

ConnectME Authority

September 15, 2011 – Meeting Notes

1. Introduction of ConnectME Authority Members and Staff

Authority members: Greg McNeal, Acting Chair; Mitch Davis; Vendean Vafiades; and Dick Thompson.

Staff: Phil Lindley, Lisa Leahy

2. Planning Project Review

- Draft Strategic Plan Discussion
Jim Page, Sewall Company provided an overview of the upcoming draft strategic plan. The final draft will be provided to the Authority members early next month for a more in-depth discussion at the October meeting. We will then put it out for public review and comment. The final version should be ready for Authority approval at the December meeting.
- Randy Claar, Sewall Company, provided an update of the mapping project and will demonstrate our static map gallery where we will have premade maps of grant areas, towns, and legislative districts. We will also provide maps on request. We are working on one now for Vinalhaven for the town manager. Mitch Davis requested that the map viewer allow searching by latitude and longitude.

3. Supplemental Grant Projects Review

- Broadband Capacity Building Project – State Planning Office
Amanda Rector, State Economist, provided a brief update on the status of the project announcing that the task force had been selected and that Warren Cook from Maine Network Partners (<http://www.mainenetworkpartners.org/>) was the Chair. There was discussion of the potential of the project moving to the Department of Economic and Community Development due to the pending reorganization of the State Planning Office. Authority members had a number of questions and requested more information at a subsequent Authority meeting.
- Technical Assistance – Department of Education
Bob McIntire from the department provided an update of the Technical Assistance project with the handouts that have been provided to the adult education centers. He described how the adult education center classes would provide technical instruction to adult learners which should in turn; increase digital literacy and broadband adoption.

4. Executive Director Report

- Financial Report
- Annual audit update: The Executive Director will be meeting with the auditors from MacDonald Page next week to review the audit process. One issue is a code of ethics policy. The Controller now requires that all component units of the state (the Authority) include a copy of its code of ethics with the audit package. A copy of the State's Code of Ethics for Financial Stewards adopted by the Executive Branch was provided as an example. We can adopt it or use it as a model, but it does seem to fit our operations. The completed audit (or final draft) needs to be approved at the October meeting to reach the Controller by 10/15.
- The Authority members also discussed contacting broadband providers in the state to craft public/private partnerships to assist with discounted broadband service and high-cost installation. Subsidies for access would increase the adoption or subscription rate for those customers where price is a barrier to adoption. The Federal Communications Commission is considering changes to its Universal Service Fund to provide such subsidies.

5. Public comment period