

CONNECTMAINE

Authority Members: Denise Garland - Susan Corbett - Liz Wyman
Fred Brittain - Nick Battista - Jeffrey Letourneau

June 24, 2020

ConnectME Authority – Meeting Notes

1. Introductions: Authority Board Members: Doug Birgfeld, Susan Corbett, Liz Wyman, Nick Battista and Jeff Letourneau

Authority Staff: Peggy Schaffer and Brooke Johnson

2. Approval of Minutes: Jeff Letourneau motions to approve the minutes and Doug Birgfeld seconds the motion. All were in favor.

3. Monthly Financials: Brooke Johnson reviewed the monthly financials. ConnectMaine paid \$59,186.65 in expenses for the month of June. The ending balance was \$613,179.15. Additional obligations were discussed leaving a final cash balance of \$510,278.15. The Board accepted the monthly financials.

4. Director Report: N/A

5. Listening Session Summary: Nick Battista summarizes the listening session explaining that in the last 2 years ConnectMaine has seen significant changes in structure, organization, funding, rules, and grant programs. Some of these changes include moving into DECD as the administrative home for ConnectMaine, revising the unserved definition to match the FCC definition of 25/3, seeing an increase in funding from the state, implementing new rules, working to leverage federal funding opportunities, and an entirely new board. The listening session was an opportunity to hear about how these changes have been working, identify areas for improvements, areas the board should be focused on, and key issues that should be addressed through rule making. Two key themes were: More clearly articulate the basis and rationale for certain decisions and improvements to the grant making processes.

6. Strengthening Institutional Structures: Nick Battista explained that we should be thinking about this in three distinct areas that are happening on different timelines– rulemaking that we have to do within a certain timeframe; board governance; and program improvements.

Rulemaking – We need to go out to rule making to implement statutory changes made this spring by the legislature. Looking to have a solid draft of the changes necessary to implement the new statutory requirements by our July board meeting that we can review and start the rule making process. Looking to make sure interested parties have an opportunity to have a more detailed conversation, particularly about how the confidentiality rules are crafted.

Board governance review process – Good board governance processes are an important part of building a strong organization. Reviewing the board's roles and responsibilities, internal processes, and clearly articulating the institutional relationships with DECD and other entities, requires dedicated focus and time. Looking to have a board governance work plan and proposed timeline to review at the July meeting. Also, in July, potentially inviting Heather Johnson and somebody representing the Economic Recovery Council, to attend an upcoming meeting to further discuss institutional relationships.

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Program Improvements – Using the statute, rules, 2019 – 2021 strategy and the 2020 action plan as guiding documents, develop a set of recommendations for improvements to the grant programs. Some of these will be around the process we use, some of these will be around scoring criteria, and some may require changes to the existing rule. The interplay between process, scoring criteria, and rules is complex enough to merit additional discussion prior to go to rule making to address pieces in an ad hoc manner. For July, looking to continue this discussion and provide stakeholders with additional clarity on process and timing of substantive discussions.

7. Other Business: Brooke Johnson explained that she has accepted another job at OIT and her last day with ConnectMaine will be 7/3/2020.
8. Public Comments: Several attendees commented on the need for grant program improvements and transparency.

Board meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.