

TOWN OF GOSHEN
BROADBAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 20, 2023 – 5:00PM

Held at Goshen Town Hall and by Zoom

PRESENT: Marc McCarthy, Peter Kujawski, Gary Stango Jr (Zoom), Scott Olson (Zoom)

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Marc McCarthy at 5:01pm and a short recess was needed to allow members to join. Meeting was reconvened at 6:00pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion was made by Peter Kujawski and seconded by Gary Stango to approve the January 19, 2023 regular meeting minutes. It was voted to accept the motion. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

OLD BUSINESS: The committee discussed the progress with making an Optimum connection to Camp Coch but also recognized the fiscal calendar and need to secure budgetary approval for expenditure. Difference designs were discussed, and the committee recommended preparing a formal recommendation to the First Selectman's office and to the Parks & Recreation Commission that could be submitted to the finance committee. Gary Stango researched and prepared a summary list of equipment and a memo was drafted and submitted. It was agreed Scott Olson would make the recommendation to the First Selectman on behalf of the committee. A copy of said memo is attached to the minutes.

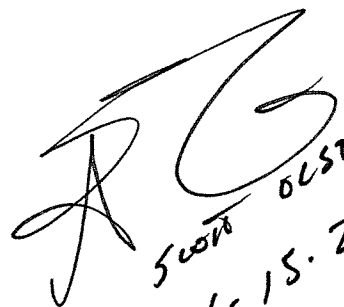
The committee also discussed a submission for the upcoming Town Topics newsletter. It was agreed Marc would draft something and circulate for review and submit to Virginia and also send along to Woodridge Lake and the Goshen News for circulation to residents. A copy of this submission is attached to the minutes.

NEW BUSINESS: Each of the committee members discussed construction progress that had been witnessed during the past several weeks throughout the community by Optimum. Squan and their subcontractors continued their underground work throughout Woodridge Lake while limited aerial work was done throughout the rest of time due to DOT restrictions, but it was anticipated that work would be accelerated through the summer.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm

Received June 15, 2023 @ 3:10 P.M.

Attest Brian Z. Breen
Goshen Town Clerk


500 Olson
06-15-2023

Town of Goshen

Broadband Advisory Committee

To: Board of Selectman

From: Broadband Advisory Committee

Date: April 24, 2023

Re: Camp Coch new Optimum broadband service to support WiFi mesh network

One of the key objectives established by the Broadband Advisory Committee (BAC) in 2023 was to explore options to gain broadband access at Camp Coch to host a strong WiFi mesh network for use by Parks & Recreation Commission activities and Goshen residents. Camp Coch is notorious for a very weak cell signal environment and terrible internet access currently supplied by a legacy Frontier DSL connection offering speed of <5 Mbps. Camp Coch is used for many different community activities including those organized by the PRC as well as outside community groups. The facility includes three (3) buildings for the purpose of this project, the main building, the nursing station and the pavilion by Dog Pond. In the opinion of the committee, having a proper, reliable WiFi signal across the property is something that should be pursued given the utility and convenience it will offer the overall community, improving safety and future attractiveness for PRC and other community activities.

Following multiple requests for a field survey/engineering, Optimum was able to utilize existing conduit and pull coaxial (HFC) cable to 291 Beach Street address, making it serviceable on their system. They were able to do so in mid-February 2023, without micro-trenching across the parking lot or aerial spans.

Last week, some of us met with PRC Director, Erin Reilly to gauge her program's needs at the location and incorporate them into our recommendation, while providing her with information to incorporate into her RFP for next year.

Today, the primary building contains an office for PRC, where the Optimum connection enters the building, the main meeting hall, and a storage area downstairs. Two access points (APs) are recommended, one in the main office and one in the hall. Several existing security cameras located downstairs are connected but lack bandwidth to function properly. They would now gain a proper strength connection due to the new access point added to the main hall, allowing them to function as originally intended, improving security at the property.

A secondary nursing station building, consists of a smaller single floor structure which is actively used by PRC activities in the summer and has historically had no signal and deemed a priority by Erin. Connecting this building now will also allow future expansion potential to spread a signal across the playing fields to the south. The nurse's building would only require a single access point (AP), connected to the main building by 2 "line-of-sight" antennas, establishing a strong connection between the two buildings with extremely low latency and full 1Gbps speed.



Broadband Advisory Committee Update

May 2023 - Loads of new-build fiber construction activity taking place in the Goshen and the surrounding area. This serves as one of the most significant capital investments in the region in many years but not one but two companies. As we are sure you've noticed this spring, communications construction crews have been actively stringing new fiber optic cabling across telephone poles and pulling new orange conduit pipe throughout much of Woodridge Lake. Although a solid 6-9 months late due to various weather and DOT issue, Altice USA (Optimum) has deployed multiple authorized contractors to complete its build with an intent to start marketing Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) broadband internet and TV service sometime later this year. And not far on their coattails, the new Frontier (fiber version) is even more aggressively also building out an entirely new fiber optic network across the more densely populated sections of its existing, former copper customer network (formerly SNET/ATT DSL phone service). So, by early next year many Goshen residents who live along state roads or in more densely populated areas will soon be fortunate enough to have not just one fiber optic broadband solution but two! While in other towns, ARPA funds have been used to incentive construction, in Goshen and its surrounding neighbors, this race to secure the future fiber customer is being done with no government support. **Service quality will be greatly improved while prices should be similar. Customer Wins!**

New Camp Coch Wi-Fi coming soon! After much work, new Optimum connection was secured to the Camp building on Beach Street and shortly thereafter, the Board Selectman supported a recommendation put forward by the Broadband committee to purchase new wireless equipment to provide a strong Wi-Fi signal across the Camp building, nursing station and the new pavilion. The new system will broadcast a strong signal across the property which has nutritiously had a terrible cell signal. This will allow future meeting participants at the camp to gain more functionality and connectivity as well as offering camp parents, counselors, staff and children with improved internet access if it's needed to make phone calls, access signups, etc. It will also help improve the functionality of the existing camera systems which have struggled to broadcast images, lacking bandwidth. Committee members have donated their time to handle the installation to keep costs down.

What's so good about fiber anyway? Today, Optimum customers receive their signal over the legacy hybrid fiber coaxial (HFC) network which has been upgraded over the years but at its core retains substantial bottlenecks in bandwidth, forces bandwidth to be shared across users and therefore slows during peak periods of data/video consumption and was designed for downloading information, not uploading (i.e. receiving streamed video content from users - Zoom). FTTH is an entirely new physical network with massive bandwidth scale improvements, symmetrical speeds (i.e. same upload speed as download) and no sharing of capacity. Suffice it to say, it is on a different playing field. Normally such a service would come at a premium, but threats of inroads from 5G wireless offerings combined with aggressive new entrants (Frontier, GoNetSpeed, etc) are benefitting the customer as these services are being offered basically at the same price. Don't be fooled by aggressive marketing, pricing is at or the same of current services. Call customer retention at **877-936-4778** in order to make sure you are receiving the best rates for service. Pricing has started to go up as 12 months of Showtime is no longer offered, and gift cards have been trimmed but 300 Mbps at \$40/mo, 500 Mbps now at \$60/mo, 1Gbps now at \$70/mo still with free installation. Rising interest rates and inflation are forcing their hand on pricing. Both Altice and Fronter have removed their 2 & 3 year price caps on offers.

How will I know when service is available at my address? Keep an eye on your mailbox as you should start to receive marketing materials introducing Optimum Fiber soon. Alternatively,



The proposed system includes a business class router, WiFi access points, managed switches, and a primary controller to manage security and updates. This system will allow secure official town use (not broadcast) as well as an isolated, broadcasted guest network ("CampCoch WiFi") for residents and guests while on the property. Gary Stango and Marc McCarthy are willing to donate their time to the town for installation and setup over the next several weeks.

New broadband internet service for the location would cost \$65/mo for 300Mbps or \$115/mo for 500Mbps plus \$99 for installation. We recommend starting with the basic 300 Mbps to provide the location with basic broadband speeds, security camera access and can revisit this seasonally or as needed should there be a need to start hosting zoom meetings or other streamed content at this location. This location will also soon receive an upgrade to fiber optic service connection by both Optimum and Frontier over the next 6-12 months which could utilize much of the proposed hardware.

We have provided two equipment options for either the main building or the main building PLUS the nursing station. The equipment cost is estimated between \$900-\$1,500 with tax/shipping while ongoing broadband service would cost ~\$780 per year (\$65/mo). Once an enterprise grade router has been installed, additional locations at the camp could be easily integrated in the future.

Introducing "CampCoch WiFi" will be a wonderful benefit to the community, and it comes at a very modest cost. Our committee unanimously recommends this expenditure and are hopeful you and the Board of Finance can find room in the village budget so this connection and service can be installed before the summer season.

Option A - Main building Only

	<u>Units</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Enterprise Router (Unifi DMP)	1	\$379	\$379
Access Point (U6-LR-US)	2	\$179	\$358
500ft Cat6 Cable	1	\$70	\$70
Wall Rack (2U)	1	\$35	\$35

SubTotal			\$842 plus tax

Option B – Connect Nurse's Station:

Access Point (U6-LR-US)	1	\$179	\$179
Antenna (GBE-Plus-US)	2	\$179	\$358

TOTAL EQUIPMENT COST			\$1,379 plus tax

Note: Expanding to the nurse's station will allow further expansion into the adjacent field and parking lots in the future.



you can check to see if the service is available here -

<https://order.optimum.com/Buyflow/Storefront>. Various addresses in Torrington and Litchfield are already live. You will be required to have a new installation wherein they will bring a new fiber connection to your home either aerially or direct buried depending on your current connection. They will then remove your current modem and replace it with an Optical Network Terminal (ONT) or Fiber Gateway and provide you with a new wireless router utilizing Smart WiFi 6 which is probably more powerful than your current equipment (you are free to use your own router if you prefer). Traditional video set-top boxes will be returned (no more rentals) and replaced with their Altice One Mini TV Box and video will now be distributed via WiFi in the home. Alternatively, you can use some Apple TV units. No word yet on Roku, Chromecast or other Smart TV devices. TV packages will be similar and can be reviewed on the website.

I hate Optimum, Frontier is even worse, both have terrible customer service - What options do I have? Soon, many residents will have an option for the same superior fiber service – a true head- to-head, lowest price wins competition. We've never had this with no contracts, etc. Frontier had a legacy of terrible service built on an old copper network but after bankruptcy, great internal strides have taken place with a new management team with one of the most aggressive construction programs in the industry, with nearly 400 crews actively adding nearly 40,000 new fiber customers per month. They are aggressively piercing AlticeUSA's 8 town territory and folks should not be reluctant to giving them a try based entirely on their past experience. May the best price/offer win!

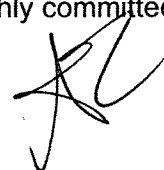
Take note, the cable companies are also looking over their shoulder as the likes of T-Mobile, Verizon or AT&T have rolled out mobile hotspot (WiFi) offerings often with no data caps, making for an even cheaper solution for folks who do not need symmetrical speeds fiber will offer.

How to know you've gotten the best rate from Optimum? Call customer retention at **877-936- 4778** to make sure you are receiving the best rates for service. Please pass this number along to friends and neighbors. A call should allow existing customers to receive the new customer offering.

We expect Frontier Fiber to pass 500-600 homes in 2023 and another 600-700 homes in 2024.- Much like other towns in Northwest CT, Frontier is taking an economic approach to its build, concentrating on more dense areas of town, identifying parts of Woodridge Lake, Tyler Lake and homes along key state roads for its deployment. Residents in nearby towns have seen substantial mailings detailing comparably priced fiber offerings to what Optimum is offering and presumably most everyone will be a new fiber customer, eligible to receive the best rates.

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) - Finally, all Goshen residents should be aware of the this federal assistance program for lower-income households to help reduce the cost of broadband and mobile services in some cases to zero. Many are eligible to receive free wireless and free broadband service with the program. Some of the paperwork may seem cumbersome but more information regarding the program is on the website and materials are available at town hall.

The TV business is changing FAST – folks that have cut the cord, please reach out to others to teach them how. Reach out to any committee member for ideas. Folks should NOT be paying high cable bills today. Should anyone have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to one of the BAC committee members or attend one of the monthly committee meetings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC' or similar, located at the bottom right of the page.

