

Town of Mount Vernon
Select Board Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2019

The next meeting will be held on January 21, 2019

Present: Clyde Dyar, Sherene Gilman, Alex Wright, Marti Gross, Joe Young, Chuck Wright. Andie Zuniga, Garrett Murch, Mark Gilbert,

6:30pm Signed warrant

7:00pm Open Regular Selectmen's Meeting- Crockett calls meeting to order.

7:00pm **Open TV Broadcast and approve 1/04/2019 and 1/21/2016 meeting minutes:** Dyar motioned to accept minutes of 1/07/2019 and 1/21/2016 meeting. Jackson seconded. Vote 2-0 in favor.

7:02pm **Broadband committee report.** Wright stated the committee has been gathering information that can be used to help the town make the next step. Wright was on the economic development committee and they pointed out that expanding broadband access to citizens of Mount Vernon was essential to the growth of the town. Internet is now a necessity if an individual wants to run a business from their home. They also spoke with hospitals and schools about broadband access. They spoke with a broker that also finds internet essential- every client who comes in to buy a house wants to know what the internet access is in that location. They need to speak with Spectrum and Consolidated Communication and Great Works internet (GWI). They spoke with an individual from Franklin County. JW Sewell does survey work and they put together a plan for the entire Franklin County. The cost was \$20k and each town contributed \$1k towards the fee and the rest came from the County Commissioners office.

Grenier provided Wright with the number of households and the number of miles for every road in Mount Vernon. There are five roads in town with more than 50 households and all of those roads have Spectrum access. These included the North Rd, Wings Mills Rd, Rt. 41, and the Bean Road. Just because a road does not have access to Spectrum does not mean they cannot pursue satellite service for high speed internet. Many individuals do not think the satellite service is reliable enough for a business. Spectrum does not see value in providing broadband to roads with only 15-20 houses on them.

There was discussion about whether the contracts are by road or by town. Dyar stated they are currently down by town.

Young mentioned there was a community building planning grant that the town could apply for. There are a lot of people complaining because they have no or poor service. Young stated used Casco Bay Advisors who volunteered to help Fayette put together a Community Building application for a grant. Casco Bay would do this for Mount Vernon if they worked together as a group. Wayne will most likely be participating and Young plans to contact Readfield to see if they would like to join. Young would like to get \$500 from each town to put together an application for a grant. They are applying for two separate grants.

Wright asked how many towns would need to sign on before being to able to cut a deal. This planning process would give them an idea of what they want to put into an rfp. Young stated that the more towns involved the lower the cost for each town.

The Board asked why a planning grant would be needed when so much of the leg work has already been done. Wright stated he spoke with Vienna and they have been invited to a Select board meeting. Wright also spoke with Readfield he is not sure they want to move forward at this time. 50% of the citizens are on roads that these ISP's will not want to take care of on their own so we need to figure out a way to make

this happen. Less than 50% of Mount Vernon citizens have access to Spectrum. Wright stated he feels the state vastly overestimates the percentage of broadband available because it is based on census data and assumes that if an individual at the end of a road has access then everyone on that road has access.

Wright stated there needs to be a financial analysis and they need to talk with the community and make presentations and receive feedback about the interest level. There was also a question about how many of the people who have access to broadband took advantage of it. Murch suggested teaming up with New Hampshire and Vermont.

Wright stated he needs to meet with the appropriate individuals and decide on a plan of education for the community to explain what this directive is and why it matters for them. Before meeting with the community. Wright would like to make a presentation to the Comprehensive Planning committee. Jackson stated they would be having a public hearing for the comprehensive plan around April.

Jackson asked when young was hoping to get \$500 from the town. Young responded that the application is due on February 15th.

Dyar stated his favor for joining a concerted effort with nearby communities that may give us an advantage for leverage with broadband providers.

Jackson stated she is for \$500 going towards this. Dyar motioned to take \$500 form matching grant fund to work on a planning grant for the region in broadband communication. Jackson seconded. Vote 2-0 in favor.

8:13pm Accept resignations and make several Planning Board appointments.

Hagelin verbally resigned to Jackson. Dyar motioned to officially accept John Hagelin's verbal resignation. Jackson seconded. Vote 2-0 in favor. Nate Kane resigned via email.

Dyar motioned to appoint Greg Caldwell to the planning Board. Jackson seconded. Vote 2-0 in favor.

Dyar motioned to appoint Nate Kane on the planning Board as an alternate. Jackson seconded. Vote 2-0 in favor.

8:18pm Sign InforME Rapid Renewal documents. Dyar motioned to table the inforME request until next meeting. Jackson seconded. Vote 2-0 in favor. Dyar stated the Board will meet Thursday with the Town Clerk and discuss the issue.

Other business.

-**Sheriff's January report.** Dyar stated they are doing a great job.

-Wright wanted to clarify article written about RSU. It talked about expanding athletic fields and he wants to make it clear that no funds have been committed to this project. He also added the RSU is not contemplating expending any other bonds in the near future.

8:25pm Adjourn. Dyar motioned to adjourn. Jackson seconded. Vote 2-0 in favor.