

Town of Goshen
Joint Meeting of the Planning Board and Zoning Board
Minutes of August 6, 2020
FINAL

Planning Board members present: Alicea Bursey (Chair), Stephen Bursey, and Fred Smith

Zoning Board members present: Alicea Bursey (Chair), Ron Parenteau, Judy Dunn, and Ray Porter

Guest (s): Jeff McIver, Clark Wamsley, Janlee Porter, Steve Smith, Jodi Parenteau, Bryant Winterholer, and Dan Peterson

Meeting called to order at 6:59 p.m.

Chair Bursey called the meeting to order and opened the floor to Mr. Jeffrey McIver of Consolidated Communications.

Consolidated Communications Representative Presentation

Mr. Jeff McIver introduced himself and presented a powerpoint presentation regarding speeds and internet coverage in Goshen.

- He explained the Consolidated Communications business model and noted that Consolidated is more residentially driven.
- An overview of Consolidated Communications was given. Some facts mentioned were that they employ 3,600 employees, they operate in 23 states, they are based out of Illinois and currently they are running 44,000 fiber networks.
- In reference to Goshen Broadband, Mr. McIver's explained that the town is currently running on a copper network which is distance and directionally-determinate and can be problematic in many ways. He explained the differences in copper versus fiber equipment for internet access. And explained that an upgrade to fiber optics would not restrict internet speeds over distance which allows for greater speeds and better support services. Overall, the fiber optics would be extremely beneficial for the town.
- Maps of the town showing current upload and download speeds were shown. The Goshen statistics for overall usage are as follows: 524 total user locations in Goshen with eight (8) serving units, and 55% of existing subscribers are at maximum speed, however, 20% of the town is not capable of acquiring any speed.

Ray Porter: Asked if there were any reliability charts to see how often the service is interrupted. He explained that sometimes the service just shuts off and leaves residents with no access whatsoever. Several other residents also shared their concerns and experiences regarding current lack of reliable and continuous service.

Jeff McIver: Said he did not have that information, and was unsure what the causes might be, but he will look into it further.

- Mr. McIver explained the process other towns had used to bring broadband into their communities. One option would require applying for a bond. Additionally, paperwork would need to be submitted with town statistics and eventually move the project/bond to a town vote in March. Mr. McIver also shared that the

Selectman would ultimately need to be the drivers of this process and officially send out requests for proposals and handle the review of the proposal process.

Alicea Bursey: Asked if (hypothetically speaking) everything passed in March, how quickly could the upgrade happen?

Jeff McIver: Stated that in one previous case, after the March approval went through, it was only a few months after that (mid-October) customers were able to sign into fiber optics, and by the end of that calendar year, most residents who wanted the upgrade were able to do so. He stated that the process can be fairly quick once all the paperwork and financials have been approved.

Ron Parenteau: Asked what the cost difference was?

Jeff McIver: Explained the fiber optic fee that would be added to the bill (roughly \$11 maximum per user location/customer), which would eventually be lowered as the bond began to be paid off. As far as individual bills, he stated that other than the fiber optic fee, most houses should be able to experience at least a two (2) level increase in internet speed without an increase in the bill.

Clark Wamsley: Asked if TV was included or an option with the fiber?

Jeff McIver: Yes, Consolidated just came out with a streaming service that would be available through fiber.

Judy Dunn: Expressed concern regarding the 20% of residents who currently are receiving no service at all. She asked if there was anything that could be done now to fix this problem. Several residents agreed and spoke about their current need for immediate action.

Jeff McIver: Mentioned that he will try and bring this topic before the engineers and see if anything can be done to fix the current issues.

Some discussion was had regarding the funds being offered by the State through the Cares Act.

Jodi Parenteau: Suggested that the current boxes be reevaluated to see if they are strong enough to handle the immediate internet upgrades.

Jeff McIver: He will follow up regarding the current situation. He would like to continue dialogue with the town on this topic and assist in customer concerns. He encouraged residents to email or call him with problems concerning connection. He believes that fiber optics will be extremely beneficial for the town and address many of the issues Goshen is experiencing.

Chair Bursey opened the floor for Board member questions or concerns. No questions or concerns were made.

Chair Bursey opened the floor for residents' questions or concerns.

Clark Wamsley: How quickly will the process take for the Town?

Alicea Bursey: During the next week, meetings are in place and discussion will be had. There are already plans to write the RFI at the next Zoning Board meeting and hopefully, by December or earlier, paperwork can be submitted so that everything can go before the town for a vote in March.

Dan Peterson: Thanked the board for their efforts in getting a representative to come and speak with the town. He thanked Jeff McIver for coming out and sharing information and listening to the issues that the town is facing.

Anyone needing Jeffrey McIver's contact information can email the Planning Board Chair for details.

No further questions or concerns.

Other Business

- The next meeting will be the third Thursday of the month – August 20, 2020.

Standing items

- Capital Improvement Plan
- Edina Subdivision (Wayne McCutcheon) - In continuance until August 20, 2020
- Subdivision (Bevilacqua) - In the 30-day appeal period
- Annexation (John Hooper)
- Library Project
- Regulation Discussion (Based on Housing Crisis Article) - Pending
- Member Discussion - Standing Item

Planning Board adjournment: *Fred Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting; Stephen Bursey seconded the motion, all were in favor.*

Zoning Board adjournment: *Ray Porter motioned to adjourn the meeting; Judy Dunn seconded the motion, all were in favor.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:08p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Salinardi
Recording Secretary