

ConnectME Authority

Friday, March 25, 2016 – Meeting Notes

1. Introduction of ConnectME Authority members and staff

- Dick Thompson, Acting Chair, Denise Garland, Sue Woods, Bruce Williamson
- Phil Lindley, Lisa Leahy.

2. FirstNet Project Update provided by Lisa Leahy and Elissa Tracey.

- Background of project described.
- Survey data results – 42% response rate, initial geo spatial data set
- National RFP has been issued
- 12k first responders in ME – majority are volunteer or on call.
- Tribal interaction April 18, 2016
- Survey questions – use, applications, split between work/personal, etc.
- Consultation with federal task team in April
- What/how will current data sets and devices interoperate with NPSBN
- How does “push to talk” fit into NPSBN
- Covered leasing agreements

3. Mapping and Data Gathering: Update and review from Sewall Company.

- Clarence Young described “good, better or best” data for a future mapping project.
- The main questions are “Should we continue mapping and data gathering and at what level?”
- Previously we provide FCC USF and CAF2 maps produced from the map data obtained from the now-expired NTIA grant project.
- Current maps do not yet reflect current Authority’s 10/10 standard
- FCC Form 477 data reporting – all providers are now required to submit electronically.
- Authority online interface mapping tool shows broadband access. Users sometimes report there is not actually any service there or finds options they did not know exist.
- Range of provider data accuracy, some data has to be manipulated into a data set, Sewall provides this function.
- From 477 collecting from actual experience of customers within a census block, but information is not shared back to states.
- Revised Form 477 data will not maintain the national map. Points Authority needs to consider:

Do we think mapping information is valuable?

Form 477 data may not be useful enough to warrant cost. About 12 states are continuing mapping efforts on their own, self-funded. No federal grants are available to support these efforts.

Provider of last resort – may have additional uses for this data. Do a full assessment to see if we may leverage data for other uses in state. Some data was used for FirstNet data gathering efforts.

Quality of data is important.

Provider input and questions:

FairPoint:

How would Authority do aspirational goals if we do not collect data? Authority maps do have ability to display by tier levels now. How accurate does FairPoint think Form 477 data is? Very accurate, on a location basis as understood by FairPoint. Subscriber portion has to be kept confidential. How can Authority measure where grants are provided?

TAM:

What is the map to be used for? It might not be cost effective to get data for all locations. Maybe a percentage. Planning grants may need more information when needed for grant purposes. A baseline of data for tracking growth projection would be useful. For a targeted purpose, acquire confidentially from a provider. TAM would rather have a consumer contact them directly for coverage. Monitoring, strategic plan and grants are a good use for map data. What is the purpose of map, for marketing or for achieving Authority goals?

Time Warner:

Towns know where coverage is. They work closely with Sewall and Tilson now to share coverage areas.

Brian Lippold:

Authority should speak with engineers at companies to see what can be done to provide more accurate information.

Sewall:

Data behind the map to support many different maps. Will create a list of all initiatives that have been supported with data.

For discussion at next meeting: Options and outcomes that they serve. What current tools are being used for what initiatives?

4. Executive Director Report

- Court Case Update
Trial end at the of April. Stipulation by both parties taking place now. Judge asking for list of agreement points. Three pages of items at this point. Still outstanding: Final amounts owed by other party and final amount unclaimed and turned over to ConnectME fund. Scheduled for one day trial, additional day is reserved.
- Financial Reports
Outstanding grant amounts from previous grant rounds, less than \$100k.

5. Public Comment

- Updates from FairPoint with staff after meeting regarding CAF2 projects.

- Infrastructure grants – eligible for locations under 1.5 Mbps? Yes, only those locations that are unserved, less than 1.5 Mbps.
- 10/10 – served at 10/10 speed only or will it be weighted less if less than 10/10? Authority only funds projects that can provide 10 up and 10 down in some mix of product offerings for this round. Service provider must state a 10 up and 10 down service offering.
- Board can adjust after this grant round once applications are known.
- Waivers, amendment to rule. Concern that changes to rule are more than waivers; rule should be changed as they are major substantive. Window is closing. Staff should contact legal to inquire or come to meeting to discuss this matter.