

How Town Meeting Will Select a Broadband Option for Worthington

The decision making process

The Worthington Broadband Committee and Municipal Light Board have determined that there are three viable options to bring high speed internet to our town. Voters at Annual Town Meeting will be given the opportunity to choose which option the town pursues. There will be a separate article for each option:

Article A, to authorize the borrowing of up to \$2.1 million to build a town-owned network

Article B, to authorize the borrowing of up to \$1.07 million for a Matrix-owned network

Article C, to support a Comcast-owned network, requiring no debt authorization

We will consider the articles in the order of the amount of debt that must be authorized: A, then B, then C. Since articles A and B seek to approve the issuance of debt those articles will require a $2/3^{\text{rds}}$ majority to pass, per state law. Article C does not seek a debt authorization so a simple majority will be needed for passage. Discussion and debate of the articles will not be limited by article so all three can be discussed at the same time.

Town meeting will determine which option the town will pursue by seeing which article passes first. Once an article passes, the voting will stop. If article A passes the voting will stop and articles B and C will not be voted on. The town will have selected a town-owned network. If article A fails to pass, article B would then be voted and if it passes that would be the approved option, voting would stop and article C would not be taken up. If article B fails to pass, article C will then be voted on. If article C passes that will be the option. If it fails, town meeting will have rejected all three options.

While the rejection of all three options could be a possibility it doesn't appear to be the desire of the town. The key to prevent that from happening is our willingness to compromise. For example, if you favor article A but it fails to pass you need to compromise your preference and vote yes on article B or C and not just vote no because your first choice failed.

Said slightly differently, if you really want article A, vote for it. If it passes, you win. If it fails, hopefully you will vote in favor of B and/or C since they still bring you broadband.

If you really want article B, vote for B and hopefully supporters of A will join you.

For all of those who really want option C, your choice is easy – vote against A & B.

If town meeting authorizes borrowing under article A or B then that debt must be excluded at a special election in early June. Once the debt is excluded, a 90 day pre-subscription drive would begin.

The passage of article C would recommend to the select board to sign agreements with the State and Comcast.

Please see the other side for the wording of the articles

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The wording of the articles and the order that they will be voted on

FIRST ARTICLE: To see if the Town will appropriate \$ 2,100,000 to pay the Town's share of the cost of designing, constructing and installing a high-speed broadband network, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto, which project shall be undertaken by the Town acting alone, and that to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, is authorized to borrow up to said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, s. 8(8), or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor. Any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount. No amount shall be borrowed or expended pursuant hereto unless the Town shall have voted to exclude the amounts required to repay any borrowing approved by this vote from the limitations on total property taxes contained in M.G.L. c. 59, s. 21C (also known as Proposition 2½).

SECOND ARTICLE: To see if the Town will appropriate \$1,070,000 to pay the Town's share of the cost of designing, constructing and installing a high-speed broadband network, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto, which project shall be undertaken by the Town acting in conjunction with Matrix Millennium, and that to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, is authorized to borrow up to said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, s. 8(8), or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor. Any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount. No amount shall be borrowed or expended pursuant hereto unless the Town shall have voted to exclude the amounts required to repay any borrowing approved by this vote from the limitations on total property taxes contained in M.G.L. c. 59, s. 21C (also known as Proposition 2½).

THIRD ARTICLE: To see if the Town will vote to accept the Comcast proposal to build a cable/broadband network that will serve at least 96% of the Town pursuant to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's Flexible Grant program and to further request that the Selectboard execute a Cable Television License Agreement with Comcast pursuant to statutes and regulations overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable.

Please see the other side for a description of the decision-making process