**Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 8, 5:30 pm-6:30 pm  
Surry Town Office**

Attendees: Nate Cole, Bill Matlock, George Borowsky, Chris Stark. Guest: Susan Corbett by zoom

Last Month’s minutes were approved

**Susan Corbett, Founder and Executive Director of the National Digital Equity Center (NDEC)** also on board with Connect Maine

Susan described the key components of a **Digital Equity and Digital Inclusion plan:** Affordable Broadband, Affordable Equipment, Digital Literacy Training, Public Computer Access, Community Advocates and Broadband Adoption

“Is there a plan for low-to-moderate income families that cannot afford an internet connection? (Affordable Connectivity Program -ACP through the FCC benefit: 200% [not 150% as was stated/this program also includes a one time $100 discount on laptop, computer, tablet] income eligibility guidelines $30 discount and can register directly online-FCC. Work with community and NDEC to provide the additional benefit to those that don’t meet the federal guidelines)

“Is there a plan to I.D. who in the community needs equipment? The National Digital Equity Center (NDEC) provides devices to low-to-moderate income families that need equipment – laptops, desktops, tablets, etc. – need to take a class first. -Shared the ways people communicate digitally/needs

In the NDEC survey, 94% of students want to know how to get video content if they drop their cable – such as Netflix, hulu, sports channels, etc). Other common requests in classes are: 91% wanted to know to be productive in home or business (Word, Excel, Quickbooks), 79% wanted to get basic knowledge about computer/internet, including internet safety, 69% wanted to connect to family and friends ((Zoom, Skype, Facetime, WiFi Calling) and 37% wanted to know how to use social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

Public Computer Access – Public WiFi nearby?

Community advocates –volunteers that promote digital inclusion? ---Start with Broadband Committees.

What is Broadband Adoption – What is the community’s take-rate? Do all homes have a computer? - 25% don’t adopt it because of affordability.

2018 Surry Stats:710 households 671 have a computer – / 620 has broadband connections [not accurate info] (DSL, cable, fiber, fixed wireless… access to internet) . 110 homes with less that $25K household income 57% were not happy – too slow.

NDEC helps with:

Free Digital Literacy Classes – for work and business, aging well with technology for home and education

Free devices for low-to-moderate income individuals – they receive funding from the Office of Community Development

Partner Affiliate Onsite Program – bring students together -

Volunteer Program – trained to provide classroom/ instructional/tutoring

67% of their students are 50+… 8% of students are 80+, 28% are unemployed/ 34% are retired

Digital literacy -improve job seeking skills, increase access to educational attainment : Measure Outcomes – such as increase workforce/job seeking skills and access to educational attainment, aging in place, isolation/loneliness, increase telehealth uses

Popularize and proliferate information about the program. Make program accessible to everyone. Searsport had the same questions.

Raised question to committee: Is there any funding that you can put aside to subsidize?

NDEC –

For more income affordability a Town could have a $ match to the ACP benefit – ISP can take $30 off the bill for 1 year – Applicant has to resubmit each year for the benefit.

Noted: A tablet is a better online device for older adults that are novices to technology for starters. – use TMobile and US Cellular –

CBGB program

Searsport – George Carper – town office working with the library

Donate used equipment– Give IT/Get IT - buy equipment

Instructors work closely with recipients

Classes are free for all Maine residents

**POSSIBLE ACTIONS**

Partner with NDEC and offer NDEC classes in Surry – promote through a Special Edition of the Surry Scoop

Contact ARPA re: digital equity efforts - Island Institute –

Report at SCIA meeting (April 18) and/or the Town Meeting (April 25)

**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, March 10 5:30 pm, Town Office – talk to Consolidated (Fidium Fiber)