

**ConnectME Authority**  
October 16, 2014 – Meeting Notes

1. Introductions

Board members, Authority staff, and representatives of the James W. Sewall Company and the Office of the Attorney General introduced themselves.

Authority Board Members: Jean Wilson (by phone), Tom Welch, Dick Thompson, and Ralph Johnson. Greg McNeal was absent. Dick Thompson served as chair for this meeting.

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

James W. Sewall Company: Clarence Young and Randy Claar

Members of the public introduced themselves.

To take advantage of a quorum of the Board, items requiring a vote were taken out of order from the sequence outlined in the meeting agenda.

2. Annual Audit – Report by Macpage

Representatives of Macpage reviewed various documents (financial statement, audit opinion, single audit, management letter, and auditor's letter) prepared following the audit, which resulted in an unmodified opinion. Discussion occurred and the acceptance of the audit report was approved unanimously.

3. ConnectME Grant Awards – 9<sup>th</sup> Round: Challenges

Two challenges and one withdrawal were considered.

The Town of Orono: challenge submitted by Time Warner. Questions raised by and discussed among Board members included precedence for the project (Franklin Community Health Network second round grant), possible statutory restrictions, and overall policy. While some members of the Authority felt that as a policy matter, this grant would be a good use of ConnectME funds, the vote was unanimous to table the matter with an instruction to the parties to submit final arguments to the Authority within ten (10) days. The issue will be re-visited at the next Authority Board meeting. Dick Thompson abstained from voting due to the involvement of the University of Maine System and his role as Chief Information Officer for the System.

RedZone Wireless/Diamond Cove: Jean Wilson recused herself from participation because of property ownership on Great Diamond Island. Questions regarding broadband speed, speed testing, and the basis for the challenge were asked by Board members. The applicants and the appellant were called upon to respond. Voting was unanimous to deny the challenge due to the

overwhelming demonstration of below broadband threshold speed in the grant project area, with Jean Wilson abstaining.

Town of Dedham: the Town decided to withdraw their application and refuse the grant since it would not provide funding to address all unserved areas within the municipality. The grant amount was for \$93,549, with a total project value of \$291,549. Members voted unanimously to accept the withdrawal.

Tom Welch left the meeting at 2:45PM in order to attend another meeting.

#### 4. Mapping Project: Next Steps

Clarence Young of the James W. Sewall Company (JWS) explained the purpose of the continuation of the project; to collect service location information from broadband providers while the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) determines its course of action and the usefulness of revised Form 477 data. JWS proposes to work with service providers to obtain service information at a cost not to exceed \$70,000 for one year. Board members voted unanimously to support the endeavor for one year.

#### 5. Broadband Sustainability Fund

The Executive Director updated the Board regarding the status of the action regarding the Broadband Sustainability Fund. The complaint was filed with Kennebec County Superior Court September 12, 2014. Defendant submitted its answer, affirmative defenses, and counterclaim October 7, 2014. Plaintiff's reply and affirmative defenses to the counterclaim was submitted October 23, 2014.

#### 6. Executive Director Report

Financial matters were covered in-depth during the Annual Audit portion of the meeting. The Executive Director advised Board members of an issue involving AT&T and DirecTV concerning a merger application, with AT and T asking for a support letter from the Authority to the FCC. The board agreed that the ED should submit the letter.

#### 7. Public Comment

The addition of new meeting material will be posted to the Authority website. Updates can be expected sometime during the week of October 16, 2014. Audit materials will be posted when finalized.

The meeting concluded at 3:06PM. The next meeting will be in January 2015.