

B.U.G.-F. Joint Committee for Broadband

Frequently Asked Questions on Broadband

1/22/2024

This document summarizes the Joint Committee's responses to commonly asked questions about the Town's proposed Broadband Project effort. In addition to questions that arose at and after the Public Meeting on November 15, 2023, this document also addresses questions raised about Brightspeeds capabilities. Brightspeeds responses will also be reflected in this document for questions pertaining to their operational capabilities.

This document will be revised as additional questions arise or additional information necessitates revisions to a previous answer.

Questions are not in any particular order.

Q. Why was Brightspeed selected?

A. As summarized in the presentation at the 11/15/23 Public Meeting, the Joint Broadband Committee received four responses to its Request for Proposal (RFP) and feels that Brightspeeds proposal best meets the needs of the towns of Brussels, Union, Gardner, and Forestville and provides the best value.

Q. Is Brightspeed doing other projects similar to this?

A. Yes, Brightspeed is conducting fiber builds throughout Wisconsin and in our 20-state Footprint. There are a variety of private builds and public/private partnerships like Door County.

Q. Can the existing fiber that Brightspeed has in the ground be reused for this project?

A. Most likely not, however we are reviewing and qualifying if existing fiber can be used. In most cases the current fiber would not be sized properly for these new fiber projects as the current capacity of existing fiber may not meet our requirements.

Q. Can we put a cap on current rates, i.e., the \$59/69/79 in conjunction with the levy?

A. From a Town's perspective, the money borrowed from the (BCPL) to pay the Town's share of expense would be amortized over a 20-year period. The money the Town is investing through our borrowing is to help defray the Infrastructure Installation cost and has nothing to do with Brightspeeds monthly service fees. The initial borrowing amount will not increase over the 20-year period. Brightspeed is responsible for paying for maintenance and upgrades they do from their monthly user fees.

From Brightspeeds perspective, we cannot commit to a cap on current rates. Brightspeed cannot gauge what market rates will dictate and with BEAD funding projected for 2025, Brightspeed cannot commit to a cap.

Q. I already have 3 boxes at my lot line and if Brightspeed is bringing in new fiber, will there be another box, or can a copper/fiber combination box be installed?

A. The Brightspeed Fiber build will require a new pedestal (green box) where required.

Q. I have a \$49 price for life product (assuming this is DSL), will this be honored with the new fiber?

A. The price for Like for \$49.00/month is for speeds up to 100Mbps and would not be honored for the new fiber to the home product as these would be different plans. The current offered rate for our fiber broadband is: 200Mbps/\$59.00, 500Mbps/\$69.00, and 1Gbps/\$79.00.

Q. How many techs do you have in the Door County area and where do they come from for service issues?

A. Brightspeed has four Customer Service Technicians that have responsibility for the Door County area.

Q. How can we be assured that current service issues and/or delays for service will not occur with fiber?

A. Brightspeed cannot say that there will never be a service issue with fiber. However, fiber has proven to be a very robust and reliable service and is transported via light waves versus electrical voltage for DSL.

Q. I think it was mentioned, but is there an affordability program for lower income households?

A. Brightspeed is part of the federal ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program) which provides a \$30 subsidy for broadband service. Brightspeed may also offer their own \$30 subsidy for qualifying households making the basic 200 Mbps service almost free. [Affordable Connectivity Program | Brightspeed](#)

Q. What if someone has purchased wireless equipment already for wireless internet, do they still need to pay for this new internet, or will there be some sort of credit to these people that extended the upfront costs for these wireless internet services?

A. Brightspeed would include the modem/router for fiber broadband (per our current offering). Brightspeed would not reimburse for equipment purchased by the consumer for their home wireless network.

Q. Will all speeds be the same for everyone with this new internet, or will the people at the end of the line have less internet? I know with Century Link, that was the case with us, and we did not even stream enough internet to watch a movie! As long as you can guarantee this won't happen with this proposed internet! Century Link said they could not do anything about this problem.

A. From the Towns perspective, unlike DSL which had distance limitations, fiber uses laser light and has no such distance limitation issues. Every connection, no matter where you are in the chain, has the same opportunity of all speeds offered.

DSL is old distance limited technology on aged equipment and infrastructure, fiber is a better technology with new infrastructure/medium (glass) will not have those shortcomings. We also will be upgrading our backbone to provide/sustain the faster service speeds offered in our lineup. In essence, would be building a whole new Fiber Optic Infrastructure to replace the old, antiquated copper line DSL system.

From Brightspeeds perspective, Fiber Broadband transport does not have the same limitations as copper DSL. All subscribers should have the opportunity for consistent speeds however, internet speeds may vary by address. Including the Brightspeed High-Speed Internet Fiber Agreement link: [High-Speed Internet Subscriber Agreement | Brightspeed](#)

Q. How will this project be paid for?

A. The project cost for installing Fiber to the Premise will be paid for in several ways. First the Internet Service Provider (ISP) will contribute 25% towards the cost of the project for each Town, Second, a grant will be applied for under the BEAD (Broadband Equity Access & Deployment) program at a 50% ask of the project cost of each Town. And finally, the remaining balance of the project cost for each town will be the town's responsibility. Each Town will then decide how much they will contribute towards the remaining amount of their overall project costs. That could be anywhere from 25% down to 0% of the remaining amount.

The tentative recommendation for each town is to borrow the needed funds from the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL), Wisconsin's oldest State Agency. The BCPL's net earnings come back to the local community to fund public school libraries through the Common School Fund. Also, BCPL loans have no repayment penalty, so communities can refinance if/when interest rates drop. There are other possible lending institutions to choose from such as local banks, and USDA Re-Connect future opportunities.

Q. Do seasonal residents get to vote? We pay taxes too!

A. If the Town Boards hold a special elector meeting in their respective Towns, then Wisconsin State Statute §6.02 would apply. If the Town Boards decide to put the question to a referendum in the April/Spring election of 2024, then the answer is no, seasonal residents may not vote as it then interferes with State Election Laws.

Wis. State Statute §6.02 1) Every U.S. citizen age 18 or older who has resided in an election district or ward for 28 consecutive days before any election where the citizen offers to vote is an eligible elector. (2) Any U.S. citizen age 18 or older who moves within this state later than 28 days before an election shall vote at his or her previous ward or election district if the person is otherwise qualified. If the elector can comply with the 28-day residence requirement at the new address and is otherwise qualified, he or she may vote in the new ward or election district. Wis. Stat. § 6.02

Q. How can seasonal residents have their voice heard if they can't vote?

A. All full-time or seasonal residents are invited to attend any of the Joint Committee on Broadband meetings posted at each town location and on their website. The committee meetings are normally held at the B.U.G. Fire Station #1, located 1080 Cty Rd C just south of Brussels. There will also be a second Public Meeting on Broadband being held at the Southern Door High School Auditorium on March 13, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. where representatives from Door County Broadband, Brightspeed, and members of the Joint Committee on Broadband will be in attendance. Another way to be heard is to leave a message on the respective Town website which the Town Clerk will receive. You may also

email or mail the Joint Committee for Broadband Chairman Jon Koch at, 9238 Lovers Lane, or (jkoch9238@gmail.com).