

MONADNOCK BROADBAND GROUP

The Monadnock Broadband Group (MBG) is an informal coalition of municipal officials, practitioners and other stakeholders with interest in understanding and coordinating relative to broadband issues in Southwest NH. The MBG serves as an important regional forum for education and peer-learning on broadband-related legislation, funding opportunities, implementation models, and more.

July 18, 2024 (10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

Zoom

Delegation Room

Historic Cheshire County Courthouse

12 Court Street

Keene, NH 03431

swrpc.org/broadbandgroup

Henry Underwood, SWRPC

hunderwood@swrpc.org

603-357-0557 x18



ZOOM TIPS

- *This session is recorded as a resource to those that are not able to attend. You can find a link at swrpc.org/broadbandgroup.*
- *Please check that your name appears correctly in the participants list and update as needed.*
- *Please say hello via the chat (consider sharing your contact information).*
- *Mute your microphone when you are not speaking.*



LAST TIME: NOVEMBER 17, 2023

BROADBAND EQUITY, ACCESS, AND DEPLOYMENT DRAFT PLANS AND PROPOSALS

The State's Office of Broadband Initiatives and Mission Broadband (the State's contractor) had recently announced public review and comment periods for their Initial Proposal document, Volume I and Volume II tied to federal broadband funding. Staff from Mission Broadband will provide an overview of the different BEAD-related documents, accept input from attendees, and answer questions.

DRAFT DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN

In tandem with the development of documents related to BEAD, the State's Office of Broadband Initiatives has overseen the development of the first ever Digital Equity Plan by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (UNHCE) and the National Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE). Following the November 13th Digital Equity Summit, staff from UNHCE and NCDE will provide an overview of New Hampshire's 4-year plan for digital equity in support of economic, educational and other opportunities.



TODAY'S AGENDA

- I. Welcome*
- II. Internet Service Provider Updates (40 minutes)*
- III. Federal & State Broadband Updates (20 minutes)*
- IV. Information Technology Needs Assessment (10 minutes)*
- V. Legislative Updates (5 minutes)*
- VI. Member Updates (10 minutes)*
- VII. Next Steps (5 minutes)*
- VIII. Adjourn*

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER UPDATES

In the last year, many providers have made significant strides in improving broadband service in the Monadnock Region through a variety of funding sources. Representatives from AT&T and Comcast have offered to share some of their recent progress, what they see as potential future needs, and services and capabilities that may be of interest to Monadnock Broadband Group attendees.

FEDERAL & STATE BROADBAND UPDATES

Since the most recent Monadnock Broadband Group meeting at the end of 2023, the State's Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity plans were approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). A challenge process associated with the BEAD program for municipalities and non-profits is slated to begin on July 15th. The funding will address remaining broadband gaps as well as reduce barriers to access. Matt Conserva, Office of Broadband Initiatives, Clay Purvis, NTIA and Henry Underwood, Southwest Region Planning Commission will provide updates.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Now that many municipalities have found broadband connectivity solutions, there may be more interest in broadband-related issues such as cybersecurity, digitizing processes/information and increasing public access to government proceedings. SWRPC has conducted initial research around and outside of the region and will report on potential opportunities to address these concerns. They could take the form of regional information sharing opportunities, in-depth needs assessments, regional service procurement or something else.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Reduce demands on stretched municipal staff and volunteers through streamlined digital processes.
- Identify opportunities for cost savings through measures such as joint purchasing of licenses and services.
- Increase the convenience of constituent services.
- Ensure that digital systems are safe and secure.
- Facilitate public participation in local governance. Examples might include livestreaming public meetings, automatic transcription of notes.
- Provide education and technical assistance to municipal staff and others, in hardware and software usage and implementation.



1 = Strongly Disagree - 5 = Strongly Agree	Town 1	Town 2	Town 3	Town 4	Town 5	Average
Q1: We lack sufficient budget, training, and expertise for a robust IT infrastructure.	3	2	1	2	3	2.2
Q2: We have aging hardware and software systems that need to be upgraded.	2	3	1	1	2	1.8
Q3: Our staff understands and follows the latest in cybersecurity best practices.	2	4	3	4	2	3.0
Q4: Residents have equal access to high-speed internet, devices, and online services.	3	4	5	5	4	4.2
Q5: We are ready to respond to an IT emergency.	3	5	3	5	3	3.8
Q6: We backup and protect sensitive data including citizen records and financial transactions.	4	4	5	5	4	4.4
Q7: Our meetings, forms, and information are accessible online.	4	4	4	3	4	3.8



- **Q1: Rating 2.2** - We lack sufficient budget, training, and expertise for a robust IT infrastructure.
- **Q2: Rating 1.8** - We have aging hardware and software systems that need to be upgraded
- **Q4: Rating 4.2** – Residents have equal access to high-speed internet, devices, and online services.
- **Q5: Rating 3.8** - We are ready to respond to an IT emergency.
- **Q6: Rating 4.4** - We backup and protect sensitive data including citizen records and financial transactions.
- **Q7: Rating 3.8** - Our meetings, forms, and information are accessible online.

Strengths

- **Q3: Rating 3.0** - Our staff understands and follows the latest in cybersecurity best practices.

Weaknesses

IT Assessment SWOT Analysis

Opportunities

- **Training** – Training is focused on productivity; cybersecurity needs to be emphasized.
- **Hardware and Software** – HW and SW upgrades need a trusted counselor model to ensure safety, continuity, and appropriateness.
- **Cybersecurity** – Personalized training for job functions needs to be on-going. Primex needs to be engaged for reviews.
- **Continuity of Operations** – Restoration testing of backups needs to occur on a regular basis.

Threats

- **Cybersecurity** – The number of threats and their greatly increasing sophistication is a grave concern.
- **Productivity** – Escalating technology complexity creates training challenges (e.g. the introduction of AI)
- **Personnel** – Turnover requires uniform ongoing training and support; institutional knowledge is at risk of being lost.
- **Data Integrity** - Safeguarding financial and personal information with appropriate safeguards.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

At least four bills were identified in the most recent legislative session in New Hampshire relative to broadband (i.e. SB 247, SB 273, SB 395 and SB 445). Attendees are encouraged to provide updates on pending or upcoming legislation and consider coordinating on consolidated testimony, talking points and other logistics.

MEMBER UPDATES

A chance to learn about what others are doing. Attendees are encouraged to describe activities related to addressing broadband and telecommunications challenges and opportunities in their communities.

NEXT STEPS

An open forum on strategies for moving forward, coordination, collaboration, etc.

RAPID FEEDBACK FORM

forms.office.com/r/Wm3N6n4zIn

3 questions

30 seconds

Anonymous

Monadnock Broadband Group
Rapid Feedback Form

