

14 February, 2013

State of Maine  
ConnectME Authority  
3<sup>rd</sup> Flr. Cross State Office Building  
78 State House Station  
Augusta, ME  
04333-0078

Dear Executive Director Lindley,

As a member of the Westfield Planning Board, I am writing to inform you that we plan to submit an application to the eighth grant round of the broadband infrastructure funding program. We are at the exploratory phases, and while we have started to collect information that would help us answer the eight items that need to be addressed in this pre-application letter, we are lacking much of this detailed information. This is in part due to just learning about this opportunity one month ago, and also in part due to the lack of accuracy of the current broadband service map. We have contacted Time Warner Cable (e.g. Stan Maynard) to start to identify current coverage, and to begin to assess the feasibility of expanding broadband beyond the Rt. 1 corridor onto side roads. Since these roads do not meet the 15 houses per mile minimum of TWC, grant funding would be the only feasible way to expand service. Personally, I have had TWC twice evaluate the possibility of providing service on the Shorey Road where I live; they are not able to expand service due to low house density. We expect to expand service within Westfield, but, we also have contacted the town of Mars Hill to let them know we are interested in partnering with them as well. We will continue to do more legwork in the coming month, in order to estimate project costs, determine percentage of households that would be served, upload/download speed, and identify potential funding from public and private sources other than ConnectME.

Currently, there is broadband service (TWC) along Rt. 1, and this service extends into Westfield village to reach the post office and town office. There are some fledgling and well-established businesses (e.g. Smith's Farm) that are located in the currently unserved areas. The board believes that expanding service would significantly serve both private and business clients, and that the likelihood of TWC or another service provider doing this without outside funding is very low for now or the near future. The board also is pursuing plans to strengthen the town of Westfield as a destination for modest development, especially as a bedroom town of Presque Isle. We are certain that possessing broadband is an attractive feature to new middle-class housing developments, and may in fact be a necessity.

While this letter of intent demonstrates that we are only at the early stages of exploring this work, our planning board is committed and capable of putting together a strong plan. Jason Johnston will take the lead in contacting providers, surveying residents, and if necessary using GIS to map proposed service and households served. Steve Vance has maintained networks for his entire career, and was the lead on a grant that initially provided highspeed internet connectivity with the SAD#1 schools of Westfield, Presque Isle, and Mapleton.

We are committed to finding a way to expand service in our area, and to work with public and private entities to leverage our efforts to the mutual benefit of all. We will appreciate any further guidance, advice on how to develop our plan, or assistance with mapping the broadband service in our area.

Sincerely,

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Town of Westfield Planning Board, Member  
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