

Chris Tallackson's notes on the Taghkanic Broadband Meeting

Taghkanic Broadband Committee
Meeting
October 27, 2016

Present:

Arthur McGuire, Co-Chair
Jeffrey Tallackson, Co-Chair
Erin Edwards
Susan Raymond
Christine Tallackson
Joyce Thompson

Arthur McGuire reported on the Columbia County Broadband Subcommittee's October 24, 2016 meeting that he and Jeff Tallackson attended:

See notes from Dave Berman below

The Taghkanic Broadband Committee then discussed:

- Contacting Claverack about its broadband situation, existence of a Claverack Broadband Committee and any potential for co-operative effort to increase access/speeds in both towns. Joyce Thompson offered to get in touch with Kippy Weigelt, Claverack Town Supervisor.
- The November 30, 2016 application deadline for Round 2 funding through the New York Broadband Program Office:

-Arthur McGuire will contact Jason Shelton at GTEL in the hopes of learning about any plans they may have for funds awarded in Round 1 or being applied for in Round 2 which might include Taghkanic.

-Jeff Tallackson will contact David Fingar at Mid-Hudson Cable to follow-up on their receipt of the County 911 map of Taghkanic and whether they have identified any areas meeting their residence/mile criteria for inclusion in their Round 2 grant application.

- Preparation of a Taghkanic Broadband Committee "year-end report" letter for possible submission to the County Board of Supervisors/County Broadband Subcommittee to encourage a county effort to connect all of its municipalities and to support the need for a county-wide approach to New York State officials implementing Governor Cuomo's plan for universal high-speed broadband access by 2018.

The Committee canceled its next regularly scheduled meeting falling on Thanksgiving Day and agreed to schedule a special meeting at 2:00pm at Town Hall on Tuesday, November 15, 2016.

Dave Berman's notes on the County Broadband Sub-Committee meeting

Broadband Sub-Committee Meeting October 24, 2016

Chairman Reilly gave a summary of the State's Broadband Program Office (BPO) presentation on Round 2 of the grant process. Proposals must be submitted by November 30, 2016. The BPO will provide up to 80% of funding for approved projects.

Mike Tucker of the CEDC then showed maps of the County showing where the Charter PSC areas are that are currently unserved or underserved and thus eligible for BPO funding. These maps are based on the State BPO use of census blocks. Charter franchise areas were not designated on the maps.

While the specifics of the Charter plans under the PSC agreement are not public Chairman Reilly and Ann Mueller of Congressman Gibson's office stated that the first build out will reach 7,814 homes in the county and will eventually reach 14,400 homes when the program is completed.

Next on the agenda was a presentation by two of the other providers in the county, Mid-Hudson Cable and G-Tel.

Mid-Hudson was represented by Dave Fingar, the Chief Technology Officer and Stephen Souky, the Controller. They announced that as of June 30th of this year that Mid-Hudson Cable's entire system was capable of 100 Mb/sec service.

They are exploring potential expansion and the possibility of applying for BPO funding in Phase 2 but at this point they did not have specifics in terms of service or areas.

Mid-Hudson also has a wireless ISP known as Mid-Hudson Data which did receive funds from round 1 to expand that service. There are three levels of service offered 10/2, 15/3 and 25/4—first number is advertised download speed and second number is advertised upload speed.

G-Tel was represented Jason Shelton, the General Manager. G-Tel is focused on fiber expansion and is in the process of installing some 110 linear miles of new fiber. Shelton pointed out the terms of the BPO require all construction that uses grant money be completed by the end of 2018 which is somewhat of a hardship for small companies with limited staff resources. Further there is currently a shortage of fiber optic cable with delivery times of 8 weeks. He did say that the BPO has met with Corning—the major manufacturer—and all recipients of state funding will get priority which may reduce the lead time to 6 weeks.

G-Tel's goal is to install equipment capable of Gigabit speeds. Quick note here—consumers often confuse bit and byte. Speeds for internet connections are always in bits and there 8 bits to a byte. For perspective 1 megabyte is 8 million bits.

Supervisor Pat Grattan in response to a suggestion by Connect Columbia checked with the County Attorney to see if the towns could negotiate as a group for better cable franchise agreements and the opinion was, yes they can.

Since the BPO deadline for Round 2 is November 30th it is unclear if there will be a November meeting of the subcommittee.