

TASKS FOR A FOUR-TOWN RMLD BROADBAND STUDY COMMITTEE

Brief Background: Massachusetts has 41 municipal electric utilities (including RMLD) of which 12 (not including RMLD) are in the telecom business in addition to the electricity business. Done right, a muni telecom/Internet business can provide municipal savings, aid economic development, and produce revenue.

Should RMLD do something? The strategy should be incremental. And the way to look for incremental opportunities is to form a 4-town committee (with some telecom expertise on it) that can identify specific market niches and savings opportunities. Going into this, I would point out a few things. 1: RMLD already has a 23-mile fiber optic loop, some of which runs through areas we would like to redevelop. 2: The Town(s) have additional fiber. 3: Fiber has enormous capacity that grows as new electronics emerge. 4: Data needs are booming in all sectors.

(Draft) Initial Committee Tasks:

A: Pull together a comprehensive map of existing fiber optic assets owned by RMLD, the Town, and the other three towns served by RMLD. This will help build “situational awareness” of available infrastructure already paid for.

B: Add up how much the four Towns and Schools spend on various telecom services (phone/voice, Internet, networking, leased lines, public safety radio, etc). RMLD might do better, providing revenue to RMLD while saving taxpayer dollars.

C: Identify (with some granularity) gaps in high-speed service provision by incumbents. Survey local businesses and institutions for their level of satisfaction, and identify a few targets of opportunity where we’d have a revenue model.

D: See what we can potentially do in high-priority redevelopment areas. RMLD’s fiber optic loop literally runs through some of these zones. Can we attract high-bandwidth business with premium data service? (They’d also buy our electricity.) What current or proposed buildings we could service?

This is a partial and draft list, but it gives a sense of what a four-town committee could do.

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