**08 May 2020**

**Location: Zoom Conference Call**

**All Attending:** Butler Smythe,Jim Fisher, Robert Publicover, Doug Cowan, Eric Marshall, Brian DeFiore, Stephenie MacLagan

Opening Remarks – Intros

1. Town Updates
   1. Brooklin (Bill Cohen via email) passed that the upgraded DSL is complete – up and running – so 100% of residents should be able to get a minimum of 10/1. Butler noted that it would be interesting to know how many can still not get access either for cost or lack of phone lines (as in other peninsula areas).
   2. GWI submittal to USD has been submitted for Penobscot, Brooksville and Sedgwick. Results may still be some period of time off so just have to wait.
2. Maine Broadband Internet Bond – Vote 14 July!
   1. Absentee ballots go out in the middle of June, but you can apply for them now! Request goes from this site to the respective town office for approval. <https://www.vote411.org/maine#absentee-ballot-process>
   2. Need to reach out to make sure people vote and understand what this is.
   3. Presentations given online with Joel Katz on of the presenters. Video will be made available soon - via Island Institute - and will provide when available.

<https://www.mainebroadbandcoalition.org/yes-to-bond>

* 1. Grant will be used to match Federal grants - 1:4 rather than 1:10
  2. Next CARES act may include broadband funding
  3. Maine Community Foundation (MCF) is also looking at grants for match - aligned with state funds
  4. Island Institute has planning grants in July but current funding hasn’t been spent yet and waiting for reports. Communities are going to have to commit to a universal solutions.
     + 1. Raise funds at town meeting for universal fiber or other “high speed” access
       2. COVID has put municipal budgets into crisis (schools, taxes, vehicle registrations, etc.)
  5. Stephanie emphasized that gathering unique stories to connect broadband to people’s lives is the desire for the communication and sharing the stories is part of the campaign for the Bond vote.

Don’t forget to send in your stories: [broadbandstories@islandinstitute.org](mailto:broadbandstories@islandinstitute.org)

1. Schools (& Teachers) with Internet access issues. As passed previously, Brooksville input in this CNN report, if you haven’t read… <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/29/us/rural-broadband-access-coronavirus-trnd/index.html>
   1. 1 May Weekly Packet identified that a teacher vs. the GSA IT person, was addressing the shortfall in internet access to students (distributing hot spots for students (cell phones)… interesting. Hopefully all schools have identified all connectivity issues for local students?
   2. To help capture shortfalls in connectivity for students and teachers, a Sample Data collection “tool” was previously sent. The collective information could be used for any communication that needs data to support impacts of COVID on the education system – at least.
   3. Rather than contacting each school – the following five can be contacted (best of only by one (or 2) people max. Butler’s intent was to wait until after school was over and budget efforts less of a distraction. Jim has contacted Chris vis email. At this point Butler volunteered to contact the others later in the early summer (June). Would like inputs/comments on survey….
      * 1. Mark Hurvitt - Superintendent (Union 93)
        2. Chris Elkington – Superintendent (Union 76)
        3. Bay School – not sure how the School is impacted as they generally don’t use computers – but will find out…
        4. Harbor School
        5. GSA
   4. The homework gap is affected by
      1. InfrastructureA picture containing bird

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      2. Affordability
      3. Island institute deployed 100 hotspots - speeds are slow, unreliable
      4. Digital literacy in the home is a barrier
2. Community Connectivity Issues and Mapping shortfalls. Lack of Phone Lines, Communication, expansion (lack of), etc. add to local problems.
   1. RDOF (FCC Program) Grant Mapping issues conversation. Map to the right is from the link below and based on FCC data that is known to have issues.
      * 1. $18 billion in grants (FCC)
        2. Map indicate areas that are possibly eligible based on inaccurate FCC data - may be outdated as well
        3. <https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/auction-904-preliminary-eligible-areas/>
        4. Problems of granularity of the maps - including FCC data
   2. Inside the home issues
      * 1. Some homes don’t have computers in the home and lack funds to buy them
        2. Some resources that are available (not sure how they are impacted by COVID -19):
           1. Butler spoke with Jodi Martin at the last Maine Broadband Coalition Meeting in Waterville – her org is out of Belfast.

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* + - 1. Jim Fisher passed <http://technology.ruths.org/> - is a very affordable source (Belfast)

Hope to see more at the next meeting.

**OTHERS**

1. Next Meeting **– 0800 12 June** via **Zoom**

To Join Zoom Meeting: <https://islandinstitute.zoom.us/j/92000428161>

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