

# ConnectME Authority

January 20, 2012 – Meeting Notes

## 1. Introduction of ConnectME Authority Members and Staff

Authority Members: Jean Wilson, Chair; Vendean Vafiades; Mitch Davis; Dick Thompson  
Staff: Phil Lindley, Lisa Leahy

## 2. Broadband Strategy Plan – Review and Discuss Final Version

- Jim Page, James W. Sewall Company, provided information on changes to the plan since the last Authority meeting and incorporating public comments received. Comments were posted on the Authority website and most were responded to within in the draft with appropriate revisions. Public comment was solicited early on and the Authority will continue to welcome comments as the plan is further developed.

Suggestions from the public and from this Authority meeting covered all parts of the draft; from tactics, indices, action items, and implementation. All will be incorporated in the final draft to be discussed at the next Authority meeting in March. The Authority will review and discuss the plan for adoption and implementation; discuss the proposed public awareness campaign for further review at a subsequent meeting and possible contract or RFP.

- A few of the specific comments from the Authority:  
Partnering with private companies is crucial to not only expanding availability, but to increasing adoption. The public/private partnerships that have served in the past should be emphasized.

A number of the recommendations, tactics, and action items in the draft are worded with strong support, policy conclusions, or determinations that have not been fully discussed by the Authority or may not be within the Authority's jurisdiction. For example; recommending ways to "change" state laws and regulations should state that the Authority should review or support changes that may increase the growth of broadband. The final draft will contain revisions that reflect those revisions.

The strategic plan should be a "roadmap" for the Authority's activities that helps guide initiatives, while recognizing that not all recommendations and action steps may be affordable or of high enough priority. Resource assumptions, executability, and intent should be clear. It should be made clear that the plan is modular, meaning that one section does not necessarily require the completion of other sections, again depending on resources.

The introduction and executive summary should be combined in a more concise section that briefly says what the plan is about. A letter from the Authority members should also be included at the beginning to document the members' overview of the plan and the Authority's activities.

## 3. Broadband Capacity Building Project – Review and Discussion

- State Planning Office – Amanda Rector
- Dept. of Economic and Community Development – Denise Garland

The BBCB project will transition to the Dept. of Economic and Community Development as soon as a new memorandum of understanding can be crafted. The Authority approved the transfer of the project from the State Planning Office to DECD. While there may be some delay in the project, the NTIA grant requirements and timelines are not an issue at this time.

4. Executive Director Report

- Grant Award Extensions Approved:
  - i. Pioneer Broadband – Town of Orient (4<sup>th</sup> round), to 6/1/13, previously approved, subject to revised plan and documentation. Will be a fiber to the home project.
  - ii. Waldoboro (MIS) (4<sup>th</sup> round), to 6/30/12.
  - iii. Time Warner Cable – North Hiram (5<sup>th</sup> round), to 3/1/12
  - iv. Oxford Networks – Turner area, Bethel area (5<sup>th</sup> round), to 3/15/12
  - v. North Country Broadband – Abbott (5<sup>th</sup> round), to 9/30/12

The Authority discussed the need for rules or documentation for a brief extension policy. Timing is always difficult to estimate at the beginning of a project, but applicants should be required try to be more accurate. This could be referred to the Advisory Council. Another issue or concern is that some applicants may not have the resources to conduct an engineering study prior to receiving grant funds.

- Mapping Contract Extension Approved for the James Sewall Company
  - i. For years 3, 4, and 5, under NTIA grant – continues broadband mapping and inventory project, funded from supplemental NTIA grant.

- Advisory Council Membership:

Seat 1 is Fletcher Kittredge, GWI, from previous appointment

Seat 2: Formerly Reggie Palmer, TDS. Vacant

Seat 3: Formerly Time Warner. Vacant

Seat 4: Linda Lord, Maine State Librarian (approved)

Seat 5: Jeff Mao, DOE, (approved)

Seat 6: Vacant.

Seat 7: Jeff Letourneau, NetworkMaine (approved, if no conflict)

Seat 8: To be appointed by MTI

Seat 9: John Burns, Small Enterprise Growth Fund representative.

Seat 10: Wayne Jortner, OPA, appointed by the Authority

Seat 11: Appointed by Authority. Vacant

Mitch suggested someone from a community college for seat 6 and he would provide contacts. Time Warner agreed to find someone for seat 3. Ben Sanborn, TAM, agreed to find someone for seat 2 and FairPoint agreed to find someone for seat 11.

- Overview of upcoming Broadband Summit 2.0, with MMA (Lisa)
- Tentative schedule for next grant round (next page). Similar timing as 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> rounds. Approved.
- ConnectME Online Map Viewer – New version. Will move to production server next week.

5. Public comment period

Emma Lishness, Tilson Technology, provided an update on the progress of the Three Ring Binder and clarified the ownership of 3RB. Maine Fiber Company owns 3RB; neither GWI nor the University of Maine System hold an ownership stake.

Proposed Schedule – 7<sup>th</sup> Grant Round

- 3/5/12 (Monday) Notice and Pre-Application Information available.
- 4/2 (Monday) Pre-Application Letter Due (circulated to all providers)
- 4/13 (Friday) Full Application Available
- 5/14 (Monday) Full Application Due (reviewed and scored by team)
- 5/31 (Thursday) Grant Awards at Authority meeting (depending on availability)
- 6/15 (Friday) Challenges Due