program or by waiving the bond recovery fee or other surcharges.**
  - There is an FCC program (~\$50) currently being developed (unclear on end date).
  - Keene Housing program?
  - Fitzwilliam RfP responses had offerings at lower cost with FCC minimum but were costlier than CCI’s initial fee.
  - Idea: ensure CCI would cooperate with the Town, funders, grant opportunities that could reduce costs to customers.

- 9. Short duration for community to “accept” completed build-out.**
- 10. Term of bond recovery being adjusted (annually?). Ability to qualify for payments from other funding sources (incl. State programs).**
  - Original proposal was unchanging (Chesterfield stated every 2 years based on bond servicing).
  - RDOF grants to CCI that can pass down to reduce monthly costs and cost of bond.
  - Timing of bond sale/application and qualifications of grant programs to support project.
- 11. Providing free and/or public access at “community anchors” like town offices, transfer stations, libraries, community centers, etc.**
- 12. Considering the need to obtain payment and/or performance bonds.**
- 13. Responsibilities of provider to respond to any requests from local government.**

#### **Discussion Topic “Parking Lot”**

During the discussion, one or more topics with unresolved details may be considered for a future meeting or separate discussion.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.