

ConnectME Authority

December 9, 2016 – Meeting Notes

1. Introductions

Authority Board Members: Dick Thompson, Chair; Sandy Saunders; Ralph Johnson; Denise Garland; and Bruce Williamson

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

Members of the public were asked to introduce themselves.

Lisa Leahy, Clerk of the Board, read a letter from Governor Paul R. LePage, appointing Dick Thompson as Chair of the ConnectME Authority Board.

2. Rulemaking

Phil Lindley summarized the four sets of comments received on the draft rule: both pre-hearing and post-hearing comments from the Telecommunications Association of Maine; comments from the Office of the Public Advocate; comments from a consortium of cable providers (Charter Communications, Comcast, and MetroCast Cablevision), and comments from FairPoint. After discussion of the nature and extent of comments received, it was agreed that substantial changes to the draft rule are requested. It was decided that, rather than proceed with the current draft, a working group of interested parties should be formed to further discuss and refine the document. The working group will include members of the Board (Dick Thompson, Denise Garland, and Bruce Williamson) ConnectME Authority staff, and the parties that submitted comments. ConnectME Authority staff will initiate this process in early January. ConnectME Authority staff will confer with staff from the Office of the Secretary of State to ensure the Office is aware of the timeframe adjustment for producing the final draft. Public input, revisions, and presumed provisional adoption will occur well in advance of the January 2018 date required for draft rules undergoing legislative review.

The Board voted unanimously to follow this course of action.

3. Executive Director Report

Financial Reports - Phil Lindley presented the draft budget for 2016-2017, noting current financial conditions and ongoing obligations for outstanding grant payments and projected administrative and operational expenses. The Board discussed staff resources and funding and agreed to revisit the budget, if necessary, as it continues to discuss and determine appropriate Authority staffing levels. The Board unanimously approved the budget as presented.

Mapping Contract Status – Phil Lindley requested authorization to enter into a contract with the James W. Sewall Company for a period of five years for the purpose of conducting data collection, analysis, and mapping activities for the Authority. The Board unanimously approved the request.

FirstNetME Update - staff updated the Board on the status of FirstNet in accordance with the document included in the Board packet.

Staff Activities – staff discussed staff travel and events/activities conducted in the last six months. Staff outlined an approach for Broadband Day (Thursday, January 19, 2017, in the State House Hall of Flags) designed to highlight the effectiveness of the ConnectME Authority infrastructure and planning grants to date.

ConnectME Grants – Phil Lindley spoke to recent infrastructure grant payments and Final Completion Reports from the 10th round of infrastructure grants. Lisa Leahy briefly reviewed planning grant activities undertaken by grant recipients since the awards earlier this year.

Dick Thompson recognized Phil Lindley's impending retirement and thanked him for his years of service in helping to form and direct the ConnectME Authority. A round of applause followed.

4. Public Comment

Regarding rulemaking, it was expressed that a provisionally adopted rule cannot be enforced and it may be possible to complete the activities of the rulemaking work group and submit a provisionally adopted rule to the legislature for action this session.

A request was made to amend, post-Board meeting, the electronic version of the Board material in order to include documents which are made available during the meeting. Staff acknowledged and agreed to put this into practice.

The Board voted unanimously to close the public portion of the meeting at 3:12PM in order to conduct an Executive Session.

5. Executive Session – Personnel Matters

The Board held an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. The Executive Session concluded at 4:00PM. No voting occurred within the Executive Session.

The Board Chair opened the meeting to public participation. Seeing none, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:01PM.