

**Bremen Broadband Committee Documents, Meeting Dates & Minutes  
September 2019 - July 2020**

**Committee Documents:**

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**LINKS TO TIDEWATER TELECOM & CONNECT MAINE APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:**

[Tidewater Telecom Proposal - Bremen Agreement - 2/4/2020](#)

[Final Joint Bremen/Tidewater Application to ConnectMaine - 5/7/2020](#)

- [Bremen Support Letters for ConnectMaine Application](#)

**Links to Minutes:**

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## May 10, 2019 Letter to Select Board of Intent to Form Committee

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May 10, 2019

Board of Selectmen  
Town of Bremen  
Bremen, Maine 04551

Dear Board Members:

I recently met with two Bremen residents who are interested in expanding broadband service in Bremen. Sam Hafford, Crissy Stirratt, and I met at the Bremen Town Library and decided we should form a Bremen Broadband Committee to explore possibilities. We will also have Christa Thorpe as an advisor bringing potential resources from her work on the Island Institute's Community Broadband team. In addition, Sam Hafford has extensive experience with broadband as a former IT consultant and employee of Tidewater Telecom.

We wondered if a member of the Board of Selectmen would be interested in meeting with us to help formalize the creation of this working group within the town. We have planned our next meeting tentatively for 11:00 on Wednesday, May 22nd at the Bremen Library.

You can email me at [ernieinvt@yahoo.com](mailto:ernieinvt@yahoo.com) or call me at 617-485-4707.

Yours truly,

Ernie Carroll

**September 5, 2019**

## **Bremen Broadband Committee Proposal & Goals**

### **Committee Goal:**

To help bring reliable, affordable, “future-proof” high-speed internet access to every home in Bremen.

### **Appointment Details:**

The duration of the committee will be two (2) years starting from the approval date, with the option to terminate or extend the term based on status of the project. At its discretion, the Board of Selectmen can extend the duration of the committee. The committee will be composed of five (5) members (preferably including a selectman liaison), which are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The committee will meet bi-weekly or as needed and will publicize meeting agendas and minutes.

### **Proposed Activities:**

- Collect data and mapping on the current state of internet access in Bremen

Update – from LCI/Alan Hinsey:

In Bremen we currently have :

- 295 DSL customers
- 95 Fiber customers

Also – FYI – there are 83 addresses right now in Bremen that have our fiber available to them (for \$69.95 50 Mbps - includes phone and 1,000 min long distance) that have not yet applied. We will be marketing to those 83 addresses again soon.

- Research the various options available to achieve the above goal, which may include working with the incumbent ISP, requesting information (RFI) from other service providers, exploring regional cooperation with neighboring towns, understanding funding sources, etc.
- Apply for Planning or Infrastructure Grants.
- Engage the community and estimate the public take rate using various methods including, but not limited to:
  - Surveys and Social networks
  - Articles in the local newspaper
  - Public presentations and Q&A sessions
- Support Digital Literacy initiatives in the community
- Participate in local, regional, and state conversations around Broadband that benefit Bremen.

**Proposed Membership:** *May be finalized after public invitation for residents to express interest?*

1. Ernest Carroll
2. Sam Hafford
3. Christa Thorpe (likely chair)
4. Brian Withers
5. Matthew Hanley

Select Board Liaison: Bo Marsh

Associate members (Unofficial): Autumn Mahoney, Crissy Stirrat

**Upcoming Dates:**

- Proposed Meeting Dates: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday or as needed – update to: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays?
- Local/State Broadband Events:
  - Tue. 9/24 (LCRPC broadband meeting, 6-8pm YMCA)
  - Mon-Tue 10/28-10/28 (Maine Broadband Summit, Thomas College, Waterville)

## Highlights from 2004 Bremen Comprehensive Plan relevant to Broadband Committee

### 3.2 Analysis – Economy (p. 21)

Of the people returning surveys, 71% felt that marine business like commercial fishing should be encouraged, and 67% believed that “home businesses” should be supported. In terms of future growth, 83% of respondents felt that single family housing was the only type of growth “that the Town could accommodate without jeopardizing the Bremen you love.”

### 3.4 Recommendations – Economy (p. 22)

#### Policies:

- Actively support the fishing industry.
- Limit non-marine development along the shores
- Actively support home based businesses.
- Encourage new businesses that are clean, non-polluting and compatible with those historical and existing businesses in Bremen.
- Keep Bremen affordable.

#### Strategies:

- Ensure that Town ordinances do not present unreasonable constraints to fishing and small home businesses.
- Participate in Regional Economic Development organizations looking for opportunities to encourage small businesses that are compatible with the rural character of Bremen.
- Publish a list of businesses in Bremen.
- Encourage the fishing community to sponsor public education forums such as the clam seeding project.
- Support State sponsored tax incentive programs that benefit the working marine waterfront.

## 16 REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS (p. 138-9)

The Town of Bremen is not a self-sufficient entity; it has many ties to neighboring communities, to Lincoln County, the Mid-Coast Region and the State; therefore, some of the issues concerning Bremen are also regional concerns.

Bremen recognizes the value and need to coordinate with neighboring communities to provide protection of shared resources, and to seek the best regional solutions for common concerns. Therefore, it is the long-term goal of the Town to utilize existing mechanisms and work with neighboring towns in developing new regional programs that will achieve common desires.

**Bremen Broadband Committee**  
**September 26, 2019**  
**5:30pm Bremen Library**

Committee Members Present: Christa Thorpe, Matthew Hanly, Sam Hafford, Brian Withers

Committee Members Absent: Ernie Carroll

Total Bremen residents in Meeting: 8

Introductions

- Christa Thorpe - Nobleboro Rd resident, Island Institute community development officer
- Matthew Hanly - spent summers here whole life, lives on Fogler Rd, frustrated by lack of high speed internet; school board member; pretty good cell service
- Elaine Stevens - recently moved back to Maine after 20 years in FL, born brought up in Maine, used to FL service, but "service here is like waiting for the paint to dry"
- Reggie Stevens - retired, but still has tax clients - needs high speed internet for work
- Sam Hafford - broadband committee, background in construction of internet networks & fiber optics
- Brian Withers - works for Cisco systems, has the resources to get Bremen Broadband Committee access to Cisco's resources for data & analysis and other tools
- Marty Forrest - Does online consulting, concern about monthly affordability
- Niel Ross, lives in Muscongus, helps people "cut the cord" - Sportz TV, at home currently getting 6mbps, paying \$111/mo for that plus the phone -- would be willing to do free classes on cutting the cord

Discussion of Tidewater/LCI Proposal:

- Proposed Prices: \$70/50mbps - \$90/100mbps and \$100 installation that can be applied to monthly
- Tidewater = ILEC (incumbent local exchange carrier) and LCI = CLEC (Competitive...)
- ConnectME goal is to cover 20% of the cost of a build-out -- need to clarify this, because Tidewater's proposal has ConnectME covering almost 50%
  - Committee member commented: This process seems to work backwards - Communities first need to choose a company to work with, rather than being funded then getting to put out to bid
  - Decisions made based on headcount, less populated areas don't have the density to attract ISP
- Neil spoke on getting signatures from community members about their interest in competition noting that "Spectrum is hungry to get customers." Others have heard very negative perceptions of Spectrum
- Bremen has space on the poles for multiple providers
- CMP is the "wireless network" that touches every house on the grid in Bremen since every meter is a smart wireless meter

Bremen Goals:

- Need high-speed, reliable, affordable FTTH in Bremen
  - Explore creative options such as feasibility of setting up mesh networks (ubiquity.com)
- Maintain the ability to have choice and competition
- Explore municipal ownership and invite providers to compete on it (open access?)
- Due diligence for Bremen residents - exploring other providers through RFPs
- Working regionally with Bristol
- Conduct a survey to gain wider perspective of community priorities

Next Meeting: October 10th - 5:30

**Actions:**

- Ask selectmen "Does the town have a revenue source from power utilities for poles in our right of way?"
  - Thorpe to reach out Bristol broadband, ask if they have a meeting coming up and offer to attend to explore regional collaboration
  - Thorpe will send out minutes and put Draft minutes on website
  - Thorpe ask Peggy Schaeffer at ConnectME whether Tidewater/LCI have already applied
  - Need help with legal framework - Ask selectboard (Ernie?)
  - Possible future action: Hafford could have meeting with CMP if needed
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**Bremen Broadband Committee Agenda  
October 10, 2019  
5:30pm Bremen Library**

**BB Committee Members Present:** Christa Thorpe, Ernie Carroll, Matthew Hanly, Sam Hafford, Brian Withers  
**Also Present:** Henry Goldberg (Bremen resident), Alan Hinsey (LCI)

- Approval of 9/26 Minutes with spelling corrections
- Introductions: New attendees to this meeting included Bremen resident Henry Goldberg, Telecommunications lawyer practicing in Washington DC, represents private companies before the FCC, did some early work for Netflix. Alan Hinsey from Tidewater/LCI also attended the meeting.
- ConnectME Updates
  - Christa Thorpe shared answers from Peggy Schaeffer (director of ConnectME) to our questions about the ConnectME grant application process. An internet service provider *can* apply for a grant alone, without direct involvement of the town. From Peggy: "LCI has not applied for a grant for Bremen. I think they are talking about using RUS or other funding available to them because Bremen is in their ILEC footprint."
  - Alan Hinsey shared that LCI has received 14 ConnectME grants. They have worked all 3 ways (applying alone, community applying and hiring Tidewater, and doing it as a partnership -- they prefer the partnership)
    - Most recent successes were Bowdoinham/LCI and Alna/Tidewater
    - LCI is now working with other ILEC groups - Lincolnville, Bristol
  - Hanly asked about ConnectME funding mix - goal to cover 20% the cost of build out
  - Rating system includes more - Participation points - cost per home passed (under \$500)
  - Community Participation: Need to get 85% of 283 homes that would be served to say yes on a survey - we would support that
  - RUS funds - grants and loans available - Tidewater is interested in RUS loan funds for project
- Bremen poles update (Sam, Ernie)
  - Ernie will follow up with Hank to get answers
  - CMP can see all the meters in the neighborhood; Smart network
- Generate ideas for potential Island Institute Planning Grant Application (group)



- Andrew Hinkley - 207-659-9900 → Sam Hafford recommends for helping discuss the planning grant - negotiated pole attachment agreement with CMP
- Christa will invite Island Institute to answer questions about planning grant
- Tidewater - 8 miles of fiber: 94 customers do have fiber, 83 could but don't -- need to explore why
  - Hinsey: If another company is willing to build out fiber for \$400,000, we should take their opportunity, but Tidewater is committed to improving service for its ILEC customers
  - Hafford: Will it be an overlash build out? Alan assumes so. Would be hard to beat the cost
  - For Alna and Bowdoinham, Tidewater helped create the online survey
  - Carroll will ask selectboard about information on other providers
- October 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> Bremen reps to [Maine Broadband Summit](#)
  - Sam Hafford & Ernie Carroll

Next meeting - October 24th - 5:30

Actions- RFP from selectboard to ISPs? / Planning Grant brainstorm

## October 24, 2019

**BB Committee Members Present:** Christa Thorpe, Ernie Carroll, Matthew Hanly, Sam Hafford, Brian Withers

**Selectmen Present:** Bo Marsh, Hank Nevins

- **Approval of 10/11 minutes - MH moved, Sam second, Approved**
- **Discussion:** A Lincoln County News report from the recent paper implied that the select board was discussing and moving ahead on broadband plans with Tidewater. Bo Marsh and Hank Nevins attended tonight's broadband committee meeting to get on the same page.
  - **Select board report** - Bo shared out that broadband was an item on the agenda and the article captured what had been shared. In response to Mr. Hanly's feeling of the committee needing to be notified Hank reported that all committees should send a representative to select board meetings. Discussion of the protocol moving forward - how to prevent miscommunication and lack of transparency between
- **Discussion of Revised proposal from Tidewater**

Alan Hinsey said Tidewater got the signal that Bremen doesn't want to pitch in the money and they're willing to work with us without a cash match. Tidewater is going to build out FTTP anyway and they want to do it quicker with town partnership. ConnectME round is March 2020 so we need to be ready to apply for that jointly. If the town doesn't join, Tidewater will apply by themselves. Committee will work together on surveys, participation. Tidewater doesn't see the need for a planning grant, can do own design, has the data they need. Total still around \$400k, \$95k from ConnectME because it's under \$100k and it makes price per home \$350, About the same amount of ConnectME funds and 165 served in Alna.

Sam Hafford reiterated the question of whether the build will be an overlash? That's the fastest, cheapest way, and Alan agrees that they'll likely do whatever is fastest and cheapest. Hinsey pointed out that if successful, the build would be done by June we'd be one of the first 100% FTTP towns in Maine.

Hank: Questions about numbers - We have 668 metered locations in Bremen. Currently 94+83+283 = 400 -- Want to ensure that all homes will be served. Hinsey agrees that number may go up after detailed survey. To the question of whether there will be a seasonal rate, they don't know yet.

Committee members raised questions about pricing -- will these prices be locked in? Hinsey responded there's a 3 year contract to get those rates - \$200 to break the contract

Question was raised regarding how the town can hold Tidewater accountable - The ConnectME grant is one accountability tool but there's limited capacity for ongoing oversight. To ensure the project's success, Tidewater wants a presale of 140 homes (50% of total new build). ConnectME is looking for efficiency for every dollar they spend - also, grantees must finish project within 12 months. Alan Hinsey reiterated their goal is to do what makes sense for both parties.

- **Town survey? Table to next meeting:** The committee can do a survey gauging interest -- Alan said they have contact info for all Tidewater customers. We have 330 people on Bremen email list - so Tidewater can send out the link for us to use.

At the committee's request, Alan left to let the group deliberate on their own. Former Waldoboro broadband committee member Seth Hall shared about challenges with lack of control over Tidewater's pricing changes. This is something the committee will keep in mind for negotiations in the agreement. Hall explained that Tidewater's fiber build in downtown Waldoboro provided fantastic, reliable service, but the rest of Waldoboro still has poor out-of-date coverage.

Downtown Waldoboro customers used to have 100meg symmetrical for \$49.95 (side note from Seth - fiber IS the answer and Tidewater's Fiber service has been incredible). Hall explained that when he asked for a second line, the terms changed, and even as a presently contracted subscriber - he'd be asked to pay \$190/month for 100 symmetrical. Hall is hosting a meeting at the Bug Tussle annex in Waldoboro to discuss broadband connectivity for entire midcoast region -- watch the paper, will happen before Thanksgiving (**Update: Meeting scheduled for Nov. 14**). Mr. Hall is inviting members from other municipalities interested in broadband expansion - the reason for the meeting is to share information and discuss the possibility of more public accountability and ownership over broadband utilities.

The committee decided to take time to consider all of the information around the proposal and to make a final decision about moving forward with Tidewater at the next meeting on **October 31, 2019**.

**Meeting adjourned** at 7:00.

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## October 31, 2019

Bremen Broadband Committee meeting - 5:30 Bremen Library

**BB Committee Members Present:** Christa Thorpe, Ernie Carroll, Matthew Hanly, Sam Hafford

**Absent:** Brian Withers

**Others Present:** Mary Ellen Barnes, director of Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission; Autumn Mahoney, associate member & communications volunteer; Marty Forrest; Dave Herbert.

**Discussion:**

- Mary Ellen Barnes reported on the LCRPC 7 Towns Planning Grant process
- Hafford, Carroll, and Thorpe reported out on the Maine Broadband Summit
- Committee discussed message to Select Board regarding working relationship
  - BB Committee will send a member to the committee
  - When the committee has recommendations, we pass them on to the select board
  - Select board is concerned with the time-sensitive aspect of it -- want the committee to make a decision as quickly as possible to hit the grant
  - BB Committee provided Bo and Hank with some background about trust issues with Tidewater -- Marty was frustrated with the charging of \$100 to change contract -- his pricing is currently \$130 a month
  - Mary Ellen can help us understand the ConnectME process (whether that grant comes to the town or can go straight from the ISP)
  - Town attorney can look over the draft of an agreement (MOU between Tidewater and Bremen)
  - Formal letter of intent from Tidewater -- to include in a survey to the town
- Next Steps:
  - First, sit down with Tidewater to discuss the proposal:
    - Roles of each party
    - Reasons for not moving forward at this moment and request a formal intent/best deal from Tidewater -- outline our requests:
      - Specific Contract Terms: What is the deal for each homeowner -- real prices, installation responsibility (distance, every address served), 3-year scope of rates, service, seasonal resident arrangement, as much detail as possible (installation subsidies for Bremen residents)
    - After getting their formal letter of intent, we can come back to the table with our needs:
      - Interested in a better deal for seasonal residents (65% of town)
      - Don't want to impact our ability to get competition in the future -- Long term goal to bring some alternatives in or explore maintaining our own infrastructure
    - If we get satisfactory response from Tidewater - share the letter of intent through a survey, forum, etc.
  - **Survey/Forum** - Autumn Mahoney: we should go ahead and do a survey anyway
    - Gather data that we can pass on to other vendors for RFP if desired
  - Discussion on whether to pursue RFP: Given the position of Tidewater as Bremen's "ILEC" (Incumbent Local Exchange Company) building FTTP will be drastically cheaper for Tidewater than any other company, because Tidewater can access federal RUS loans for their ILEC areas.
  - When we get the letter from Tidewater, it would be a good time for our committee and the select board to sit down with our town attorney (Henry Goldberg volunteered to help this process)

Action:

- Email MLSN about Bremen Library speeds
- Thorpe respond to Tidewater/LCI that we appreciate the proposal and want to move forward with shaping an agreement. We need a formal proposal with details of the plan & pricing. This would allow us to survey the town on whether they would support the actual plan -- be as specific as possible
  - Survey includes: Would you be willing to support the proposal from Tidewater
  - Another question - how many Bremen seasonal residents turn off their phone service; How many current DSL customers are there?
- Autumn will write up a press release on the committee's progress so far

Next Meeting: Nov. 21st - Would like 1 week to review (request proposal be sent by Nov. 14th)

**Working Groups - to be confirmed next meeting**

- Terms of Agreement working group -- Brian, Sam, Matthew
- Survey Working Group -- Christa & Ernie

**Announcements:**

- Nov. 14 Bug Tussle - Matthew Hanly might attend
- Nov. 7th Select Board Meeting - Ernie Carroll
- Nov. 21st - Christa tentatively attend select board meeting at 5pm then head to 5:30 Broadband mtg

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**Bremen Broadband Committee  
November 21, 2019  
Bremen Library  
5:30 - 6:36**

**Committee Members Present:** Matthew Hanly, Christa Thorpe, Ernie Carrol, Brian Withers, Sam Hafford on phone

Other attendees: Bremen residents Henry Goldberg, Bennett Collins, Dave Herbert

**Discussion:**

Intro: Had planned to focus the whole agenda of this meeting on discussion of the formal Proposal from Tidewater for FTTP build out in Bremen, but having not yet received the proposal, committee discussed ideas for a terms of agreement and concluded that community involvement creates a more successful grant application.

**Terms of Agreement - Brainstorming**

- Don't preclude future competition (leave make-ready space on the poles)
- Timeline -- LCI will stick to their proposed time -- Penalty if build out isn't done on time?
- Affordability -- Comcast's Internet Essentials program
- Existing customers' rates same as new rates = standard for whole town
- Fix rates -- most favored nation treatment, no one else gets lower rate
- Give 90 days notice before rate change
- Seasonal resident pricing option
- Equal Access to All - no matter where you live in Bremen your home would have access to the same speeds and reliability as any other resident
- How company will deal with service interruptions and the restoration times

**Other considerations in this process:** Dealing with history of Tidewater's last ConnectME grant funded build out in Bremen and residents' memory that "they didn't deliver" on the original proposal -- "Progress moves at the speed of trust." Post-meeting Update: Tidewater Telecom requested clarity from the town and committee about this history -- why did community members feel that Tidewater had not come through in the past? Thorpe looked up the past ConnectME grant application and confirmed that Tidewater Telecom **had** completed

the project as described in the ConnectME application which was reviewed by the Select Board of Bremen. There was a misunderstanding in the community that the more recent fiber build (down Keene Neck Rd and a few others) would be a fiber install to the whole town, but this was not mentioned in any documents. Alan Hinsey's response to the community misunderstanding: "We work hard to provide exceptional customer service and to always fulfill all deliverables on our projects and contracts (note – all of our 13 ConnectME projects have been completed 100% - on time and within budget). We are human and we make mistakes – but when that happens, our company philosophy is to take responsible and take corrective action as soon as possible."

### **Next Steps**

- Survey & Public Forum Committee (Christa & Ernie)
  - Find out whether LCI survey can be customized by town with town access to results
  - If we do our own survey, what are the costs? Can we use LCRPC Survey Monkey account?
  - Note -- for hard copy surveys: Special mailing rate through library
  - Brian willing to help visualize data using software
  - Survey work session next Wednesday 11/27 at 11am-1pm
- Terms of Agreement Committee (Brian Withers, Matthew Hanly, and Henry Goldberg)
  - Will work by email to shape our terms of agreement on LCI proposal when we receive it
- "Competition" Committee (Sam) - explore other ISP interest in Bremen, as well as potential models for municipal network; consult with Andy Hinkley

### **Survey Questions Brainstorm** - plan to take much of survey content from Jefferson survey and LCRPC

- Do you favor the town owning its broadband infrastructure? (like firetruck, roads, etc)
- Digital literacy question

**Next Meeting:** Dec. 19, 2019 at Library 5:30-6:30pm

### **EMAILED Notes/Feedback on Proposal Rec'vd 11/25/19**

- 1 Does the 23 miles of fiber include private roads/ entrances?
- 2 How many address's are there in Bremen.  $94 + 83 = 177$ ,  $177 + 283 = 460$  per TWT calculations.
- 3 What about future developments
- 4 50% of pre sale could be high (is this a mandate by connect me)
- 5 What will open for business pricing be? do we need to differentiate residential or business as this is not a regulated service.
- 6 is there an additional cost for live streaming TV and if so how much
- 7 can customer provide private (customer provided equipment cpe) if constructed to specifications?
- 8 With a begin date of 8/1/20, what will the completion date be? how many days to construct and have total services deployed?
- 9 service interruptions and the restoration times
- 10 "Bremen to assist in the marketing and pre sale of 50% of new homes." What is meant by new homes?
- 11 What are the additional cost for symmetrical speeds
- 12 Limited time ( June 30, 2020) price guaranteed
- 13 \$1 a month for battery back up
- 14 define cost for seasonal plans
- 15 limited time offer on p4
- 16 Language to address subsidies for low-income residents?
- 17 What happens if 140 pre-buy application goal isn't attained?

*18 worried about the tight timeline and amount of work to do to gain the support necessary to make this happen*

**December 19, 2019**  
**Thursday 5:30pm at the Bremen Library**

**AGENDA**

1. Draft response to Tidewater's Proposed Agreement for Bremen fiber build-out  
Committee discussed key questions and concerns regarding the proposal:
  - 283 homes might be further off than they think. According to Brian's data, there are 613 addresses in Bremen; TWT has 460 total addresses
  - Pricing Questions: What is the O.P.E.N. for Business pricing?
    - Please provide details about the "seasonal plan"
    - We would like same price-per-speed for everyone, not distinguish between residential and business (we're trying to encourage small business) - charge more for higher capacity needs
  - We want symmetrical speeds 50/50 and 100/100
  - Price to lease modem?
  - We want the advertised LCI pricing of \$50 with option of no landline
  - What is the result if the 50% pre-buy is not attained? (Since we're signing this agreement)
  - Why is the battery back up required? If this is non-negotiable, please clarify how this serves the customer - details regarding service interruptions and restoration time.
  - \$10 for state minimum speed (25/5) for low-income families

Next Step: Christa will send the questions/points in an email to TWT

Request responses by Friday Jan. 3rd; Our goal is to get an agreement signed by the 13th of January

Henry Goldberg: When we have a revised proposal addressing the questions, the committee will draft an MOU that both parties would sign regarding Bremen's art of the deal

Thorpe asked the committee a final question regarding potential support from Island Institute for LCI: Committee responded that as long as it doesn't hinder our process, Island Institute providing a planning grant to Tidewater is fine with the committee.

Before next meeting:

- Finalize survey and action plan for community outreach
- Plan public forum on Broadband for January 23rd

Action: Mr. Carroll will try to find out how many Bremen residents are on public assistance of some kind to give Tidewater a rough number since we're requesting a commitment around low-income subsidies.

**Next Meetings:** Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 5:30pm. Christa Thorpe will be absent.  
Thursday, January 23, 2020 at 5:30pm followed by Public Forum?

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**January 9, 2020**

**Members Present at Bremen Library:** Matthew Hanly, Brian Withers, Ernie Carroll

**Present via WebEx:** Christa Thorpe

**Selectman Present:** Boe Marsh

**Summary:** Committee discussed MOU with Tidewater and next steps with selectman Boe Marsh. Committee then worked on Bremen Broadband Survey draft together.

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Note from Ernie Carroll:

In response to Alan's email of Feb. 3 about 55 addresses "that won't have fiber running directly to a pole within drop distance", Sam and I went to the following addresses.

On Feb. 24 we visited 19 and on Feb. 28 we visited 13. All but one had an existing phone drop that Sam said could be "Over lashed" if I have that right. Additionally, two already have Fiber services.

**February 13, 2020**

At 12:14 PM, Christa Thorpe <cthorpe@islandinstitute.org> wrote:

Hi all,

Apologies for the late notice, but as today was a snow day for the town and the library, we will not be able to have our regular Broadband Committee meeting tonight.

I'll try to sum up what we would have covered in the meeting tonight:

- Select Board meeting report (2/6/20)
  - Re: MOU – As you saw from last week's email from Alan Hinsey, he does not expect Tidewater management to sign the MOU for reasons he gave in his email. At the select board meeting, he shared that if Bremen is awarded the Connect Maine grant, there will be a legal binding contract from Connect Maine for Tidewater to complete the project as specified. Personally, I would still prefer Tidewater to sign the MOU provided by our committee, but I don't see wisdom in holding up the whole process for that. I am glad to know that Connect Maine does provide a contract, and I've requested Alan send a copy of their past contracts for us to see. Any other thoughts on this point?
  - Re: Timeline – The select board gave Tidewater's final proposal to the Town Attorney and will sign it when advised to do so by the attorney. In the meantime, we will move forward with

gathering survey responses and planning a Forum for February 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am at the Town Office.

- Broadband Survey
  - I've attached the final draft of the survey, and I welcome you all to preview the final online version [here](#) and let me know if you see any glaring issues.
  - Dissemination: I will work with Kelly to make sure the Tidewater proposal is posted both at the town office and on the website, if possible by tomorrow 12/14
    - Paper surveys will be available at the town office. We also need a plan for mailing out the surveys either through Tidewater or the town\*
    - Online survey – the link will be emailed to all those on the town list serve as soon as the Tidewater proposal is posted. It will also be posted on the Announcements page of the town website.
    - \*Other: Press release, facebook, door-to-door
  - \*Pending action items – need to meet soon about these!
- Public Forum – tentatively set for Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup> at 11am, but to make this happen we need to be promoting it *next week*. Thoughts on whether this is feasible?

Suggestion: Sub-team meeting this Saturday 2/15 10:00am at the Library

- If one other team member is available to meet at the library this Saturday to help me draw up a press release for the broadband survey and public forum announcement/agenda, that would help move us forward. Let me know.

**Bremen Broadband Committee  
February 27, 2020  
5:30pm Bremen Library**

**Members Present:** Brian Withers, Christa Thorpe, Sam Hafford, Ernie Carroll

Also: Henry Goldberg

**Agenda**

1. Tidewater & Spectrum updates
2. Broadband Forum details
3. Addresses check-in (Sam and Ernie update on pole scoping; Brian updates?)
4. Survey Data [Here](#) is a link to all the responses so far

**Minutes**

- Brian is working on data - interested in utilizing the map to gauge interest and prioritize build-out\*
- Discussion of Spectrum's interest in Bremen. Spectrum will take longer. Need to work on franchise agreement before moving forward with Spectrum. This can be a future role of the committee to reach our original goal of wanting competition in Bremen.
- Discussion of Bowdoinham's contract and language we want to add to Connect Maine Authority grant - Christa to send MOU to Peggy Schaeffer with request to add more protective language to Contract



- Saturday Forum - estimating 10 pizzas from Hilltop Stop (owned by Bremen residents)
- Continue collecting survey responses and Petition signatures

**Action:**

- CT bring clipboards to Forum
- CT coordinate final details with Alan (pizza, attendees, bring Randal?)
- Henry, Sam, and Ernie to enter paper survey
- Brian will continue working on data

**February 29, 2020**

Bremen Broadband Forum - Saturday 11:00 – Bremen Town Office

**Agenda**

**10:30 – 11:00 Pre-meeting**

- Committee members at “welcome table” with handouts & paper surveys (plus 2 laptops with survey link), greeting public as they come in and asking if they’ve taken the survey

**11:00 – 11:05 Welcome/Intro**

- Christa introduce BB committee
- Committee member briefly summarize our work so far (volunteers?)
- Christa introduce agenda/facilitate meeting

**11:05 – 11:15 Community Members share on importance of broadband for...**

- Working professionals/telecommuting (Brian Withers)
- Education (Student or school board member)
- Aging in place & telehealth (Dr. Mike Clark *tentatively*)
- Business Owner/Marine economy (Boe Marsh *tentatively*)

**11:15 – 11:20 Q&A for community members**

**11:20 – 11:35 Tidewater Telecom Presentation on FTTP-Built proposal**

**11:35 – 12:00 Public Comment and Q&A about Tidewater Plan**

- May continue longer if needed, but additional questions may be asked after forum (esp. about specific addresses)

### **12:00 – 12:10 Closing**

- Next steps: Reminder of survey & Connect Maine grant
- Volunteer recruitment for raising support for grant
- Future digital literacy classes opportunities, including “Cutting the Cord”

### **12:10 – 1ish? Refreshments & Continued interactive Q/A - Pizza & Drinks Provided by Tidewater**

- Specific address questions - google earth display
- O.P.E.N. TV demo?

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**Post-Forum Summary:** ~35 Bremen residents (typical for special town meeting; today was a beautiful sunny day and the Republican Caucus was taking place at exactly the same time - something we had neglected to notice when planning, but we also felt the need to have the forum as soon as possible.

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**Bremen Broadband Committee  
March 12, 2020  
5:30pm Bremen Library**

**Present:** Matthew Hanly, Christa Thorpe, Ernie Carroll, Sam Hafford, Brian Withers  
Also: Henry Goldberg

**Agenda:**

- **Spectrum Updates** (Christa/Matthew)
- **Tidewater - trim cost applied?** (Sam)
- **ConnectME Grant To-do's** (Brian, all)

Discussion of Spectrum's (Melinda Kinney's) phone calls with Matthew and Christa expressing intention to build 100% FTTH in Bremen and challenge current ConnectME grant process

Decision: Communicate to Alan: We've heard that Spectrum wants to move forward, but we have nothing in writing and Christa get up to date info from Connect Maine  
Monday 1:30 - Christa has meeting with Alan

Matthew: **Motion to stay the course on the ConnectME grant - commit to agreement with Tidewater**  
2nd Brian → Committee Vote = 5 in favor / Unanimous consent

**ConnectME Grant Next Steps:**

- Have 108 signatures; Need 293 more addresses
  - Christa (Nobleboro Rd, north end of Shore Rd, Storer Rd)

- Brian (north tip of Waldoboro Rd; east Turner Rd)
- Matthew (Biscay, Fogler, McCurdy, Porcupine Ridge, west Turner Rd)
- Sam & Ernie (Muscongus Rd, Factory Rd, Waldoboro Rd from Biscay to Muscongus; south end of Shore Rd.)

Ask Melinda if they've recently applied to Tidewater to have the town of Bremen added to their pole list of attachments

1. Bremen BB Cmte - pls begin collecting info and writing section for the application:
  1. 85% support signatures (340 min) from the 400 unserved addresses
    - i. volunteers to do door to door if needed
  2. Letters of support (these need to be Bremen residents or Bremen-based – but are not restricted to just the 400 unserved addresses)

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**Bremen Broadband Committee**  
**March 26, 2020**

First 100% Virtual Meeting: WebEx hosted by Brian Meeting number (access code): 207 335 407

Brief Meeting to discuss revised action plans since Covid-19 interruptions to door-to-door signature gathering.

Discussed ongoing issue with potential interest from Spectrum but still no information in writing. Committee concluded that Tidewater is likely to get FTTP built before Spectrum

Brian - compile support letters from data & addresses

Henry - support

Ernie - will send to friends

CT send email link.

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**Committee Grant Work Sessions Continue Remotely on WebEx and Zoom:**  
*No Meeting Minutes Taken - Updates/Notes added to ConnectME Grant Application*

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Grant Application Work Session with Tidewater

**April 6, 2020**

Alan Hinsey is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: ConnectME Grant check in with Bremen

Time: Apr 6, 2020 01:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Committee Members Present: Matthew Hanly, Christa Thorpe

Bremen BB Committee Grant Work Session on WebEx

**April 9, 2020**

5:30pm - All committee members attended virtually except Sam Hafford

Grant Application Work Session with Tidewater

**April 23, 2020**

Thursday, April 23, 2020 2:00 PM-3:00 PM

Committee Members Present: Matthew Hanly, Christa Thorpe, Brian Withers

Bremen BB Committee Grant Work Session on WebEx

**April 23, 2020**

5:30pm - All committee members attended virtually except Sam Hafford

Grant Application Work Session with Tidewater

**April 30, 2020**

Alan Hinsey is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting - 2:00 PM-3:00 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84002413432>

## **Bremen Broadband Committee Minutes**

**June 25, 2020**

**5:30-6:30**

**Location: Online/WebEx**

**Bremen Broadband Committee Members Present:** Brian Withers, Christa Thorpe, Sam Hafford

**Committee Members Excused:** Ernie Carroll, Matthew Hanly

Other Bremen residents present:

- Tracy Jones
- Jodi Shapiro
- Henry Goldberg
- Paul Williard
- Steve Heffernan
- Neal Ross

Tidewater representatives present:

- Alan Hinsey - director of Marketing and Sales for Tidewater
- Matthew Hurley, Project Manager for Bremen fiber network build-out

**Meeting Summary:** The purpose of this meeting was for Bremen to hear from Tidewater about the proposed build-out timeline and next steps for the committee and residents.

### **Running Meeting Notes:**

- Introduction of Project Manager Matthew Hurley - joined Tidewater 6 months ago and dove into Bowdoinham and Alna build-out processes which he's now finishing up.
- ConnectMaine contract - signed between Tidewater and ConnectMaine on July 1 states that project must be completed by June 30, 2021. Extension requests are allowed, but this is LCI's 17th contract with no extensions needed so far.
- "Completed" project means fiber on all the poles and ability to connect homes, but note that doesn't mean every home is "lit" at that time. Still Tidewater's goal is to have as many customers using the new network by July 2021 as possible.
- Next step is for Matthew Hurley to lead the process of identifying every address in Bremen to ensure the build-out results in 100% FTTH on the mainland. We're starting with a list of approximately 400 addresses, but in this surveying process, the address list will likely grow. In Bowdoinham, the expected number of addresses went from planning to connect 195, to actually connecting 217 (pre-sold 110, and next week will have 75 of those lit up). If Bremen is similar to Bowdoinham's build out, we can hope for around 70% "lit" by next July.
- Cases that require "Customer action" will take longer - for example, those that have to put in conduit, etc.
- ConnectME distributes money in 25% increments, so Tidewater will be using the available ConnectME funds up front, then drawing on RUS loans, and the last 25% of ConnectME grant funding comes when the build out is completed.

- Tidewater is now completing the RUS application - so the availability of those funds will partly determine the timeline.
- **Materials:** Bremen will need approximately 25 miles of fiber optic cable. The normal lead time to receive such an order is 6-8 weeks, but nationwide there's a new understanding of the need for internet, plus coronavirus has increased the need, resulting in a hugely increased demand for a tight supply; Therefore, the new lead time is 24+ weeks. Tidewater is ordering the cable right away, but it won't be on hand until November/December; Similarly, the electronic equipment needed on both ends of fiber is manufactured by a company whose lead time has also greatly increased, not as long a wait as the cable, but a lot longer than would be.
- **Timeline:** July 2020: Tidewater is ordering the cable in the next couple weeks
  - Phase 1: Design/Planning.** July - November 2020. Lots of planning between now and Thanksgiving - lots of pre-surveys to ensure every address is captured (Matthew Hurley - project design). Detailed design for fiber and attention on Marketing/Customer interest - pre-orders -- committee helps with communication; Pre-site-surveys - customers will have heads up about any additional construction charges
  - Phase 2: Transmission.** November - fiber arrives, transmission lines on poles, and we're ready to go.
  - Phase 3: Splicing.** December 2020 - Splice the "looped fiber" off the transmission lines to be ready for dropping to individual addresses.
  - Phase 4: Dropping.** January - July 2021. Tidewater aims to be lighting up the network after Christmas holidays and beginning to splice and connect addresses through the spring/summer.
- Caveats: Weather issues can happen, but at least we're not facing unexpected Covid interruptions the way Bowdoinham and Alna did, as Tidewater was able to develop "safe install" protocols that are now in place so they can keep working.
- Key concept is "Managing customer expectations" - Tidewater will try to be really clear about what's happening so everyone in town knows (Alan inquired whether Bremen has a town newsletter. Yes we do, but we should also plan to probably send a hard copy mailing to all addresses with tax bills.)
- **Bremen Public WiFi Hotspots:** Other ideas to help manage expectations and provide for the desperate needs for high-speed connection during the ongoing pandemic: Bremen WiFi hotspot wish list - where do we want them. Ideas:
  - Town Office
  - Library
  - Post Office
  - Firestation & Town House
  - Broad Cove Marine
  - Community Shellfish parking lot
  - (Future) Muscongus Harbor parking lot?
- **Q & A:** A few questions were asked by Bremen members about installation processes and fees and what we can do ahead of time to prepare for the winter/spring installations, such as readying conduit, etc.
  - Committee members have Matt Hurley's phone number - Sam Hafford will be able to help navigate the build-out with customers, but make sure Matt/Tidewater is the final point of contact so we're not muddying the waters.

## Next Steps:

- Send our Public WiFi “wishlist” to Tidewater
- Make plan for communicating build-out phases timeline with Bremen residents
- Be in touch with Matt Hurley about helping with address surveying

### **Bremen Broadband Committee Minutes**

**July 30, 2020**

**5:30-6:30**

**Location: Online/WebEx**

#### Meeting Notes:

- Tidewater Updates: Bremen Public WiFi hotspots & Phase 1 build-out updates
  - Questions about Address List:
    - 50ish address list? Sam and Ernie got  $\frac{2}{3}$  way through checking those 50 addresses and found that many of them were in fact within pretty close proximity to a pole with Tidewater network. They are willing to continue that process.
    - Inactive addresses? Paul Williard noticed his address was listed as not having fiber (correct) but was also listed as “inactive” even though it’s definitely an active connection currently - 55 Storer Rd. His neighbor Nancy Hall’s address was also listed as inactive though that’s inaccurate.
    - Henry commented that we need to communicate with town ASAP regarding the timeline - we built up a lot of momentum through the ConnectME application process and
  - 439 Shore Rd issue - A new resident (building new property on Shore Rd) called into the meeting and explained that 5 poles on Shore Rd (\$2,000 per pole)
- Verizon - Paul Williard will reach out to see about ways to improve Verizon cell phone reception through additional transmitters
- Committee next steps: Public communication plan