

CONNECTME



State of Maine
ConnectME Authority
59 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0059
Connect.ME@maine.gov
www.Maine.gov/connectme/

Dick Thompson
Chair

Authority Members - Denise Garland - Susan Woods - Bruce Williamson - Sandy Saunders - Ralph Johnson

March 23, 2018

ConnectME Authority – Meeting Notes

1. Introductions: Authority Board Members: Dick Thompson, Chair; Susan Woods, Sandy Saunders, and Bruce Williamson.

Authority Staff: Heather Johnson and Brooke Johnson.

Members of the Public were asked to introduce themselves.

2. Uppervalley Economic Council- UVEC explained why they would like an extension. They have currently received all funding except \$34,000. Bruce Williamson asked if they do not receive the \$34,000 can the project continue. UVEC stated yes and they are very confident that they can raise the remaining money needed by asking the Towns and fundraising. Bruce Williamson asked who will own the project once it is complete and the answer was Pioneer Broadband. UVEC stated that they have almost 90 customers committed to the service and that is a 90% take rate. This \$400,000 project will build another 32 miles needed. If they do not receive the federal grant ConnectME will keep the \$150,000 they awarded the Sherman project. All were in favor of extending the grant until September 30, 2018. We will discuss a timeframe for them to complete the project at the October Board meeting.
3. Board and staff retreat topics & overview- Heather Johnson described the topics she had for suggestions for the Board and Staff retreat agenda. The board was offered to give their input or any other suggested topics they might want. Bruce Williamson asked that we eliminate the word reverse auction and call it procurement auction. Dick Thompson would like to discuss expanding funding for Maine and Susan Woods suggested that we could merge the topics, public/private partnerships-optimization and sustainability and reverse auction. Dick Thompson suggested we pick 4 topics due to not having enough time and asked that Heather Johnson prioritize the list and set aside the topic, improving digital inclusion, literacy and adoption for a separate meeting soon. Dick Thompson asked that Heather Johnson get the Board an updated agenda next week.
4. Website update- Heather Johnson described that we are in the beginning stages of our website redesign and that the prior quote has decreased and we have a target launch date for May 15, 2018.
5. Policies- Heather Johnson explained that the legislature is looking for certain policies from the ConnectME Authority and she provided them with the standard state policies but that was not detailed enough. The hand-out provided is the standard State of Maine policies and added information needed to satisfy the EUT. Heather Johnson explained that this is a first draft and

welcomed edits/thoughts and feedback from the Board. Dick Thompson stated he will look at the draft policies and get back to Heather Johnson.

6. Legislative update- Heather Johnson provided an update on all LD's that have been discussed at the EUT Committee since our last Board meeting. A work session was held for LD1372 and the outcome was ought to pass with a changed title and amended language. This bill would require the ConnectME Authority to establish a literacy education pilot program and the EUT does not expect us to fund the program from our assessments. LD1472 & LD1798 had language review sessions and were voted ought to pass and LD1610 was still pending a remote vote.
7. Director report- Heather Johnson briefly described her Director's report and talked about the releasing of the Community Connect Grant and how she has been working with Tim Hobbs to discuss some partnership options.
 - Financial- Brooke Johnson provided the breakdown of February billing. Very little Assessment money trickled in from January and that she made \$217,000 worth of grants payments to leave an ending balance of \$1,329,387.24. Heather Johnson described the waterfall chart of funds from our current balance to projected obligations leaving the ConnectMe fund with a yearend balance of \$533,196.
 - Approval of grant amount- All were in favor of giving \$475,000 in grant awards. Dick Thompson suggested we have a separate meeting for approval of grants.
8. Approval of February 23, 2018 minutes & Salix monthly financial report. No changes were needed for the minutes.
9. Other business- Heather Johnson described the letter of support for NNENIX that she wrote and would like approval from the Board to send the letter. Don Flewelling explained that the Exchange makes networks shorter. Dick Thompson stated that before we approve of the support letter he would like NNENIX to come to the next Board meeting and present to them and he also suggested having MSLN come and speak as well. The letter was tabled.
10. Public comments-Susan Woods wanted everyone to know about LD1488 and talked briefly about the Advisory Telehealth Group and that their meetings are public to whomever would like to attend. Ben Sanborn talked about the \$600 million for rural broadband funding that was just signed by the president and what that could mean for Maine. Peggy Schaffer informed everyone about her Conference on May 31st and to be on the look-out for an agenda coming soon. Sarah Davis described the new FCC-CAF II auction process and how it is wide open and \$4 million is for Maine. Brain Lippold talked about the unserved/underserved definitions and how we can carve the data up geographically.

Board Meeting ended at 3:55 p.m.