



May 7, 2020

Ms. Peggy Shaffer
Executive Director
ConnectMaine Authority
State of Maine
59 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0059

Dear Peggy,

The Town of Litchfield, in collaboration with Casco Bay Advisors, LLC, is pleased for the opportunity to submit this application for a ConnectMaine Authority Community Broadband Planning Grant.

Our dedicated team of community volunteers has been working tirelessly to organize and engage with our community to assess our needs, understand our current broadband infrastructure, identify where gaps in coverage exist and to develop our vision for our future. In the course of our efforts, we have moved forward with completing many of the Phase 1 requirements of the Planning Grant process and received a commitment from our Select Board to include our financial match in the preliminary budget subject to vote at Town Meeting in July.

With this Grant Application, we are seeking \$8,250, which is 50% of the total project cost, to complete the remaining tasks to develop a Feasibility Study in accordance with the ConnectMaine Community Broadband Planning Grant guidelines.

The Town of Litchfield and all of the residents of our community appreciate the opportunity to apply for this grant and sincerely thank you and the ConnectMaine Authority board for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Bell
Chair
Litchfield Broadband Committee

Brian Lippold
President
Casco Bay Advisors, LLC



ConnectMaine Authority Community Broadband Planning Grant Application

1. **Date:** May 7, 2020
2. **Submitting Community:** Town of Litchfield (Town)
3. **Vendor Partner:** Casco Bay Advisors, LLC (Casco Bay)
4. **Grant Amount Requested:**
\$8,250 = Grant Request
\$8,250 = Town match
\$16,500 = Total Project
5. **Community Project Point of Contact:** Larry Bell - Broadband Committee Chair
PO Box 158
Litchfield, ME 04350
207-446-8330 / Lbell248@gmail.com
6. **Party Who Prepared the Application:** Brian Lippold - Casco Bay Advisors, LLC
2 Streamside Ln
Gardiner, ME 04345
207-233-2976 / brian@cascobayadvisors.com

7. Executive Summary of the Project:

Broadband Internet is a critical utility similar to electricity and clean water that is needed to provide daily services to our homes and businesses. As we are quickly learning in the age of COVID-19, broadband is essential to providing vital links with the outside world and maintaining connections to our loved ones when we need to isolate ourselves in our homes.

The present patchwork of cable TV, phone company DSL, and high-latency satellite services here in Litchfield provide incomplete coverage, with many rural homes and businesses getting substandard or no service at all. To address this, Litchfield has formed a broadband committee to assess our needs and formulate a plan to implement affordable, reliable high-speed Internet services to all households and businesses in our town. As it is a significant challenge for a small town to do this, we are submitting this Planning Grant application to ConnectMaine to get help to expedite the information-gathering process. Once the planning grant report is available, we will be actively seeking out neighboring communities to partner with us as a regional group of towns is more attractive for investment to potential Internet Service Providers (ISP). Bundling our needs with those of nearby towns will result in a lower cost on a per town basis.



Table of Contents

1 PRECERTIFICATION CHECKLIST 4

2 VISION AND GOALS 4

3 PHASE 1 – SCOPE OF WORK 4

3.1 CONNECTMAINE DATA VALIDATION – *PARTIALLY COMPLETE* 4

 3.1.1 *Mapping - Complete* 4

 3.1.2 *Known addresses less than 25Mbps/3Mbps* 5

3.2 INVENTORY EXISTING BROADBAND ASSETS 5

3.3 GAP ANALYSIS 5

3.4 MUNICIPAL PROCEDURES, POLICES, RULES AND ORDINANCE ASSESSMENT - *COMPLETE* 5

3.5 DIGITAL INCLUSION - *COMPLETE* 5

 3.5.1 *Affordable Internet – Complete* 6

 3.5.2 *Affordable Equipment – Complete* 7

 3.5.3 *Digital Literacy - Complete* 7

 3.5.4 *Public computer access - Complete* 8

4 PHASE 2 – SCOPE OF WORK 9

4.1 INFRASTRUCTURE NECESSARY TO MEET VISION AND GOALS 9

 4.1.1 *Competitive market analysis* 9

 4.1.2 *Market demand* 9

 4.1.3 *Technology options* 9

4.2 PROCESS TO DEVELOP NETWORK DESIGNS AND COST ESTIMATES 9

4.3 POTENTIAL OPERATING AND BUSINESS MODELS 9

4.4 PROPOSALS FROM OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS 10

5 PROJECT MILESTONES AND BUDGET 10

6 LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FOR COMMUNITY FUNDING 10

7 BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT 11



1 Precertification checklist

The Town submitted its Precertification Checklist on April 27, 2020 and received approval from the ConnectMaine Authority staff the next day on April 28, 2020. A copy of that Checklist is attached to this Application for reference.

2 Vision and Goals

The charter of the Litchfield Ad-Hoc Broadband Committee (Committee) is to help the Select Board find ways to provide all Litchfield households with quality broadband services at competitive costs. This includes the “unserved” (*those without Internet availability*) as well as “underserved” (*those with slow connection speeds, periodic disconnects, excessive monthly fees and monthly data limits*).

The Committee plans to revisit, and potentially revise, our vision statement after reviewing the initial results of Feasibility Study (Study) that will be developed as a result of this Application.

3 Phase 1 – Scope of Work

Through the ongoing efforts of the Committee, much of the Phase 1 planning requirements have already been completed. The description below provides an overview of the work completed and that which will be accomplished as part of these Phase 1 efforts.

The Committee has already met with the incumbent service providers currently providing service in the Town. Charter (Spectrum) provided an 8.5” x 11” PDF map of their coverage, but the level of detail is not sufficient to accurately inform our Study. Consolidated Communications (CCI) has provided a higher level of detail but has restricted its use and publication by a Non-Disclosure Agreement. We have also reviewed the ConnectMaine availability data (*both mapping and known addresses less than 25Mbps/3Mbps*) and have found it is not reflective of the information shared by CCI and Spectrum or the experience of our Committee members and the results of our survey data.

In order to develop actionable information for our Study and subsequent efforts, we plan to engage Casco Bay to produce the following scope of work.

3.1 ConnectMaine data validation – *Partially Complete*

3.1.1 Mapping - *Complete*

We have reviewed the mapping and determined it does not reflect actual user experience.



3.1.2 Known addresses less than 25Mbps/3Mbps

We will plan to update the ConnectMaine Authority data based on the results of our detailed gap analysis described below.

3.2 Inventory existing broadband assets

Casco Bay will perform a field audit of all areas of Litchfield to identify and map the following within its Geospatial Information System (GIS).

- CCI fiber optic infrastructure and xDSL remote terminal (RT) locations.
- Spectrum hybrid fiber/coax infrastructure

Based on the type of RT equipment and the distance from the RTs, combined with the publicly available data already collected by the Committee, we will create our best assumptions regarding the availability of services equal to or greater than the following:

- 25Mbps/3Mbps
- 100Mbps/10Mbps (Spectrum's minimum advertised level of service)

3.3 Gap analysis

Using the information and GIS data collected from the Inventory process described above, combined with GIS-based parcel data and 911 addressing information, we will determine the roadway segments and quantity of potential subscribers considered to be unserved as defined by the ConnectMaine Authority (25Mbps/3Mbps) and unserved by 100Mbps/10Mbps service. This information will be produced within the Casco Bay GIS system and will be used to inform the Phase 2 scope of work.

3.4 Municipal procedures, policies, rules and ordinance assessment - *Complete*

The Committee has reviewed all municipal procedures, policies, rules and ordinances and have found no barriers resulting in the effect of delaying or increasing the cost of broadband infrastructure deployment.

3.5 Digital Inclusion - *Complete*

Through the Committee's ongoing efforts and the participation of CCI, Spectrum and Casco Bay, the Digital Inclusion component of the Study has been completed per the summary below.



3.5.1 Affordable Internet – Complete

The Committee has determined the following through its meetings with CCI and Spectrum and intends to publicize the availability via the Study and its ongoing community engagement efforts:

3.5.1.1 FCC Lifeline Program

Lifeline is the FCC's program to help make communications services more affordable for low-income consumers. Lifeline provides subscribers a discount on monthly telephone service purchased from participating providers in the marketplace. Subscribers can also purchase discounted broadband from participating providers. The discounts, which can be applied to stand-alone broadband, bundled voice-broadband packages (either fixed or mobile, along with stand-alone voice service) will help ensure that low-income consumers can afford 21st-century broadband and the access it provides to jobs, education and opportunities.

Consolidated Communications, Inc. (CCI) offers a Lifeline Program for eligible low-income residential subscribers at their primary residence¹. The Lifeline Program is a government benefit program. Eligible subscribers can apply the monthly \$9.25 federal Lifeline Program discount to a voice service or to a qualifying Internet service. In some states, an additional monthly voice discount is also available. Eligible subscribers who apply the Lifeline Program discount to their CCI voice service may also qualify for free toll blocking to help control long distance usage. These eligible subscribers can still use pre-paid calling cards or dial-around services to place long distance calls from their homes. Only one Lifeline Program discount is available per household on either a wireless or wireline qualifying service. Under the Lifeline Program, a household is defined as any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address and share income and expenses. The Lifeline Program benefit is non-transferable. Consumers who willfully make false statements in order to obtain the discount can be punished by fine or imprisonment or can be barred from the Lifeline Program. Visit Universal Service Administrative Co. at www.usac.org for more information on the Lifeline Program.

How do I apply?

To receive the Lifeline Program discount, residential customers must establish the eligibility of their household. Eligibility requirements are explained in detail on the Lifeline Program application and at www.lifelinesupport.org. If you meet the eligibility requirements, complete and sign the application form, attach proof of eligibility and mail directly to USAC. Alternatively, you can verify your eligibility with USAC at www.checklifeline.org. After your eligibility is verified, call CCI at (1.844.968.7224) to add the Lifeline Program discount to your CCI account.

¹ <https://www.consolidated.com/support/residential-support/lifeline-assistance-programs>



3.5.1.2 Spectrum Internet Assist²

Through the Spectrum Internet Assist program, qualified households can receive:

- High-speed 30 Mbps Internet with no data caps
- Internet modem included
- No contracts required
- Add in-home WiFi for \$5 more per month

To qualify for Spectrum Internet Assist, a member of the household must be a recipient of one of the following programs:

- The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) free or reduced lunch
- The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of the NSLP
- Supplemental Security Income (>/= age 65 only)

3.5.2 Affordable Equipment – Complete

The Committee has determined the following and intends to publicize the availability via the Study and its ongoing community engagement efforts:

- **PC's for Maine³** – A nonprofit effort to increase technology access for people and nonprofits that need technology to achieve important goals. So far, this program has provided more than 9,000 computers that have been used by more than 120,000 Mainers. The average actual cost for each computer with all of its support services is \$277. The market value of this service is more than \$910 - if such a service was available.
- **Goodwill Technology Access Program⁴** - Goodwill's GoodTech Technology Access Program (TAP) offers refurbished computers to qualified individuals at discounted prices. Computers are guaranteed to work and come with new, legal installations of Windows and Microsoft Office obtained directly from Microsoft.

3.5.3 Digital Literacy - Complete

The Committee has identified digital literacy as a key requirement of its community and is in the process of publicizing the availability of webinar classes available through the National Digital Equity Center (NDEC)⁵. When the Covid-19 public gathering restrictions are completely eliminated, the

² Further information can be found at: www.spectruminternetassist.com

³ www.pcsformaine.org

⁴ www.goodwillnne.org/stores/goodtech/

⁵ <https://digitalequitycenter.org/classes/>



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Broadband/Telecom Consulting



Committee plans to invite NDEC to conduct an informational workshop in the community and depending upon demand, facilitate training classes in its community center and/or senior center.

3.5.4 Public computer access - *Complete*

There is one computer available currently at the Litchfield Senior Center. The Committee has plans to provide the Senior Center with several iPads and a laptop once they reopen the facility after the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. The Committee has plans to provide informal mentoring on computer literacy as required. Normal hours are Monday and Friday 8:30 – 4:00 and Wednesday 8:30 - Noon.

While the Town does not have a public library of its own, they are a member of the towns that support the Gardiner Public Library and enjoy the benefits of free Internet access and use of computers at that facility.

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4 Phase 2 – Scope of Work

4.1 Infrastructure necessary to meet vision and goals

4.1.1 Competitive market analysis

This task has largely been completed by the Committee through its existing efforts, but we plan to explore the competitive market in the surrounding communities that may impact whatever solution is determined as a result of this Study.

4.1.2 Market demand

Once we have determined the technology options, network designs, cost estimates and potential operating and business models to fill the gaps in our vision; we intend to conduct a community-wide survey to determine the demand and support for implementation. The results of this survey will assist in determining the “take rate” for the various solutions.

4.1.3 Technology options

We plan to consider both the extension of the existing Spectrum hybrid fiber/coax network as well as Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) solutions to fill the gaps in order to realize our vision. Currently, we believe our best approach will be to develop a Public-Private Partnership with one or more service providers to realize this vision and do not necessarily envision building and operating our own network. At the same time, we are committed to remaining open to other solutions that may present themselves.

4.2 Process to develop network designs and cost estimates

With the metrics and mapping data developed in Phase 1, Casco Bay will develop a high-level network design and cost estimates for the technology options discussed above, using its experience in other similarly situated projects. This process will include:

- Estimation of utility pole make-ready costs and ongoing annual expenses
- Construction costs (material and labor)

4.3 Potential operating and business models

As mentioned previously, we plan to pursue a Public-Private Partnership model and will be engaging all service providers who may have interest in serving our community with service and infrastructure that will realize our vision.



4.4 Proposals from other service providers

Should we receive network design solutions from any other parties during the course of developing this Study, we will include that information in our Study.

5 Project Milestones and Budget

The following timeline is preliminary and illustrative. Actual timeline is dependent upon Town Meeting for approval of budget (delayed due to Covid-19). The six-month timeline is intended to be worst case and likely will be accelerated depending upon resource availability.

Project Milestones and Budget								
	Task	Budget	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20
Phase 1		\$8,250						
	ConnectMaine Data Validation							
	Inventory Existing Broadband Assets							
	Gap Analysis							
	Municipal Procedures		<i>complete</i>					
	Digital Inclusion		<i>complete</i>					
Phase 2		\$8,250						
	Competitive Market Analysis							
	Market Demand							
	Technology Options							
	Network Design & Cost Estimates							
	Operating & Business Models							
	Final Report							
Total		\$16,500						

6 Letters of Commitment for Community Funding

The Town of Litchfield Select Board has approved the ConnectMaine Authority grant request and the Town match of \$8,250 has been approved in the preliminary budget. Budget approval is pending the Town Meeting which has been delayed one month (to mid-July) due to the Covid-19 situation.

A letter of commitment will be provided as soon as the budget has been approved by Town Vote.



Casco Bay Advisors, LLC
Broadband/Telecom Consulting



7 Business and Community Support

The results of our prior survey and Committee meeting minutes are attached.

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Casco Bay Advisors, LLC
Broadband/Telecom Consulting



April 27, 2020

Ms. Peggy Shaffer
Executive Director
ConnectME Authority
State of Maine
59 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0059

Dear Peggy,

The Town of Litchfield (Town), and its Litchfield Ad-Hoc Broadband Committee (Committee) in collaboration with Casco Bay Advisors, LLC, is pleased for the opportunity to submit this Precertification Checklist as a prerequisite to our planned submission of an application for a ConnectMaine Authority Community Broadband Planning Grant.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this Checklist for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Bell

Lawrence Bell
Chair
Litchfield Broadband Committee

Brian Lippold
President
Casco Bay Advisors, LLC



Casco Bay Advisors, LLC
Broadband/Telecom Consulting



Table of Contents

Table of Contents

1	COMMUNITY BROADBAND TEAM	3
2	COMMUNITY BROADBAND MEETINGS	4
3	KEY DOCUMENTS / EXISTING EFFORTS	5
4	POTENTIAL COMMUNITY ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS.....	7
5	VISION STATEMENT	8
6	ATTACHMENT A - MEETING MINUTES	8



Precertification Checklist

1 Community Broadband Team

The town of Litchfield Broadband Committee (Committee) is represented by the following members:

- **Larry Bell – Chairman**
Healthcare Industry Executive; Contract Manufacturing - Electromechanical Medical Devices; Registered Professional Engineer; Elected to Town of Litchfield Budget Committee
- **Joline Bell**
Retired Business Development / Sales and Marketing Executive - Maine Office of Tourism; Volunteer - Literacy Advocates of Maine; Volunteer - SeniorPlus
- **David Blocher**
Program Manager - Maine Waste Management Agency; Senior Manager - Maine Department of Environmental Protection; Director of Policy & Planning - Maine Office of Information Technology; Served on Budget Committee for Town of Litchfield (10 years); Helped draft/update Comprehensive Plans for Town of Litchfield
- **Cheri Cooledge**
Business Councilor and Commercial Loan Officer - AVCOG; Marketing Specialist - Maine Dept of Agriculture; Product Development Specialist - Chevron Chemical
- **Josh O'Neill**
Natural Resource Analyst - Sewall Forestry & Natural, Resource Consulting LLC; GIS Consultant; Licensed Professional Forester
- **Tom Wood**
Community Lands Coordinator - Maine Coast Heritage Trust; Resource Administrator - Maine Land Use Regulation Commission; Resource Administrator - Maine Forest Service; Director - Maine Agriculture, Conservation, Environmental Protection Service Center; Director of Operations - USM; Senior Planner - Maine Forest Service; Chair of the Town of Litchfield Budget Committee



Single point person for communications with ConnectMaine for the certification process:

- **Larry Bell** - lbell248@gmail.com

2 Community Broadband Meetings

- The Litchfield Broadband Committee meets on the first Monday of each month.
- Incumbent Service Providers
 - **Charter (Spectrum)** – Melinda Kinney of Charter met with the Committee on November 20, 2019.
 - **Consolidated Communications (CCI)** – Jeff Nevins and Jeff McIver of CCI attended our meeting on December 4, 2019 to share the current capabilities of the CCI xDSL service in our communities. Jeff Nevins attended our meeting January 27, 2020 with corrected data.
- ConnectMaine Mapping

As we know, the service provider reported availability is overstated. We have verified this assertion during our committee meeting where CCI and Charter shared their availability data. Our committee members compared that data with initial results of a broadband availability survey distributed to Litchfield residents.

- Questions for Committee Meeting Attendees
 - Which providers are currently serving your community?
Charter (Spectrum) and Consolidated Communications
 - How do the mapping results compare with members' actual experiences?
The mapping is overstated. Many potential subscribers on roads showing as served cannot get service. Charter (Spectrum) only covers about half of the households in Litchfield.



- Does existing broadband access meet your needs?
No
- If it is inadequate in what ways does it fall short?
Many residents are unable to be served and for many of those that can be served, the service is not always reliable, and speeds are not as advertised.
- If you have broadband, how do you use it now?
 - *Telecommuting and home-based businesses*
 - *K-16 educational classes / distance learning*
 - *Research and general connectivity*
 - *Home entertainment*
 - *Telehealth and aging in place*
 - *Government and civil participation*
 - *Remotely connected devices – Internet of Things*
 - *Enhancing property values and tax base*
- Provide any documentation showing meeting dates, notes, agenda and number of attendees, emails to providers and responses to the questions above.

Meeting minutes from all of the committee meetings are located at the end of this document as Attachment A.

3 Key Documents / Existing Efforts

- Does the municipality use broadband to deliver municipal services? Describe the services, and how broadband is used to deliver these services.

The Town office has a broadband connection that it uses to submit information to the State government and provide limited online services to the public. The Town also maintains a website and Facebook page to keep citizens informed about Town business, events, meetings, etc.

The Town does not have its own police force, but the Kennebec County Sheriff Department uses



broadband to communicate with state and federal databases. The assessor's office makes access to property records and maps available to the general public.

- Are there local or regional economic development plans in which broadband could play a role? If so, provide a list of these documents.

The Kennebec Council of Governments (KVCOG) has attended some of our meetings and is supporting our efforts from a regional perspective. The Committee has invited leadership and citizens from abutting towns to attend our meetings and / or start their own committees.

The Committee has submitted information to add a broadband component to our Comprehensive Plan. Previous versions of the plan have treated Internet access as a utility to be provided by the private sector. It is apparent that this approach does not meet the needs of our community. We believe a Public-Private approach is now needed to provide services at an acceptable level of availability and reliability and to support the development of small businesses in our community.

- Does the Town have a cable TV franchise agreement?

Yes. However, a new franchise agreement has been provided to the town by Charter for renewal consideration.

- Are there any on-going community projects focusing on the digital divide or information technology (public access through schools or libraries, training, improving access to broadband, etc.)?

We have raised awareness of the availability of reduced-cost service plans for low-income families. We have also initiated discussions with the Senior Center to provide educational sessions focusing on technology as a means to support older seniors who are not familiar with internet resources at-large and the recent advances in internet-connected (smart) devices.

We have also directly communicated the existence of and details of the reduced-cost service plans with RSU-4 senior management and have initiated on-going communications between the Litchfield Budget Committee and RSU-4 over lower cost ways to meet school and student needs.



- Is there a TIF or other economic development grant for all or part of the area to be served?

No

- Does the town have a municipal electric company? If not, what electric utilities serve the area?

No. The Town is served by Central Maine Power.

4 Potential Community Anchor Institutions

- Provide a list of potential community anchor institutions. Community anchor institutions are entities such as schools, libraries, hospitals and other medical providers, public safety entities, institutions of higher education. Anchor institutions can also be community support organizations that facilitate greater use of broadband by vulnerable populations, including low-income, the unemployed, and the aged.
 - *Town office*
 - *Fire Department*
 - *Community Center*
 - *Senior Center*
 - *RSU#4*
- Provide a list of commercial institutions that could benefit from lower cost, higher bandwidth, and/or improved reliability of broadband.

The incumbent service providers have been willing to extend services to large businesses to meet their needs. Our deficit is in serving residences and small businesses.



5 Vision Statement

- **Vision Statement**

The charter of the Litchfield Ad-Hoc Broadband Committee is to help the Select Board find ways to provide all Litchfield households with quality broadband services at competitive costs. This includes the “unserved” (those without Internet availability) as well as “underserved” (those with slow connection speeds, periodic disconnects, excessive monthly fees and monthly data limits).

The Committee plans to revisit, and potentially revise, our vision statement after reviewing the initial results of studies intended for our planning grant application.

- Explain how this effort conforms to other planning documents/published visioning efforts on other issues in your community.

The Town has had success in drafting and implementing Municipal Comprehensive Plans over the past 20-years. Voters have been able to come to an agreement on issues such as land use ordinances; capital planning and road improvement plans; and have been willing to support regulatory and financial commitments to implement those plans.

6 Attachment A – Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes begin on the next page

AD HOC Broadband Internet Access Committee

Notes from meeting held October 9, 2019 at 5:30 PM Town Hall Offices (downstairs) with additional notes from team follow up/feedback

Present: Tom Wood, Larry and Joline Bell, Cheri Cooledge, and David Blocher

Review past minutes and action items (see attached agenda)

- ConnectME –
 - Joline called and let them know we had an broadband committee in Litchfield and to inquiry on what they can do for us. They are a two person office and offer a lot of guidance on their website. They do have names of consultants that can assist our efforts if we want to go that route.
 - Tom had info on their Broadband Mapping that they are constantly updating and it was suggested that we fill out their Mapping Form to get Litchfield on their radar.

ACTION: Submit article to Sodalite and include the sites to get internet speed

Future ACTION: Once we have accurate data, contact Brook Johnson with updated speed information for Litchfield. Speed information does influence ability to get grants.

- Maine Municipal Association – 207-623-8428
 - Tom contacted GarretCorbin #2208 (gcorbin@memun.org and Kate Dufor #2213 (kdufor@mcmun.org) They are a group that can help us from a legislative level but did not have any specific support at this time. But they are now aware that we have a broadband group in Litchfield.
 - There is a writer at Town and City magazine that does write a lot about broadband in Maine and who/where things are happening. Tom has left a message with her and hope to hear from her soon.
- AARP –
 - This is another group like MMA that we should make aware of our need for better/quality interne
- Spectrum –
 - Tom tried to contact correct person and found it frustrating - community solutions/sales/vendor/customer care and all lead to deadends. Leaned on Sales folks and they did not return phone calls. Engineer – project coordinator- David Bouchard, says the Government Relations Department would be right department to talk to but he did not have contact for Tom. The town license agreement is now at town office Jamie McGee 866 # but same tree into Spectrum. Maybe going to the offices might be a good idea. Action Item: Larry/Joline will go to the office to see if we can get further up the chain.

ACTION: Ask Kelly to scan Spectrum license agreement to team. Per Kelly at town offices, the correct person to contact is Shelley Winchenbach, Director of Government Affairs Northeast at Charter Communications. Her phone # is 207-620-3319 and their office is

located at 400 Old County Road in Rockland ME. Tom will contact her to see if we can see her when we are in Rockland for RedZone appointment on Oct. 30.

- RedZone –
 - Meeting in Rockland on Oct. 30 at 11 AM. Most of committee will attend and drive up to Rockland together. Meet at 9:45 at the Gardiner Park and Ride

- Litchfield Road Committee –
 - Tom talked with Steve O. about roads and streets and 25-50 roads are not on that map. When 911 was implemented, they needed to have names so some are driveways. KVCOG was to update the roads and get it digitized. But our town said NO to high cost (\$30,000). There is also Maine.gov Maine GIS -geographical information system.
 - Richard Lane may have more info on roads – he worked on road committee.
 - Places to see on-line maps: Maine GIS home page: <https://www.maine.gov/megis/maps/>
 - Satellite photos: Maine orthoimagery discovery and download application View and download aerial photos and satellite imagery
 - Parcel Maps :
<https://maine.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=28e35c8fcf514d2685357b78bdd0b246>
 - Road maps: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/mapviewer/>

ACTION: Joline/Larry to ask neighbor associated with CMP if they have maps of all their utility poles in Litchfield. Also check with fire chief to confirm they use the Litchfield map only.

- Broadband Conference -
 - David, Larry and Joline will attend. Larry and Joline will be late on Monday but will be there for PM session and Larry and David will attend on Tuesday.

ACTION: Town will reimburse out cost for the conference per Selectman meeting, submit request.

- Consolidated Communications -

ACTION: Larry will reach out to them to see what plans they have, what our speeds are in town, and info they could provide us. They were helpful to the Bowdoinham efforts.

- KVCOG – 17 Main Street Fairfield ME 04937
 - Cheri contact them as was made aware of the broadband conference. She spoke to Cary Tyson Director of Community & Economic Development 453-4258 ext. 218 ctyson@kvkog.org
 - Joel Greenwood is in the planning division – Contact info is 207-453-4258 ext. 219 jgreenwood@kvkog.org KVCOG uses the latest GIS software, ESRI, and has an extensive database that includes geographic base data at the town, regional, and State levels. This

data is used in a variety of projects, including transportation, economic development, and planning projects.

- KVCOG provides a variety of mapping services to member towns upon request. We can create customized maps of communities showing a wide range of information including but not limited to: natural resources, public facilities, infrastructure, development trends, and/or locally-defined land use districts.

ACTION David will reach out to them.

Next meeting - November 4 10 AM in town hall – Larry will let Kelly know so it can be posted on website.

AD HOC Broadband Internet Access Committee

Notes from meeting held Sept. 17, 2019 at 6 PM Town Hall Offices

Present: Tom Wood, Larry and Joline Bell, Cheri Cooledge, not able to attend David Blocher

- Invited Cheri to join our group and she will read the book Fiber and get more familiar with the topic and let us know if she wants us to present her name for nomination to the Board
- Discussed that per our charter, the committee will provide the Board of Selectmen with initial recommendations for actions by the end of December
- The following actions were discussed: Larry Bell will contact Bowdoinham Internet Committee to see if their primary contact would be willing to come talk to us at a meeting and this may determine the date for our next meeting, Joline Bell will contact ConnectME and do more research on what they can do for us and who our primary contact would be, Tom Wood will contact Maine Town & City Magazine contacts to also learn more about what MMA (Maine Municipal Association) can do to assist us in our efforts to get better internet in Litchfield
- Per above action items, we will determine our next meeting by availability of guest speakers and try to avoid Tues/Thurs. Evenings. All agreed that daytime meetings were acceptable and that ideally a 7 day lead time is needed to announce public meeting to all residents of Litchfield
- Spectrum licensing fees for our town were briefly discussed. All agreed more research into our town as well as surrounding towns payments would be good to understand. No immediate action on this item was taken
- Discussed the need to also have Spectrum representatives come to one of our meetings at a future date

AD HOC Broadband Internet Access Committee

Notes from meeting held Sept. 123, 2019 at 6 PM Town Hall Offices (downstairs)

Present: Tom Wood, Larry and Joline Bell, Cheri Cooledge, not able to attend David Blocher

Guest speaker was Allen Acker who was involved in Bowdoinham's successful efforts to get high speed internet into that town.

INFORMATION FROM BOWDOINHAM EXPERIENCE – Allen Acker – guest speaker

- Infrastructure Grant was OK'd
- CMP tiff money was used in Bowdoinham – therefore did not need to increase taxes
- Economic and Comm. Development – they have their own committee
- His road was landlocked with 20 other houses
- They were operating on old contracts with cable company Comcast would not come to the table for that road or the town.
- Lincolville Communications (<https://intelco.net/>) was a provider that others were familiar with. They did a lot of vetting and research on the company and they had a good track record. They worked with them via ConnectME grants. They did a great job. They have a good track record on ConnectMe grants.
- It all comes down to \$\$ value/per household There were 277 unserved or underserved citizens in Bowdoinham. They needed a 75% ratio to get MAX score. That helps your grant.
- In prework they did a pre-count on all accounts – Bowdoinham did all of this themselves. They had 6 people in their group. Then it was verified with Engineering Grant money (Lincolville Communications did the verifying).
- No private municipal company was created for them – it was all done with the Engineering grant via Lincolville Communications.
- The fiber is 'last mile fiber'
- If poles were up on private roads those counted as town roads. The company was great about that. Needed to have 50% people sign up for the minimum speeds around 250 roughly.
- Pop is 5000, lots of home businesses, town manager was a huge champion, representative Berry was also a huge help at state level
- Costs: \$300k from CMP TIFF money plus \$150k from LCI and another \$150k from ConnectME Grant to cover the approximately \$600k total required to install fiber in Bowdoinham. Residents will per charged by Lincolville Communications on a monthly basis. The fee for high speed internet will be \$49.96 or 69.95/per month based on 50 or 100 Mbps with 3 year locked pricing.

Commented [JB1]:

Lincolville Communications contact is Alan Hensley, Communication Director

Comcast guy came to one of their meeting but never followed up, after grant was approved for Bowdoinham then Comcast came into Bowdoin saying that Comcast would do the upgrade for them. Allen was not sure if anything came of that or not but he mentioned Comcast lack of commitment was disappointing initially.

Lincolville Communications seems to do intelligent growth, they don't seem to over promise according to Allen

Surveys were done in Bowdoinham and Alan will help us get the surveys Nicole Brienne would likely share nbrienne@bowdoinham.com Joline will contact Nicole at Bowdoinham office this week

Litchfield will need to determine who is underserved and unserved and roads will need to be surveyed. Tom Wood mentioned that we have a town road committee and he will contact them to understand how detailed their documents are on public and private roads and what we can use as a starting point. He mentioned there is a lot of knowledge in that group and likely many will be willing to help our efforts. In Bowdoinham, the committee drove to all the roads that were underserved or unserved and documented it all prior to grant application. He said that was needed to get Lincolnville Communications to the table.

Speed is a problem for all of us in Litchfield and we also know some residents cannot get internet due to remote locations. Allen mentioned that the saturation of residents was of interest to Lincolnville Communications.

We also discussed setting up regularly scheduled meetings one hour before selectman meetings. All those present thought that would work. We will check with David as well and confirm a room location after.

AD HOC Broadband Internet Committee

Present: David Blocher, Cheri Cooledge, Joline and Larry Bell, Josh O'Neill (new member); Tom Wood unable to attend

Meeting notes from meeting held Jan. 6, 2020 at Litchfield Town Hall

Meeting with KVCOG - Cary Tyson and Kate

We invited the KVCOG to our meeting to see if they could help us regionalize our approach to broadband in this area. They also have updated our maps and it was good to discuss that with them as well.

They suggested we do a regional meeting in Feb/March with surrounding towns and they would help us coordinate it. We have that scheduled for Feb. 10.

They also suggested we stay connected with ConnectME and suggested that they may be able to help us with leveraging Spectrum. Mentioned we should use the link on ConnectME with the speed test.

Also suggested we reach out to Axiom which does a lot with rural Maine. Mentioned GrowSmart Maine and their director Nancy Smith who is from the Monmouth area.

After the KVCOG folks left, our team discusses next steps. Josh mentioned we should utilize a couple of tools on the internet for updated mapping - Open Street Maps and TIGER Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing system

Next meeting is Feb 3, 2020 at 10:30 AM at Litchfield Town Hall

Broadband Meeting Notes for February 3, 2020 Meeting

TK Networks:

TK Networks self funding a pilot program in Litchfield. Requesting 50 - 100 people from the area to be part of a pilot program. How should the committee respond? Contact information, Sodalite, Facebook page? Draft up something??

We will update all survey participants on this development and ask them if they are interested in participating in the initial pilot rollout. We will also put the information about TK up on our website and put it in Feb. Sodalite. TLIS next newsletter is in May so we should get on that and also ask if another email with this information can be sent to the lake association members.

When we asked Travis at TK Networks about the longevity of the equipment, he told us that his company will continually update equipment as customer contracts increase to keep the technology relevant.

Redzone:

Meeting on Wednesday, February 5 in Rockland - need to confirm their position

Looking at the Redzone website, there are some towns that have not funded to get coverage from them so it will be good to talk to them about their plans to support Litchfield. Also found on the website was information about different Maine towns % coverage. Here is what were listed for our area: Bowdoin 36%, Bowdoinham 47%, Litchfield 11%, Monmouth 21%, Sabattus 63%, Wales 40%, West Gardiner 55%, Richmond 0%

Plexicomm:

Review proposal - feedback from Committee

Proposal from Plexicomm was \$1.3M and 8 towers for fixed remote technology. However they did not have anyone in the state of Maine to come out and do a more accurate estimate. They are located in NY. Their endorsement was lukewarm for fixed remote technology. They did say they can do a fiber installation as well. We will keep them in mind for the future.

KVCOG:

1)Status of Mapping Project

2)Meeting at Firehouse on February 10 at 7 PM with local towns - need to develop agenda

Larry will follow up on the status of mapping and he has sent all addresses to KVCOG so they have the information needed to create a more accurate map for Litchfield. No cost for this at the point, it is part of town membership. We also have a member on our team that may be able to assist us due to his knowledge of mapping.

We have a regional meeting at 7 PM Feb. 10. KVCOG has invited all surrounding towns to participate in it. We will put up notices on the front door at town hall (Joline) and one at the transfer station (Tom). We need to put an agenda together. We will ask Kent to put the notice out to his newsletter members.

Cary of KVCOG had mentioned the GrowSmart Maine group as someone we should talk to. Joline reached out to Nancy Smith, GrowSmart Maine to ask what their broadband commitment

was. Their participation in broadband is via Maine Broadband Coalition and she encouraged us to be members of this group. She also mentioned "*one of the first challenges, from what I see, is wrapping our arms around the issue when many people are either happy with "good enough" service or are indifferent if their own broadband needs are being met...*"

David mentioned that many don't understand the future needs of broadband so we really need to talk about future needs as well. This led to a discussion on the need to look at this broadband project in phases. David will put together a skeleton agenda for the meeting and send it to all of us today.

Larry will send out an email to Cary with a skeleton agenda by Weds. and also ask about RSVP's to date so we can estimate attendance.

Spectrum:

Expect feedback shortly on action items from last meeting

We were told by Melinda that we should hear back from her on construction cost this week for some of our targeted under/unserved areas.

Consolidated

1) Jeff Nevins has revised his analysis and wants to meet with the Committee

2) Waiting for NDA signature from Select Board

Jeff had forgotten about a lot of residents in his last presentation and would like to meet with our group again. We have a Feb. 17 meeting at 10:30 so maybe have him come in at 11 AM. Larry will reach out to him.

ConnectME:

1) Attended monthly meeting. USDA grant cycle open now. 250 page application

2) January 2020 Action Plan:

<https://www.maine.gov/connectme/sites/maine.gov.connectme/files/inline-files/State%20of%20Maine%20-%20Statewide%20Broadband%20Action%20Plan%202020.pdf>

3) ConnectME Updated Map: <https://maps.jws.com/connectme/public/>

The published info on these maps is not always correct. Their board meetings are very interesting and have good info that we can learn from. They are the last Friday of every month.

Consultant:

Invite Brian Lippold - President of Casco Bay Advisors (out of Gardiner) to our meeting?

Town requires RFP process to hire consultants

We mentioned to the team that the select board had reminded us that if we hire anyone, it will need to go out to bid. Tom clarified that this was true but spending under \$5000 does not need to go to bid. It would still need to be presented to the select board for approval.

We could invite Brian to the Feb. 10 meeting as well as to one of our meetings to talk Litchfield only. Brian had mentioned that we should have more people like education, senior centers, real estate, businesses, select board, etc. on our committee.

Pioneer Broadband:

Met with Don Flewelling, Director of Govt. & Public Relations. They are interested in working with us to install fiber (but probably not ISP due to their proximity to Litchfield). \$40k to \$50k range to develop Engineering plans that the town can take to a bank for loans. High level of Aroostook and Washington County fiber implementation.

This company gave up on fixed wireless. They are rolling out fiber. They would like to bid on the engineering part of Litchfield fiber when we are ready. Need to have a plan that is fully detailed by engineers for any of the grants so this is a company to keep in mind for future needs.

Five Year Plan for Broadband in Litchfield:

Likely want to have fiber throughout (at some point 3 - 7 years out) to propagate usage of internet

We discussed the need to start outlining a broadband plan for the next 5 years. We may want to do a Strategic Plan with various phases and also a Tactical Plan with phases.

We need to be included in the Capitol Improvement Plan as well so that the future of broadband remains active in the discussions.

2020 Feb. 10 KVCOG Regional Broadband Meeting

The Litchfield Broadband Committee was all present except for Josh O'Neill. The meeting was held at the Litchfield Fire Station building.

Cary Tyson from KVCOG helped us to organize a regional meeting to include Monmouth and Wales in our discussions and learn what other towns are doing for broadband as well. We were pleased to have two people from Monmouth, Nancy Smith and Kelvin Hasch. We also had 3 Litchfield residents present (Gary Bell, W. Allan White, Joel Packer), the state representative for Litchfield, Monmouth and Wales - Kent Ackley and a consultant from Gardiner, Brian Lippold for a total of 13 participants.

Discussions were organized and Larry Bell went over our DRAFT for a Strategic Plan that may go 5-7 years. After this presentation, we asked Monmouth what their present plans were for broadband and both acknowledge there is no active group presently working on broadband. They stated the big challenge is that those that have it are satisfied/unsatisfied but are not actively going to town to complain. Those that don't have it have not formally organized. Kent Ackley did mention to Monmouth that they have TIF monies that can be used to improve their broadband issues.

We had a good discussion on education and the need to help residents better understand the future needs (5G) and what might be possible with technology. Many are not aware that newer technology will require much better broadband to work in rural areas. The driverless car was one example but more relevant to our residents are things like telemedicine and educational options on-line.

Brian Lippold, a consultant from neighboring Gardiner, spoke on the needs of each community a bit. There are 488 municipalities in Maine and ~200 are looking for better broadband solutions at this time. He mentioned that towns need to understand their gaps, what the cost will be and must create educational material for the residents because at some point there will be a cost and all need to get on board or understand what is at stake if they do not. He feels there is a great need to get some studies and education out to town residents. Having regional approaches sometimes work to each town's benefit because SCALE catches the eye of the providers. Scale matters.

We also mentioned to all present that there is a new fixed, remote wireless company TK Networks that will be coming to Litchfield, Monmouth and Wales by the end of the month of February. Kent was willing to get this news out to his constituents via his email so once we know more on timeline, we should update him.

2020 March 6 AD HOC Broadband Internet Committee

Present: Tom Wood, David Blocher, Cheri Cooledge, Joline and Larry Bell, Josh O'Neill

Meeting notes from meeting held March 6, 2020 at Town Hall Litchfield ME

TK Networks

They have installed their equipment on Channel 10 tower. Cost to install was slightly higher than they anticipated but response to date has been favorable and they are happy with all the new customers.

***Tom said he would be happy to track all those inquiries that cannot be served yet so that we can make our map more complete. We will ask TK Networks for those names.

Talked about starting a Litchfield ME Broadband Facebook. May want to make it an open group. Everyone thought it was a good idea. (Since this discussion, Town of Litchfield has started a FB account so we are likely all set on this)

Educational Night March 24th (cancelled due to Covid-19)

We will put flyers out all over town and at town hall/transfer station. Joline will make up the flyers and distribute with the help of Tom Wood.

We will set up a table for our group so that we can provide information, act as host and help everyone stay calm and positive.'

We also discussed that we will need to expand the group and create more advocates for the cause and this will be a good place to gather more names of interested residents.

We need to create an education sheet on broadband and what the future holds for towns in Maine.

Also need to have some of our surveys on hand.

Mapping

We need to get more complete data on Litchfield coverage and Josh suggests we do more IDing on the roads that have coverage and no coverage. We could have a private internal map with all this information if we are concerned about confidentiality of info provided by vendors but it would be very good for our information. We should be able to say XX% of our residents are covered and XX% are not.

Josh was asked to take hold of the mapping needs that we have and he agreed to meet with KVCOG and asked that Larry also be on the call. He is happy to take this on and said it is a powerful tool that we can use when it is updated.

We also suggested we get more info from Steve Omanski on what his maps will cover.

Consolidated

David will be talking to Consolidated about the fiber to Channel 10 and the fiber on Plains Rd. near Mark Russels tower. Will be good info to have.

As of right now, we really don't have anything else going with them.

Spectrum

We are still waiting on them to provide info on cost to bring cable to areas in Litchfield that do not have it. Melinda is very slow on getting back to us but she follows up with her team when prompted so we need to keep on it.

Brian Lippold

Proposal arrived on March 5th. We will send a memo/cover letter to the select board to get approval. In the note, we need to be clear about what we want and follow up so this gets there immediate attention.

***David will work on letter to the editor for the broadband bond issue and will talk to Wales

***Larry will talk to the West Kennebec Group

Broadband Meetings

We will meet the first Monday of the month at 11 AM at town hall. We will need to try to involve more people in the realtor sect, school, business owners (Percy was mentioned)

We also need to send our needs for budget to Trudy. **Larry will work on this and write up a draft.

DUE TO CORONAVIRUS, THE EDUCATIONAL NIGHT WAS CANCELLED
ALSO, THE SELECTBOARD DID APPROVE OUR USE OF BRIAN LIPPOLD FOR GRANT
WRITING

index #	LName	Fname	street #	Sname	Provider	speed/mps dn	speed/mps up	cost/mo	quality / reliability	service	Notes:
1	Potter-Dunlop	Julie	47	Piney Shores Drive	CC	14.0	?	\$50.00	fine	fine	Litchfield address - mail via Monmouth
2	Olsen	Kelly & Carl	107	Rosser Drive	CC	9.0	1.2	\$54.00	Too slow in summer	nr	
3	Ward	Steve	65	Stevens Drive	CC	4.0	?	nr	Too slow in summer	OK	Summer residence only - will re-connect w AdHoc later
6	McKenney	Lynne	18	Chickadee Drive	CC	nr	nr	\$40.00	OK	OK	Wants to pay summers only when in town
8	Cyr	Karen & Don	60	Rustic Drive	CC	nr	nr	\$40.00	nr	nr	Wants other options
9	Dixon	Jody	112	Buker Road	CC	nr	nr	\$58.32	OK	Poor	Wants company with better service
10	Gardner	Douglas & Leslie	105	Rosser Drive	CC	5.0	nr	\$71.00	Too slow / too expensive	not happy	Too slow & too expensive
13	McDonough	David	52	Manchester Lane	CC	4.1	0.9	\$40.92	no major problems	major problem	Interested in faster options at right price.
15	Blocher	David	638	Oak Hill Road	CC	7.0	1.0	\$45.00	OK but need more speed	OK	Spectrum not available & needs more speed
23	Heil	George & Kathleen	156	Rosser Drive	CC			\$45.00	nr	nr	Wants other options for HS internet and would like phone/TV/BB bundle
24	Sidman	Alan	46	Rustic Drive	CC			\$50.00	OK	OK	Has mo to mo service for summer only with no connect/disconnect fee / wants faster service.
33	Smith	nr	1514	Hollowell Road	CC	15.0	nr	\$40.00	unhappy	nr	Need more choices
35	Smith	David	23	Haley Lane	CC	9.5	nr	\$36.00	OK	OK	Would like more speed.
36	Sue\$ (?)	Kevin	48	Lynn Lane	CC	15.0	nr	\$50.00	unhappy	unhappy	Interested in faster options at right price.
38	Bosse	Jerry	19	Weed Drive	CC	2.0	0.7	\$67.00	unhappy	nr	Too expensive - Interested in other options.
39	Dow	Nancy	65	Woodbury Drive	CC	2.0	0.7	\$67.00	unhappy	nr	Too expensive - Interested in other options.
40	Griffiths	Gil	73	Woodbury Drive	CC	2.0	0.7	\$67.00	unhappy	nr	Too expensive - Interested in other options.
41	St. Peter	Kristen	44	Island Drive	CC	2.0	0.7	\$67.00	unhappy	nr	Too expensive - Interested in other options.
42	Gowell	Rick	42	Island Drive	CC	2.0	0.7	\$67.00	unhappy	nr	Too expensive - Interested in other options.
45	Cooledge	Cheri			CC	2.0	0.7		unhappy	nr	Interested in faster options at right price.
32	Raymond, Sr.	Chris	25	My Way Drive	CC	7.0	1.0	\$47.00	sometimes happy others nc	nr	Would like better service (speed - capacity)
44	Bell	Larry & Joline			HughesNet	2.0	0.7		unhappy	nr	Interested in faster options at right price.
17	Carpentier	Tina	12	Weed Drive	HughesNet	2.9	nr	\$130.00	Not happy	not happy	Must use Hughs (\$90) + US Cellular VPN (\$40) works from home
11	?	Eric			none						No phone line & no cable line at camp
19	Koehler	Pete			none						Would sign up in a heartbeat if there were a good option
25	Di Prima	Elizabeth			none						Has sister on Buker Pond... has no service . "Consolidated rep says flag down line truck and ask about service availability.
4	Clannon	LaMarr	nr	nr	Spectrum	23.0	2.3	\$49.99	fairly happy	OK	Love to see true HS internet access
5	Boyer	Brian & Janis	50	Easy Street	Spectrum	80.0	11.0	\$66.00	inconsistent	not happy	Absolutely interested in other options - wants to avoid ripoffs
7	Mortell	Marie	nr	nr	Spectrum	nr	nr	\$49.99	OK	troublesome	Only uses in summer will skip phone&cable programing in 2020
14	White	Allan	657	Plains Road	Spectrum	70.3	5.9	\$50.00	Not happy	not happy	Wants to change but no other options
16	Fleming	Betsy	51	Sand Pond Lane	Spectrum						Spectrum says BF has Time Warner Spectrum??? Too costly
18	Wood	Ellen & Tom	187	Plains Road	Spectrum	17.0	2.3	\$73.00	requent internet disconnect	not happy	"legacy" customer higher costs than advertised & frequent increases
20	Blythe	Janet & Mark	55	Washington Lane	Spectrum	108.0	10.7	\$74.99	nr	poor	looking for better price and better service
21	Aucoin	Kathy & Steve	233	Oak Hill Road	Spectrum	108.0	11.0	\$75.00	nr	nr	Would be happy with other options Price/speed
22	DeMatteis	Buffy	20	Easy Street	Spectrum			\$134.00	nr	nr	??? States cost at \$134 but also says 'seasonal rates' is \$30/mo???
27	N (only 'N' given)	Trevor	nr	Wentzell Road	Spectrum	100.0	15.0	\$70.00	nr	nr	Wants cheaper options
28	Larrabee	Kasey	1290	Richmond Road	Spectrum	nr	nr	\$99.99	hate	hate	Signed for \$49 got charged for \$100 - protested & paid anyway but S never fixed it - so cancelled. Wants access to BB
29	nr1	nr	34	School Lane	Spectrum	nr	nr	Too Mucl	nr	nr	Wants cheaper options
30	L (only 'L' given)	Lori	76	Center Road	Spectrum	nr	nr	\$65.00	unhappy	nr	Wants cheaper options
31	nr2	nr	nr	nr	Spectrum	100.0	10.0	\$60.00	Happy	happy	Would like lower cost without sacrificing quality
34	Donahue	Mille	38	Easy Street	Spectrum	nr	nr	???	unhappy	nr	Not happy. Not good reliability. Wants reduced cost & better quality
37	nr3	nr	410	Academy Road	Spectrum	nr	nr	???	unhappy	unhappy	Too expensive - Interested in other options.
43	Kux	James A.	27	Sand Pond Lane	Spectrum	nr	nr	\$55.00	unhappy	nr	Seasonal only \$50/ + \$5/mo for seasonal only. Looking for better/cheaper
26	Rodrigue	Kathleen	nr	nr	USCellular	2.6	7.4	\$90.00	nr	nr	Household provider does not have enough speed & am forced to go via cell phone & use VPN
12	Bournakle	Angela									No response ???