

**FINAL MINUTES**  
**Broadband Subcommittee**  
**of the Temple Community Planning Committee (TCPC)**

Thursday, September 17, 2020 7:30 PM  
Via Zoom Per SOE Order#12 2020-04

Attendees: Dana Nowell, Christine Robidoux, Jessica Hipp

J. Hipp called the meeting to order at 7:30

State of Emergency Order read by C. Robidoux followed by roll call attendance.

Zoom overview given by J. Hipp to make sure users knew how to ask questions.

J. Hipp updated attendees on the Temple Broadband Survey Results and the RFI Process (*Survey Summary attached, RFI information available upon request*).

What is broadband?

- 25 Mbps download / 3 Mbps upload speed
- Federal definition. This will probably increase to 50/5
- Context: Netflix recommends a 25 Mbps speed for streaming its top quality video, while Amazon says you'll need at least 15 Mbps

What do we have in Temple?

- Survey (*survey summary attached*)
  - The Broadband Survey was completed May 4, 2020 and had 175 responses. Using an estimate of 617 households in town that's a 28.4% response rate.
  - The survey data shows 78 users with speeds below 25 mbps (46 of those with less than 10 mbps) and 70 users with speeds of 25 mbps or higher, 27 users did not report a speed.
  - Comcast, Consolidated, and TDS are the three primary providers in Temple.
  - Some use cellular service or satellite (HughesNet).
- RFI Responses
  - RFI requested a list of addresses of served or unserved locations. TDS did not respond. Comcast's response did not provide adequate data to understand which areas in town are served or unserved. We know "many" people in Temple subscribe to Comcast, and presumably that means they have broadband access. But we can't quantify this. Consolidated provides broadband to two locations in Temple at speeds defined as served.
- Conclusions
  - There are many areas of town that do not have access to broadband internet.
  - Many survey respondents complained of spotty service.
  - Many survey respondents commented on the cost of their service.
  - There is an increased demand and urgency for broadband internet with more residents working from home and doing remote schooling due to COVID.
  - Several respondents requested more options and competitive pricing

- Temple Broadband Committee Goals:
  - To get broadband to every resident in Temple
  - To increase competition for better pricing
  - To pursue funding through the state through SB170 – Bond Funding allows towns to work as public/private partnerships with providers for financing improvements through the service providers.
  - And/or to pursue grant funding through the CARES Act Broadband program if it is offered again in the future.

Other towns in our area all have gone with Consolidated. There is zero impact on taxpayers. The Bond is for unserved residences, Consolidated fills in the gaps for served customers. The Bond is paid through a monthly surcharge to subscribers of \$10 - \$15 on average. This partnership model has received high voter approval in other towns.

CARES Act Funding - \$50 million dollars was allocated and so far only \$14 awarded, all monies must be spent before end of December 31<sup>st</sup>. Temple was not far enough along in the process to apply for funds, and the restrictions of the application were very narrow. There may be another round of funding. Monadnock Broadband Group and state elected officials are advocating for another round of funding.

Next step is RFP – The committee is drafting the RFP right now based on other towns and improving upon it as needed. The Select Board will review and hopefully approve it in the next couple of weeks.

Town has engaged Bond Counsel to guide us through the process to make sure all steps and rules are followed if we apply for a Bond. We don't pay any legal fees up front, it comes out of the bond (only if it passes).

We want to understand specific or unique needs of residents. Gathering information from the public. For example, we were asked by a resident about properties that are off the grid. As a result we added their question in our RFP.

#### Public comments and questions:

Resident George Clark – Will end of West Rd be covered? Yes – All residents will have fiber at the street level.

Resident Lea – She has a long driveway ½ mile, their line needs repairs. Consolidated customer service has not been great. She is concerned about this if we go with Consolidated.

Resident Fiona Nixon – Comcast is at end of their road and wants \$22,000 to go to the end of their driveway.

Committee member D. Nowell asked how Consolidated DSL lines get in to Lea's home – Answer: Underground. What happens if wires need to be upgraded?

Answer: All lines would have to be replaced. Lines to the house would be fiber which require less maintenance and will be set up so they can be easily upgraded in the future.

C. Robidoux Question: What would the cost be? Can we check with other towns to find out what costs to residents were if they have long driveways? J. Hipp will check with Dublin to get more information.

We have asked providers to give us costs to run fiber on private roads up front in the RFP.

Consolidated Customer service is a concern of residents. Consolidated meets just the minimum requirements now, residents hope that they would provide more. Consolidated assures us that switching to fiber will allow them to be able to provide more consistent service and higher speeds.

Westmoreland had a similar concern regarding customer service. Fiber will alleviate the inconsistent technical service which should mean fewer customer service needs.

Survey results were shared with Consolidated and the Customer Service concern was raised. We asked them to assure us that it would not be an issue going forward. Other towns who have gone with Consolidated have been very happy with the results of their fiber upgrade with Consolidated.

Connie – Consolidated presentation to the SB was impressive, they have Comcast but are in favor of this to give Comcast some competition.

There will be more opportunities for public feedback between now and March. This is the first of several public forums and hearings.

Attendees expressed thanks to the committee for setting this up and answering questions, and thanks for doing the work involved.

J. Hipp asked attendees if it would be helpful to hear from other towns? Attendees expressed their faith in us and trust us to proceed based on what they have learned so far.

Hipp's personal story: She and her husband both work from home and were not able to work using DSL. They went with Comcast and it was an expensive and lengthy process. She does not want others to go through what they went through.

Attendees encouraged to contact the committee if they have further questions or concerns at [TempleBroadband@TempleNH.org](mailto:TempleBroadband@TempleNH.org).

Motion to adjourn at 8:04 PM by D. Nowell, second by J. Hipp. Unanimous approval by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted by C. Robidoux

# Memo

Subject: Broadband Survey Results  
To: Temple Select Board  
From: Temple Broadband Subcommittee  
Date: 6/4/2020

The Broadband Survey was completed May 4, 2020 and had 175 responses. Using an estimate of 617 households in town that's a 28.4% response rate, which is a good return. We converted the raw data to a more useful electronic form and performed a basic analysis via a spreadsheet.

The data shows a snapshot of the town and provides a fair idea of how the internet is used. It also provides good data on user satisfaction. Ultimately we will need the result of a Request For Information (RFI) to get actionable data. Bond funding is tied to underserved areas based on bandwidth availability. As a result, we need information on which locations qualify for bond funding.

## The Data

The tallying and analysis of the raw data was simple and straightforward.

The Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in town varied. Comcast was listed on 83 responses, Consolidated on 51, TDS on 25, Cell Phone on 7, Other on 5, Satellite on 3, and 1 was unknown.

Satisfaction was selected from Very Satisfied (Score 1) to Neutral (3) to Very Dissatisfied (5), overall satisfaction was an average of 2.87, slightly better than neutral. Two surveys had a blank satisfaction score.

The survey asked how often users used Email, Browsing, Home Based Business, School, Shopping, Social Media, Stream Music or TV, Telecommuting, and Video Calls. Based on those results the most used functions in order are: Email, Browsing, Social Media, Shopping, Streaming, Video Calls, Home Business, Telecommuting, and School.

The survey asked how important faster internet service was. Importance was selected from Very Important (score 1) to Neutral (3) to Very Unimportant (5). Overall importance of faster internet scored an average of 1.67 or a bit more important than Somewhat Important (a score of 2).

## A Different View

Given that Comcast is 83 out of 175 surveys, or about 47%, it appears about half the survey participants have broadband. The question arises, what if we divide the survey data into "with" and "without" broadband. The definition of broadband that most of the funding rules use is 25 mbps or more download and 3 mbps or more upload speed.

The survey data shows 78 users with speeds below 25 mbps (46 of those with less than 10 mbps) and 70 users with speeds of 25 mbps or higher, 27 users did not report a speed. The average satisfaction scores of those without broadband are 3.37, below neutral and nearing somewhat dissatisfied. Those with broadband averaged 2.17, better than somewhat satisfied. More importantly, there is an entire level of satisfaction (2.17 to 3.37 for a difference of 1.2) between the two groups. If we look at importance of faster internet, those without broadband have an average score of 1.4, (better than somewhat important), those with broadband average a 1.8 (still slightly better than somewhat important).

## The Comments

The survey allowed space for comments. Comments were somewhat “all over the map”. As a result it is somewhat hard to analyze the comment sections. However, some recurring topics did arise. Several users stated that Comcast was expensive. Several stated it was difficult or expensive to get Comcast to expand to their house. Several others complain about cost of current service. Some complain about cost but were not specific (cost of current service or to add broadband?). A few (less than 5) comments were concerned that taxes will go up to pay for broadband. Several comments about sole supplier issues, people appear to want options. Several complaints about reliability. A couple people asking about/recommending a municipal or town owned network.

The raw comments can be easily extracted from the data and provided if that helps.

## Conclusion

It appears both those with and without broadband think faster internet is somewhat important. It appears that those with broadband are maybe somewhat satisfied with their service while those without broadband are less than neutral in satisfaction. So satisfaction appears to be somewhat tied to availability of broadband.

Based on the comments as a whole, it appears that many people feel something should be done. The comments paint a picture of the current situation being too slow / expensive / unreliable / having insufficient competition / being unavailable / ...

Installation of inexpensive fiber-based broadband in at least the no/low coverage areas may be the best single solution aimed at the widest range of complaints. This is also the area in which funding is most likely to be available. At this point, we recommend moving forward with the RFI.