

#20...May 13, 2021

There is a LOT going on! your Broadband Committee has been very busy!

Update the broadband survey:

We plan to send out another broadband survey in June, as soon as the new town tax maps are done so we have the most up to date mailing list. But you don't need to wait for that! Attached is the new survey form, and we'd love to get a head start on compiling the results. If you would like to participate early, please fill out the attached "word" file and email it back. This is a great chance to help us improve the survey, too.

Speed tests:

ConnectME, the state broadband agency, would like more speed tests to help fill out their map. This is the best way of registering the fact that we need better broadband. They are urging us to take the test as many times as we like, because it will improve their data. Areas such as Brooksville will be in a good position to receive funding for a major broadband improvement, and the speed test is a great way to demonstrate our need for it.

To take the test: mainebroadbandcoalition.org, press "take the test".

To view the results: <https://maps.sewall.com/connectme/public/>

Getting help with your internet bill:

There's a federal program called the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB). More information is here: <https://getemergencybroadband.org>. A lot of cell phone companies that serve Brooksville are participating: the website has a long list of "companies near me" for zip code 04617. Unfortunately at this time Consolidated Communications, which is the commonly used ISP in Brooksville, is not (yet) part of the program. If you have a way to contact CCI, please urge them to get on board with it! We know they are thinking about it, and we'll let you know as soon as they offer it. It's a hugely popular program elsewhere.

Updates to Town website:

We just discovered last week that the Broadband Committee has a webpage on the Town website! Right now it's "under construction" but there should be some interesting information posted there within the month. We hope that it will give you a more in-depth look at what we are doing than these brief emails allow. We'll let you know when it's ready for "prime time".

Broadband in the Town Comprehensive Plan:

The Comp Plan committee asked us to provide a section on broadband: four of us worked on several versions of it and now it's in the hands of the Comp Plan committee to mull over and edit.

Getting ready for the forthcoming infusion of federal cash:

Widespread news reports say that there will be a lot of federal funding for better broadband to “unserved” areas like Brooksville. We are working to put the town into the best position to benefit from those funds. This involves close collaboration with ConnectME and our neighboring towns. Right now there are plans afoot to hire a consultant to do a joint broadband plan for Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Deer Isle, Penobscot and Sedgwick. We are also engaged in conversation with Consolidated Communications which has a proposition to offer, whereby the towns pony up some funding for high speed “fiber to the premises”. There are a lot of questions to be asked about this proposition, and we are fortunate that our Broadband Committee has the expertise to ask them! If you want to know more about your Broadband Committee members, send me an email.

As Bugs Bunny said, “That’s All, Folks”! Happy Spring!