

ConnectME Authority

March 27, 2015 – Meeting Notes

1. Introductions

Authority Board Members: Jean Wilson, Dick Thompson, Greg McNeal, and Andy Hagler. Ralph Johnson was absent.

Authority Staff: Phil Lindley, Lisa Leahy, and David Maxwell

Board members, Authority staff, and a representative of the James W. Sewall Company introduced themselves, as did members of the public.

2. Review of ConnectME Authority Work Session/Retreat

Board members and staff reviewed the notes from the March 13th work session, giving session participants an opportunity to ask questions, clarify positions, and affirm the content of the notes. After a thorough review, Board and staff made no content changes to the material.

3. Public Comment Regarding Work Session

Public comments on the notes from the work session included:

- endorsement of the Authority in an advocacy role regarding broadband
- a question regarding the definition of an “Authority”
- the importance of due diligence in the grant application process, pre-award, and including both financial and technical review
- the recently-adopted 10/10 standard should be re-thought; could affect grant challenges. Unserved should have lower upstream speed.
- a desire for the Authority to engage public participation; people look to the Authority for well-developed positions formulated through an analytical approach
- promotion of municipally-owned fiber networks with the Authority assisting towns with possible solutions
- needed investment in community efforts

In response to these comments, Board members raised the idea of a bifurcation of potential grant funds; one for unserved and one for underserved. For further discussion at future meetings.

4. Discussion of Current ConnectME Authority Statutory Charge

Board member Andy Hagler presented his analysis of the current Authority statute in terms of:

- goals and policy

- essential duties in furtherance of broadband goals and policies
- central duty of the Authority
- additional duties of the Authority
- limitations on Authority action

5. Discussion of Pending Legislation

A listing of proposed legislation was reviewed; Authority position and action regarding each bill was discussed and decided. Dick Thompson would be preparing and presenting testimony.

6. Executive Director Report

Phil Lindley reviewed the latest ConnectME Fund report.

A tentative schedule for the 10th grant round was presented. The Authority felt that the round should be delayed due to pending legislation that could have a large impact on Authority activities.

The agenda for the next Board meeting was discussed and outlined.

7. Public Comment

There was no further public comment offered.

The meeting adjourned at 4:28PM.

The next Board meeting will be held on Fri., May 1, at 2:00PM in the Worster Room of the Public Utilities Commission.