

Certified Resolution

Resolution 125 of 2020

Town of Caroline Supporting an Overtarget Request for Tompkins County to Undertake a Broadband Planning Study and Pledging Five Thousand Dollars in Support.

A motion made by Councilmember Irene Weiser and seconded by Mark Witmer for the Town of Caroline to support an overtarget request for Tompkins County to undertake a broadband planning study and pledge five thousand dollars in support as follows:

WHEREAS COVID-19 has highlighted key inequities in our infrastructure and communities, including a lack of adequate broadband access to residents and businesses in our rural communities; and

WHEREAS lack of broadband access impedes the ability of our residents to do work, attend school, have medical appointments, run their businesses, and even to have virtual face-to-face conversations with loved ones; and

WHEREAS access to broadband services is not a luxury but a necessary public need that must be addressed; and

WHEREAS at least 300 households (25%) in the Town of Caroline lack access to broadband service and others experience barriers to access based on affordability and physical distance from the road; and

WHEREAS the model for broadband buildout up until now has been that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) get grant funding from the state or federal governments to build a system that the ISP owns and controls; and

WHEREAS these ISPs are driven by profit motives rather than public interests, resulting in inadequate speeds and lack of access and competition in the most rural areas in the county; and

WHEREAS municipally owned internet services can better serve the public interest; and

WHEREAS it is not economically feasible for each municipality to fight each other for state and federal funding to build their own fiber network; and

WHEREAS a collective, regional approach is not only possible and logical, it is already happening in many counties around us through a regional partnership with the Southern Tier Network, and

WHEREAS the Southern Tier Network (STN) is a municipally-owned non-profit open access fiber network created in January 2011 through a partnership between the Southern Tier Central, Corning

Incorporated, and Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties; and
WHEREAS STN was built to support the needs of public safety, improve broadband access in rural areas, increase competition and the level of telecommunications services across the region, and create a globally competitive advantage for job creation; and

WHEREAS STN has developed and successfully maintained over 500 miles of fiber across the Southern Tier of New York, with lines extending through Schuyler, Chemung, Steuben, Yates, Tioga, Broome, and even into Tompkins County; and

WHEREAS since 2011, STN has been building out middle mile fiberoptic cable that has successfully increased the competition of ISPs to provide service to both residential and commercial properties; and

WHEREAS STN is now working with member counties to explore solutions to reach into the most rural areas in the Southern Tier; and

WHEREAS earlier this year Schuyler, Chemung, Steuben, Yates, and Tioga (the current members of STN) collectively hired Fujitsu to do a study with 5 deliverables to explore a plan for STN to build, own and operate a network of both middle and final mile fiber in their communities; and

WHEREAS the Executive Director of STN, Steve Manning, indicated that Tompkins may be able to create an add-on contract with Fujitsu for the same deliverables, taking advantage of the work that has already been done (e.g. business and operations models, financial models etc.) to realize costs savings; and

WHEREAS the Town of Caroline recently participated in a webinar with Steve Manning to learn more about the potential of municipally owned broadband, and we are interested in exploring the possibility and believe economies of scale will be realized that will make the project more feasible by working with other Counties;

Now, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Town of Caroline Town Board asks the County to support a one-time Over Target Request of not more than \$80,000 for a study that will provide the following deliverables to help us identify a possible path forward for a county-wide buildout of both middle and last mile fiber optic cable in Tompkins County.

1. Market assessment - identifying the unserved and underserved areas, what the competition is in the county, where do the current providers provide service, what the terms are and what they are charging, and will outline demographics.
2. Design - outside (geographic layout and design, redundancy and diversity, how to reach each address point, comparison of a distributed or central architecture) and inside plan design (where should colocation centers be placed, convergence points, OLTs, etc...).
3. Business and operations model - what are the different models out there for municipal based fiber to the home. What does it look like and what are the different models of operation?
4. Operations and maintenance - a complete look at what would it take to operate the infrastructure, what type of service, what are the staffing needs, what is a recommended maintenance schedule? How often do you need to replace a core router etc...?
5. Financials - for both capital and operations (including take rate opportunities) - what kind of revenue can you expect since it needs to cover costs for many decades?

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Caroline pledges \$5000 to be paid to Tompkins County in 2021 when the contract for the above deliverables is executed.


Discussion: Town Board discussed additional language proposed by Supervisor Witmer. It was decided that the additional sentence not to be included.

Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Absent; Murray: Aye

Motion Carried.

STATE of NEW YORK }
COUNTY of TOMPKINS }
TOWN of CAROLINE }

I hereby certify that the above resolution is a true copy of a motion made by the Town Board for the Town of Caroline at a meeting held on October 14, 2020, and that said resolution has not been altered, amended, or revoked and is in full force and effect.


Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk

03 December 2020
Date