

# **Atlantic Broadband Advisory Council**

## **Via WebEx**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**November 18, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30PM by Chair Michael Meinz.

## **Roll Call of Members**

**Members Attending:** Michael Meinz, Ed Berdick, Joseph Rice, Craig Merriman, Stephen Marchesseault, Patricia Lannon, Kathleen McCarty

**Members Absent:** James Barnie, Christopher Steinbrick

**Atlantic Broadband representative attending:** Mary Jane Rickard, Nadine Heinen

## **Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes of the prior meeting was made by Ed Berdick and seconded by Michael Meinz. The motion passed with 3 abstentions.

## **Treasurer**

The bank balance is \$14,470.70. PO Box fee of \$118 paid in September.

## **Correspondence**

Mike Meinz presented complaint letter received. The customers issue has been resolved by Atlantic Broadband. Unsatisfactory customer service telephone wait time was mentioned in the letter.

## **Atlantic Broadband Information and Reports**

- **Customer Service Issues**  
Members discussed issues related to: (1) Call Center responsiveness (unsatisfactory telephone wait times), (2) Internet performance and (3) availability of the walk-up counters.

Response from ABB:

ABB is aware the response to customers calling the call center was not good to say the least. When COVID hit in March, we had to move quickly to transition our teams to a work from home state at a time when broadband activity was skyrocketing. We lost some staffing during this time and although planned to hire replacements, our teams were busy surviving the current state of the country and responding to the demands at the time. During this time, some other activity contributing to call center activity was happening at the same time.

From July through October our efforts to normalize operations with COVID, a series of hurricanes proceeded to test our network reliability and our ability to maintain services through disaster recovery. Again, despite reduced capacity to interact with customers over the phone and “in-person”, our network reliability was maintained and customers were able to continue working remotely. In that same time-period, we re-established normal billing practices of assessing late fees

and/or discontinuance of service for accounts in the rears that we halted since the pandemic began with the FCC “Keep America Connected” pledge.

Since this time, we have been working on reducing call volume into the call center through development of self-service options and more sophisticated IVR selections. A process to exchange modems and converter boxes through UPS was refined and our dependence on third party partners like grocery store service counters was heightened to accept customer payments. We have hired and continue to hire additional call center staffing and plan to increase the staff by 20% by the end of the year. We have also utilized a third-party call center to alleviate wait times and take overflow calls.

### **Internet performance**

We are focused on upstream (Return) signal rates and proactively monitoring for any slight discrepancies before they are noticeable to customers. Our system technicians are working every day to correct any errors show in the levels and are correcting the issues. (Upstream noise can cause intermittent internet issues and the cause can vary from plant hardware to lose connectors, to bad hardline, to customer on premise) Troubleshooting using tools and in field diagnose the issue.

We have replaced faulty coax hardline in the CT footprint, proactively and reactively.

We have upgraded our DOCSIS gear in needed areas, adding channels to increase internet speeds.

Capital investments were made to increase network capacity in areas where COVID related demand for service was compounded by housing development and new population growth.

### **Regarding the customer service centers**

Unfortunately ,at the time of the COVID outbreak, we had to close the customer contact centers due to safety concerns for both employees and customers. ABB has already re-opened some of the contact centers in other locations and will continue to evaluate additional locations.

## **Old Business**

- None

## **New Business**

- 2021 Meeting Dates
  - Wednesday, January 20, 2021 – Montville Town Hall
  - Wednesday, March 17, 2021 – Montville Town Hall
  - Wednesday, May 19, 2021 – Montville Town Hall
  - Wednesday, July 21, 2021 – Montville Town Hall
  - Wednesday, September 15, 2021 – Montville Town Hall
  - Wednesday, November 17, 2021 – Montville Town Hall

## **Unfinished Business**

### **Advisory Council contact information on town’s web site**

- None

**Community TV page on town's web site**

- None

**Community TV slide on town's Channel 22**

- None

## **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12PM

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Berdick