

ConnectME Authority
January 22, 2016 – Meeting Notes

1. Introductions

Authority Board Members: Dick Thompson; Sue Woods; Bruce Williamson; Denise Garland; and Ralph Johnson

Authority Staff: Phil Lindley, Executive Director; Lisa Leahy, Associate Executive Director; and David Maxwell

The Board voted in favor of Dick Thompson serving as acting chair, a temporary assignment, until the Governor appoints a new chair.

Board members, Authority staff, and members of the public introduced themselves.

2. Strategic Plan

Board members reviewed, provided feedback to, and asked questions regarding the latest version of the draft strategic plan (dated January 19, 2016). A revised draft will be created and made available by February 1st.

3. Community Planning Grant Program

Lisa Leahy presented a document distinguishing the two planning grant programs:

- broadband planning grants (Title 35-A, Section 9217); and
- planning grants in accordance with the Municipal Gigabit Broadband Network Access Fund (Title 35-A, Section 9211-A).

Also reviewed and discussed were potential scoring criteria for broadband planning grants. Criteria will be revised and re-visited at the February 12, 2016 Board meeting in anticipation of soliciting for the first round of planning grants in March.

Announcement of solicitation for the next round of infrastructure grants will likely occur in March. At the February meeting, Board members will determine the apportionment of available funds between broadband planning grants and infrastructure grants.

4. Executive Director Report

Phil Lindley presented a grant extension request for Mid-Maine Telecom, LLC. After discussion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the extension.

Phil Lindley presented the 2016 fiscal year budget as prepared for the 2015 independent audit conducted by Macpage; actual expenditures through December 31, 2015 and projected

expenditures through June 30, 2016. The Board discussed and unanimously approved the budget for FY 2016.

The 2015 annual report of the ConnectME Authority was discussed and unanimously approved with minor changes. The report will be filed with the legislature committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology as required by law.

The Board determined to maintain the meeting schedule of the fourth Friday of every month.

Phil Lindley updated the Board on a legislative work session held earlier in the week regarding LD 826, "An Act To Promote Maine's Economic Development and Critical Communications for Rural Family Farms, Businesses and Residences by Strategic Public Investments in High-speed Internet."

An analysis of continued broadband mapping will be presented for discussion at the February 12, 2016 meeting.

Phil Lindley stated that the trial date for the case against GWI regarding Broadband Sustainability Fund payments will be April 27 and 28.

Phil Lindley advised the Board that Authority staff has been informed it must vacate current space on the 3rd floor of the Cross Office Building. He is investigating alternatives within the building as the location is central to most Authority functions. Board members agreed that the Cross Building is the desired location for Authority staff.

5. Public Comment

Several members of the audience commented on or asked questions about:

- the draft strategic plan;
- broadband planning grants and pre-certification requirements; and
- the need for greater broadband in the agricultural community

The meeting adjourned at 4:25PM.