

Dear Sirs/Madams:

Please allow me some comments on the Montague/Hardwick broadband situation, with Comcast and Matrix design as the proposing builders.

I presently chair the Montague Cable Advisory Committee and so have had significant dealings with Comcast in recent years around the renewal of their cable license. Our original request for proposal asked for full connection to all town residents, but it soon became clear that Comcast vigorously opposed this because it did not fit their economic model and had never been forced to do that. Their behavior in the contract negotiations was noticeably less than forthcoming, sending a contract for approval directly to the selectboard and not to the committee or our counsel. This contract ignored a number of items which we thought we had negotiated with them. So I would suggest the characterization of the cable contract renewal process as smooth and beneficial was seriously inaccurate.

Concerning the experience of Leverett with Matrix design, it is certainly true that there were a number of challenges in the construction process. And it is certainly true that the final product was delivered on time and under budget, and after approximately a year continues to deliver all of its expected service with less maintenance and operating costs than expected. Effective project management on the part of the town overcame construction hurdles. This I have from Richard Nathhorst, ([RPNathhorst@leverettNet.Net](mailto:RPNathhorst@leverettNet.Net)) a member of the Leverett Broadband committee that oversaw the construction of the system. So I do not find that the Leverett experience shows Matrix in a more negative light than Comcast.

Finally, for the longterm benefit to Montague residents, there is no comparison to the advantages of the Matrix fiber optic broadband system to an extension of the existing cable television system in terms of performance, numbers served, and future expandability. I would hope that the decision does not involve competition or monopoly as much as it involves service to residents. I can easily imagine however, that our best course may be to forego MBI contribution rather than be saddled with partial service from Comcast.

Thank you for your consideration,

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