

ConnectME Authority

Friday, August 26, 2016

Meeting Notes

1. Introductions

Authority Board Members: Dick Thompson, acting chair; Sandy Saunders; Ralph Johnson; Denise Garland; Sue Woods; and Bruce Williamson

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

Dick Thompson introduced Sandy Saunders, the new Board designee for the State of Maine Chief Information Officer. Sandy replaces Greg McNeal upon his retirement from state service.

2. Mapping and Data Gathering RFP

Staff updated the Board regarding the RFP; proposals are due on September 7. Some board members asked questions, particularly regarding the expected annual budget for the services requested in the RFP. Sue Woods will represent the Board on the review panel. Dick Thompson requested that the RFP documents be sent to all Board members.

It is anticipated that the review process will be concluded in time to allow for a recommendation for the vendor to be made and considered at the September Board meeting.

3. Municipal Planning Grants – Feedback from Applicants

Board members heard from members of the public regarding the pilot community planning grant program: those who were successful in terms of receiving an award; those who were not successful; those who partnered in an application, both successfully and unsuccessfully; and those who found the process too much to undertake. Commenters were forthcoming with both the good elements as well as areas where modification or clarification might be considered. Board members asked questions of commenters. Information provided will be considered as the pilot program is evaluated prior to another grant application solicitation, a date for which has not yet been set. Detail for comments and questions is available from ConnectME Authority staff.

4. Rulemaking Process, Chapter 101

Phil Lindley presented a proposed schedule for the rulemaking process. Board members discussed the schedule as well as the desire to provide more guidance and information in addition to reflecting recent statutory changes. Board members decided to devote the September Board meeting to a discussion of the draft rule prior to posting it for public comment. The schedule will be modified to reflect this change.

5. Executive Director Report

Phil Lindley presented financial statements for review.

The Board considered a revision to an award of an infrastructure grant. This item was discussed and tabled at the July meeting. The original applicant, Pioneer Broadband, was unable to secure complete funding for the project and asked that it be transferred to the Upper Valley Economic Corporation, the partner in the application to bring the project in Sherman to fruition. At the July meeting, Board members inquired if, historically, there had been other grants awarded which were contingent on other funding sources. Staff researched the question and found that at least five (5) previous awards were made for projects which were contingent on other funding sources. The Board unanimously approved the request to transfer the grant award from Pioneer Broadband to the Upper Valley Economic Corporation.

There were no updates to deliver on the FirstNetME project.

6. Connect America Fund 2 – Update from FairPoint

Sarah Davis of FairPoint presented an update of the implementation of the implementation of the Connect America Fund 2 program in Maine. Board members asked questions regarding progress to date and future work.

7. Public Comment

There were no public comments received.

The next Board meeting will occur on Fri., September 23, at 2:00PM at the PUC Building in Hallowell.

The meeting adjourned at 3:49PM.