

**Jaffrey Economic Development Council  
Draft Minutes 12/14/17**

**9:00 am Town Office**

Present: Peter Chamberlain, Chair  
Larry Alvarez, Cathy Furze, Ed Merrell, Max Mitchell, Stephanie Niemela, Mike Shea

Staff: Jo Anne Carr

1. Broadband

Cathy, Jo Anne and Jon Frederick have been participating in a regional discussion on access to broadband. At the last meeting representatives from USDA and UNH Cooperative Extension presented information on potential funding options for support of broadband initiatives. It was quickly apparent that in the Monadnock region, Keene included, rural communities don't meet the primary provider's business model. That is we don't provide sufficient density in population or businesses to warrant expansion of services by Comcast or Fairpoint. Further, while wireless technology might be an important interim means of providing higher speeds in more remote locations, rapid obsolescence is a problem and equipment is costly to replace.

Our take away from this meeting was that while Jaffrey appears to be well served "on paper" – reporting from Fairpoint indicates they serve 95% of the town, there remain gaps in service area and poor upload/download speeds in certain areas. USDA has a grant program Rural Business Development Grants – Jaffrey can meet points which would be considered "+ factors" for funding, eg. median household income, businesses less than 50 employees and less than \$1M in profits, and having a possible match. The proposal is to request funds for a feasibility study, identifying home based business, small/emerging business, conduct a survey to identify gaps in service and less than optimal service, and explore opportunities for collaboration with neighboring communities.

Max Mitchell made a motion to add \$5K to the operating budget for the EDC to support this project and Cathy Furze second. Motion passes unanimously. Ed Merrell makes motion to support the feasibility study with Max Mitchell second. Unanimous support<sup>1</sup>.

2. TIFD Budget Drafts

Jo Anne presented updates to the TIFD budgets with recent expenditures included. No changes to the line items are proposed. These budgets do not have to go to Town Meeting this year as there is no proposed change to the financing plan. They will be presented to the Budget Committee.

3. Other Business

Jo Anne reported that the Planning Board is proposing changes to the General Business District in an effort to create additional space for small commercial development. A Public workshop will be Held December 19 at the Fire Station.

Jo Anne has been contacted regarding a bicycle tourism project, with an interest in expanding rail trail connections in SW NH. More on this early next year.

4. Adjourn

**Next meeting Date: January 11, 2018 @ 9:00 AM**

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<sup>1</sup> Note that as this is a one year request it better fits as a warrant article to be approved by Town Meeting, rather than a new budget line item.