**Colrain Broadband Advisory Committee Update – March 2020
Colrain’s own fiber network … this is the year.**

**A summary of where we are in the process…**

**Timetable:** As you’ve read in past updates, we are waiting for Verizon to complete its work of preparing the utility poles for our fiber. In the last update we reported that they set a commitment of mid-March. Verizon has moved that date *yet again*…now the goal is April 20th. Once Verizon is done, our engineering company will check the work and request any necessary corrections to be made by Verizon. (This is an important step…corrections to Verizon’s work were a significant issue in one of the other towns.)

(Note: If you find that any of the Verizon crews leave behind any debris from their work, please contact Kevin Fox, Town Coordinator.)

Then the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) has 30 days to have make ready completed and their fiber routed to our communications hut. MBI is the state organization that brings the middle-mile broadband connection to the hilltowns.

Then we inform our construction company that they can begin installing the last-mile fiber through Colrain. They will need a couple of weeks (at best) to prepare their crews to start work. During construction the middle-mile fiber with all of the needed electronics will be installed in the communications hut on Main Road.

Once the hut is operational, and the last-mile build progresses to a significant extent, we will open our Colrain broadband website for our citizens to begin signing up for service.

We don’t know how or if the pandemic will affect this timetable. As of this update, Verizon crews are still working, as is our engineering company, Westfield Gas & Electric.

**Communications hut**: Just waiting for spring and the ground to thaw.

**Managing the network:** The town has entered into a contract with Westfield Gas & Electric (WG&E) to be the Internet Service Provider/Network Operator to manage and maintain the system. The Town of Colrain will own the network, but we will have the experience and expertise of WG&E to make sure the system consistently meets all of the needs of its subscribers.

**Budget and costs**: The Advisory Committee is currently formulating a proposed operating budget and prices for services that will be offered, plus the costs of connecting each residence to the network, to be presented for review and approval.

**Future communications:** The Broadband Advisory Committee exists to assist the Town Coordinator in advising the Select Board on matters regarding the network build and operations. Watch for meeting dates and progress updates on the town website (https://Colrain-ma.gov).

Michael Shuipis - Chair