
Select Board Meeting Minutes 2/16/18

Select Board & Broadband Committee Minutes of the meeting of 2/16/18

Meeting Opened at: 10am

Select Board Members Present: Steve Weisz, Chairperson and Kenneth Basler

Also in attendance: Cliff Weiss, BJ Johnson, George Cain, Smitty Pignatelli, Representatives from New Marlborough and Egremont, Peter Larkin, Ed Donnelly, Adam Chait, Steve Moore

Steve opened the meeting stating that it is time we recognize that services like Broadband are no longer a luxury item and should be considered a utility service and today's meeting is part of the long path that Monterey has been on. Steve's personal opinion is that the provider chosen needs to remain affordable and be sustainable. The goal is to have installations be quick and services be expandable.

Kenn stated we need to look ahead and plan for this ever changing and evolving industry. Cliff Weiss, Chair of the Broadband Committee echoed these statements and provided a brief history of the proposals that have been received and reviewed. The goal of today's meeting is to work collaboratively with MBI and providers to determine a clear path forward to connect Monterey as expeditiously as possible. Monterey also wants to know what needs to be done to acquire the \$1.2 million in grant funds to reach our connection goal through the new flexible grant program which works with private providers.

MBI explained what the process has been to date with regard to dispersing the grant funds.

MBI explained that with regard to Fiber Connect they need a better understanding of their financial understanding of their capabilities and to date Fiber Connect's response to MBI's request for information was, "Thank you for your correspondence." Email. The CEO of Fiber Connect was present to respond to this. MBI is here today to try to figure a path forward as our circumstances are unique and Monterey is insistent on finding a way to make this work with the one company that is currently working to wire the town (Charter declined to service Monterey).

MBI made it clear that the authority that they need to receive their direction from is the Monterey Select Board. The Select Board, for the record, stated that they have set up a process to obtain high speed internet into the town which involves the Monterey Broadband Committee which interviews all the providers and makes the recommendation to the Board who will then be the final authority and MBI should acknowledge and accept that this is Monterey's process and the Select Board and Broadband Committee are not divided.

Monterey isn't interested in going through another round of interviewing vendors as that will just put us back several years; Monterey's only option right now is Fiber Connect and we want to come to an agreement with all the parties involved to assist Fiber Connect with Monterey's grant monies to connect 96% of Monterey.

MBI proceeded to explain how the flexible grant program will work. Board members disagreed with Monterey having to put forward any taxpayer money in order to move forward.

It was agreed that Monterey will work with Fiber Connect on a proposal for MBI on how to finish this project. Smitty Pignatelli urged that everyone should set a date certain today to keep this ball in motion. It was agreed to have something sent into MBI by March 15th.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at: 11:15am

Submitted by:

Melissa Noe, Administrative Assistant

Approved by:

Monterey Select Board

cc: Website (www.montereyma.gov)

Select Board Members

Minutes Book

Town Clerk

