

CONNECTME



State of Maine
ConnectME Authority
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Dick Thompson
Chair

Authority Members - Denise Garland - Susan Woods - Bruce Williamson – Jon Richard - Ralph Johnson

January 25, 2019

ConnectME Authority – Meeting Notes

1. Introductions: Authority Board Members: Dick Thompson, Sue Woods, Bruce Williamson, Denise Garland and Jon Richard.

Authority Staff: Heather Johnson and Brooke Johnson.

Members of the public were asked to introduce themselves.

2. Strategic Plan/Annual Report: Heather Johnson explained that we received a few comments on our new Strategic Plan and the deadline for comments was today. We have 30 days to incorporate any changes or edits and we will bring a final version to the next Board meeting for approval. Heather Johnson talked about the Annual Report that is due to the Legislature and asked for any comments or edits. Dick Thompson reviewed his suggested edits and Sue Woods suggested a few changes as well. Monday morning ConnectME will file the report with all necessary agencies.
3. Ben Sanborn-Broadband Education Program: Ben Sanborn talked about the effort that TAM initiated a discussion on how we get to the education and outreach on what broadband is and what it can do for people in the State. How do you generate support within the state? Ben Sanborn was aware that there would be funding for Broadband in this Legislative session including two bonds for funds to go to ConnectME. Ben Sanborn explained that if these bills move forward this will be an issue for the voters and how can we educate these voters to why they should want to vote for this. Ben Sanborn explained that they are working with a broad group of entities and they started working with a marketing company to gather some data and do the initial outreach. This should take 3 months and Ben Sanborn will keep ConnectME and the Board updated as things continue.
4. Broadband Mapping Update: Heather Johnson explained our progress so far with the crowd sourcing data and that we have received over 90 submissions. Heather Johnson explained that we will take all the data we have by the end of next week and upload it into our Vetro tool so we can see on a map what type of speeds people have and where. Then we will be able to draw some circles around these areas and see if there are any projects coming up and what the cost might be. Heather Johnson talked about using this data to apply for the Re-connect Program.
5. Grant Scoring: Heather Johnson explained that as we came out of the last scoring round it became apparent that we need to look at the framework in the rulemaking in regard to the scoring criteria. The tiers are out of sync because of the new eligibility criteria that was recently set and how do we want to score effectively going forward. ConnectMe would like to put a team together including communities, providers and any other interested party to help work through creating an updated

scoring structure. Dick Thompson agreed that updating the scoring criteria needs to be done and he highlighted that the support as a percent of homes passed section the point difference is significant and should be addressed. He also suggested that reviewers should be able to apply good judgement and use the entire points not broken up.

6. Approval of December 14, 2018 Minutes and Review of Financial Report: Bruce Williamson motions to approve the minutes for December 14, 2018 and Denise Garland seconds the motion. All were in favor. Brooke Johnson explained the December financial activity. The ConnectME Authority received \$7,296.67 in assessment money and paid \$127,235.93 in grant payments. The ending balance for the month of December was \$1,488,082.48.
7. Director Report: Legislative Update/FirstNet Update: Heather Johnson provided an overview of the LD's that are going to be presented in the next few weeks including LD 31 that would change ConnectME from major substantive to routine technical rulemaking, A FirstNet review was provided to ConnectME and Heather Johnson provided some of those highlights. A total of fifty-eight (58) new locations are planned. There are twenty-one (21) originally proposed locations, supplemented by an additional thirty-seven (37) locations, the majority of which are located in Washington and Hancock counties. Another one hundred sixty-eight (168) towers have been acquired by AT&T and are in the process of being upgraded for service, as are the two hundred-fifty (250) locations which AT&T already owns. Heather Johnson explained that we will open the Executive Director of the ConnectME Authority position end of next week. Heather Johnson explained that there is a Project Management Program at USM and that ConnectME will be sponsoring Brooke Johnson for professional Development. Heather Johnson talked about the vacancy of the consumer position on the Board and she believes now is a good time to think of as a group who we might want or who might be interested. Heather Johnson explained that we have a challenge on the Our Katahdin project and we will be going through the data next week and should have an answer soon. Heather Johnson discussed that we have space reserved for a legislative breakfast on 2/7/19 or we can move the date. Dick Thompson suggested we try to move the date to March. Heather Johnson talked about the request from the last Board meeting for MDI to send us a formal extension request and that was received. Bruce Williamson motions to approve the extension request, Sue Woods seconds the motion. All were in favor.
8. Other Business: Peggy Schaffer provided an update on what the Maine Broadband Coalition has been doing. The Maine Community Foundation gave them money for the next 3 years to formalize their structure. MBC created a small group of people to figure out what their mission will be and to create a work plan. Peggy Schaffer wants to make sure that the Maine Broadband Coalition is providing a voice for internet users, helping Communities and advocating for them. They want to help communities with business models and formalizing the decision making in the first year. MBC will also contract with other organizations that are doing the same work.
9. Public Comments: N/A

Board meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.