



Broadband Internet for All – Town Meeting, Saturday, 12/4/2021



Chebeague’s residents will soon be voting on a very important issue facing our town -- do we want to ensure adequate broadband Internet service for all? Be sure to attend the Special Town Meeting at 9:00 am on Saturday, December 4, 2021 at the Chebeague Recreation Center to vote on Warrant Article 6 and let your voice be heard!

The Broadband Committee's Proposal

The Town will contract with Axiom Technologies to build, operate, and maintain a fiber optic network that will be accessible to everyone on the island. Funding will come from grants and a bond that will be paid off entirely by Axiom (ultimately by subscribers), not by taxpayers.

Points Axiom has agreed to - that will be the core of a contract:

- Design and build a system that reaches every household and business, including all hookups.
- Make all necessary repairs, keeping a bucket truck on the island and employing an on-island technician.
- Provide symmetrical (equal speed up and down) service, capable of 1 Gbps but offered in three tiers:

50/50 (50 Mbps down & up)	\$60/month	For all tiers, a \$20/month 6-month off-season rate is available
100/100	\$80/month	
500/500	\$110/month	

- Prices are guaranteed by Axiom to be constant for at least the first five years.
- Hookups will be free to all during the construction phase. The only set-up cost is a router/wi-fi access point if you don't have one already. Can be rented from Axiom or bought from anywhere.
- Present Axiom or Consolidated subscribers may keep current slower speeds at current prices.
- Axiom will pay the Town each year enough to pay the debt service (principal and interest) on the bond, plus the cost of insurance on the network. The money will come from the subscribers' fees with no impact on taxes.

Costs:

Total cost of the network is estimated at \$1,340,250. We can reasonably expect \$500,000 - \$600,000 in grants, leaving somewhere between \$740,000 and \$840,000 to be bonded. The grant situation is changing fast, and we might well do better than that. In any case, Axiom will help us with grant sourcing and applications. We are asking for bonding authority up to \$975,000 just in case we get less grant money than expected.

To re-emphasize - Costs will be paid by subscribers. Those who do not want the service will not have to pay for it.

Advantages:

1. **Reliable high-speed Internet can help Chebeague Island attract and retain young families, keep our school full, and make working from home much more practical.**
2. Three basic reasons for this plan with fiber:
 - a. Town ownership of the infrastructure provides partnership in all phases of operation, cost, and availability.
 - b. Equal service available to all.
 - c. Proven reliability as fiber has supplied our School and Library for years.
3. Much better internet service than is possible with our current DSL over old, deteriorating copper telephone lines.
 - a. The number of copper telephone lines is limited and close to exhausted.
 - b. Copper DSL is an outdated technology being quickly replaced by fiber optic nationwide.
 - c. Even new copper telephone lines are unable to transmit at fiber speeds. Fiber networks are easily upgraded simply by changing the electronics.
 - d. Distance affects the ability of copper DSL to deliver broadband speeds. About 40% of our homes cannot achieve the current federal speed standard. Many get no service at all. Fiber is not affected by distance.
 - e. The future holds many new uses for Internet. These include increased working from home, aging in place, home health care and monitoring, education, banking, entertainment, smart appliances, gaming, and devices and applications as yet unknown. The current system cannot supply speeds necessary for future needs and make them equally available to all. Broadband may combine Internet, telephone and video services.

4. Businesses are increasingly dependent on the Internet for everything from processing credit cards to e-commerce. Symmetrical speeds (same up and down) are required for large data uploads, which are severely limited on our present DSL. The Committee plan provides symmetrical speeds.
5. Axiom is a reliable partner. They are building exactly the same model in Georgetown (1050 homes), Arrowsic (254 homes), Monhegan Island (120 homes), Southport (900 homes), Searsport (1500 homes) and are waiting on final votes in Leeds (350 homes), China (2200 homes) and Hampden (3300 homes). These public/private Internet partnerships enable critical local control.
6. As the result of our Request for Proposals, we received proposals from Spectrum and GWI, which we deemed not to be at all favorable for Chebeague, and we did not receive a proposal from Consolidated Communications.
7. Town ownership is strongly recommended by the Island Institute and ConnectMaine. Our proposal of a bond, grants, and provider (Axiom) will create a cost-effective, managed, and maintained solution for our island's need for this vital resource.

For more information, please visit https://www.chebeague.org/2021/broadband/FAQ_INDEX.htm
or the 2021 Broadband link on <https://www.chebeague.org>

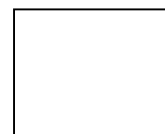
This brochure was create by the Town of Chebeague Island Broadband Committee



Chebeague Broadband

Looking at the Future

Remember: Town Meeting at the Rec Center, Saturday, December 4th!



Postal Patron

Chebeague Island, ME 04017