

**Town of Fletcher – Select Board
Fletcher Town Clerk's Office
Monday, July 1, 2019
Meeting Minutes**

Present

Members:

Jon Bondy (Chair), Matt Gillilan, Christine E. Nilsen, Jesse Wiens

Guests:

Randy Brock, Sheriff Roger Langevin, Corey Parent, James Gregoire, Diane Dayvie, Charles Tinker, Sue Ferguson, Clay Purvis, Karrie Sweet, Rachael Scarpa (Secretary)

1) Call to order

- a. Jon Bondy called the meeting to order at 7:05pm

2) Broadband Presentation (attached)- Clay Purvis:

- a. Clay Purvis from the state of Vermont gave a presentation to the Select Board regarding the different state and federal programs available for towns interested in taking on high speed internet or broadband projects. ~~ING~~
- b. Clay also spoke about expanding cellular service throughout Vermont and explained the state's efforts to collect data. There is a possibility for volunteers from Fletcher to drive around town with cell phones from different providers (provided by the state) to collect accurate cellphone service data.

3) Regular Select Board Business:

- a. Historical Society: The Select Board spoke with Charles Tinker (Historical Society) about the challenges the Historical Society faces cleaning up after the rummage sale. The Select Board discussed having a town truck available to haul leftover items away, as this would be more cost effective for the Historical Society than renting a dumpster. The Select Board encouraged the Historical Society to come to them if/when they need support.
- b. Tax Rate: The Select Board discussed a plan to set the tax rate next week.

4) Sheriff's Update:

- a. Sheriff Roger Langevin provided information to the Select Board about what updates have been made to the Franklin County Sheriff's Department.
- b. The Sheriff presented a proposal for a shared 40 hour contract with Fletcher and two other towns. After some discussions of different options, the Sheriff said he would entertain the idea of having the department work 20 hours/week in Fletcher at \$50/hour to work on issues in town. There was also discussions about having the Sheriff's Department work in Fletcher for 10 hours, over a two week period at the Sheriff's Department's expense, for the town to see the impact. The Select Board will discuss ways to collect information from the town to see if there is an interest in having a contract with the Franklin County Sheriff's Department.*

5) Roads:

- a. International truck: The Select Board reviewed the state bank proposal for the purchase of the new International truck.
- i. Christine moved accept the proposal
- ii. Jesse seconds Christine's motion.
- iii. The Select Board unanimously approves.
- b. Communication: Jon will draft an article to communicate the truck purchase to the town.* Jesse will work on fixing the roads email on Norman's phone so that he can send emails from roads@fletchervt.net.*
- c. Matt discussed current and upcoming road projects with the Select Board.
- d. Matt will talk to Rich about having Brian build the office at the town garage.*

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6) Adjournment:

- a. Meeting adjourned at 9:26pm

**Denotes action item*

Upcoming Meetings:

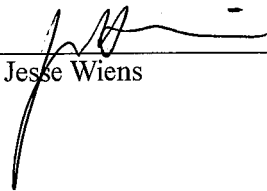
Select Board Meeting: Monday, July 15, 2019 at 7pm



Jon Bondy, Chair

Rich Bidwell

Matt Gillilan



Jesse Wiens



Christine E. Nilsen

Telecommunications & Connectivity Grants and Resources 2019-2020

Fletcher Vermont July 1, 2019

Broadband Market Challenges

- ▶ Light touch regulation - broadband is regulated at the federal level, and there is no universal service mandate.
- ▶ Competition is fierce - telecoms compete on a variety of factors including content, bundled services, and price. Competition is largely between facilities-based providers. Competition leads to lower margins.
- ▶ Private investment business models are focused on return - Telecoms invest in upgrades to existing systems over expansion (i.e. the move from 3G to 4G). The rural last mile remains underserved/unserved because the business case for private investment is lacking.
- ▶ Geography - settlement patterns and geography create challenges for deployment.

Broadband Costs*

- ▶ Design / engineering
- ▶ Real estate
- ▶ Easements
- ▶ Legal fees
- ▶ Construction
 - ▶ Materials (fiber, splitters, hubs, splitters etc.)
 - ▶ Make-ready
 - ▶ Labor (hanging, splicing)
- ▶ Backhaul
- ▶ Content
- ▶ Operations & Maintenance

*not an exhaustive list

FTTP Business Case Components

- ▶ Feasibility Study/Business Case Development
 - ▶ High-level design
 - ▶ Deployment cost estimates
 - ▶ Backhaul and Internet Access Costs
 - ▶ O&M
 - ▶ Sales and Marketing
 - ▶ Billing
 - ▶ Debt service
 - ▶ Survey directed uptake and revenue projections
 - ▶ Funding sources

FTTP Public-Private Partnership Business Case

- ▶ Basic Partnership Structure
 - ▶ Local community funds, owns and extends fiber to the premises
 - ▶ Middle-mile fiber provides backhaul to ISP - could be same entity
 - ▶ ISP provides customer premises equipment, retail services, billing and customer management
 - ▶ Outside plant maintenance is by local community
 - ▶ Inside plant maintenance is by ISP
 - ▶ Local community and ISP share XX% of gross revenues
 - ▶ Additional revenues streams are shared decreasing overall risk

Current Federal Broadband Programs

- ▶ Connect America Fund Phase II (FCC) - \$50 million for Vermont. Given to FairPoint/Consolidated to expand DSL in rural, "high cost census blocks."
 - ▶ Replaced in 2021 with "Rural Digital Opportunity Fund"
 - ▶ \$20 Billion to help 4 million. Waiting on the details...
- ▶ Mobility Fund Phase II (FCC) - \$4.5 Billion Nationwide for 4G/LTE service to unserved areas. State portions and eligibility are not determined. Eligible areas are in contest period.
- ▶ USDA - a variety of grant and loan products targeting the deployment of broadband. These programs currently fund areas that lack 25/3. USDA received \$600 million this year earmarked for broadband nationwide
- ▶ Nat'l Broadband Map - the Dept. of Commerce received \$7.5 million in funding to update the nations broadband map.
- ▶ E-RATE - provides subsidized broadband services to school and libraries. Vermont is well served by this program with the help of the AOE. *Funds available for schools*
- ▶ Economic Development Administration, Northern Borders Regional Commission, and USDA have non-broadband grant programs that can be used for broadband.

Current State Broadband Programs

- ▶ Communications Union District
 - ▶ Provides a legal entity for municipalities to start telecom planning
 - ▶ Allows towns to work together on a regional issue
 - ▶ Provides structure and governance
- ▶ Connectivity Initiative
 - ▶ Focus on the “last mile.” Funds business and residential locations lacking 4/1 broadband
 - ▶ Minimizes overbuilding - while overbuilding is sometime necessary, granular mapping data helps ensure that funds are directed to the right places
 - ▶ Technology agnostic - higher speeds are favored over lower but can fund any technology
 - ▶ Scalable - with an emphasis on cost per location, support can increase with increased levels of funding.
 - ▶ Compliments other sources - can be used conjunction with federal, local and private funding
- ▶ Vermont High Cost Fund - ongoing support to rural telephone providers that provision broadband.

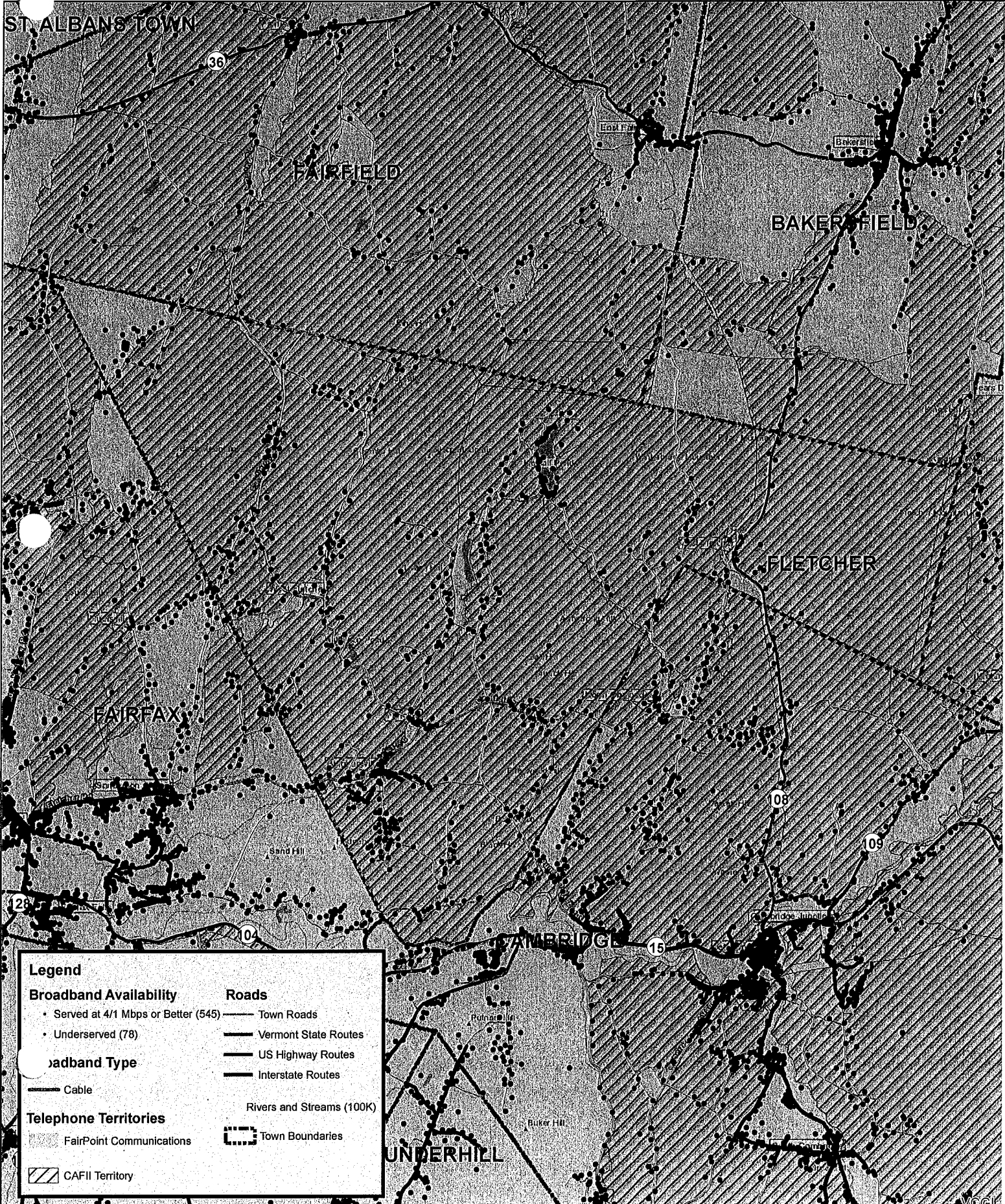
H.513 --- Vermont's 2019 Broadband Bill

- ▶ Raises funding for the Connectivity Initiative
 - ▶ \$205,000 one-time money
 - ▶ .4% USF increase dedicated to buildout
- ▶ Creates the *Broadband Innovation Grant Program*:
 - ▶ Funds feasibility studies related to deployment of broadband
 - ▶ \$700,000 total funding (\$60,000 per grantee)
 - ▶ Open to CUDs, municipalities, non-profit, for profit
 - ▶ 1st Round expected in August 2019 *(of applications)*
- ▶ Vermont Economic Development Authority Loan Program
 - ▶ Loan Program for new broadband providers (open to CUDs)
 - ▶ Loans of up to \$4 million per project
 - ▶ Launch in FY2020
- ▶ Technical Assistance
 - ▶ Additional staff resources dedicated to assisting communities directly with broadband expansion.

Department of Public Service Resources

- ▶ Rural Broadband Technical Assistance Specialist
 - ▶ Dedicated staff assisting communities with broadband visioning
 - ▶ Connection to other resources
 - ▶ Education and outreach
- ▶ Broadband mapping
 - ▶ Helping stakeholders make informed decisions using availability data
 - ▶ Wireless mapping continues with the help of volunteers
- ▶ Middle-mile fiber
 - ▶ We manage three middle mile networks that are available for broadband *not applicable to Fletcher*
- ▶ Wireless licensing of state-owned properties *not applicable to Fletcher*

Broadband Service Availability for the Town of Fletcher, Vermont



Legend

Broadband Availability

- Served at 4/1 Mbps or Better (545)
- Underserved (78)

Broadband Type

— Cable

Telephone Territories

FairPoint Communications

CAFII Territory

Roads

— Town Roads

— Vermont State Routes

— US Highway Routes

— Interstate Routes

Rivers and Streams (100K)

Town Boundaries

Broadband Availability by Road Segment 25 Mbps Down / 3 Mbps Up or Better

