

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

December 14, 2018

ConnectME Authority – Meeting Notes

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

Authority Staff: Heather Johnson and Brooke Johnson.

Members of the public were asked to introduce themselves.

2. Strategic Plan: Heather Johnson talked about the new Strategic Plan that is open for comments. Dick Thompson suggested we hold a public hearing for comments/review. Sue Woods suggested we include in our Strategic Plan a purpose, goals and where the gaps are and what it will take to fill those gaps. Ben Sanborn explained his concerns of including the Action Plan and he will submit formal comments in writing to ConnectME. The Comment period deadline for the Strategic Plan is January 25, 2018 at the next Board meeting. The vote on the Strategic Plan will be 30 days after the January meeting to allow time for ConnectME to make suggested changes.
3. Approval of October Round Infrastructure Grants: Heather Johnson explained that we received 7 grant applications for the October round. They were scored by a selection committee and the recommendation is to fund the two projects that scored the highest. The top scored were the Otelco Plymouth/Dixmont and the Our Katahdin/Millinocket projects. The ConnectME Authority had \$150,000 for projects for this round and the selection committee recommended adding \$16,485 to fully fund both of the top two projects. Ralph Johnson motions to approve both projects with the additional money needed and Sue Woods seconds the motion. All were in favor. Heather Johnson and Dick Thompson both suggested before the next round that ConnectME needs to change the scoring criteria and the application. Heather Johnson discussed that she would like to do a workshop to help people understand what we are looking for in a grant submission.
4. Mapping Discussion: Heather Johnson explained that we received all the data from Sewall this week and we will start advertising in January. Heather Johnson explained that the handout is a sample of the data we received for 25/3 Mbps and 10/1 Mbps and the questionnaire was attached as well. Sue Woods would like to be looped in on this discussion. Ben Sanborn believes that providers should be helpful and verify this data but how often? Heather Johnson believes monthly is reasonable. Nick Batista explained that he is happy to help in any way he can and Don Flewelling discussed providing ConnectME with their dead zones.

5. Approval of October 26, 2018 Minutes and Review of Financial Report: Ralph Johnson motions to approve the minutes for October 26, 2018 and Sue Woods seconds the motion. All were in favor. Brooke Johnson explained the October financial activity. The ConnectME Authority received \$7,730.67 in assessment money and paid \$66,662.50 in grant payments. The ending balance for the month of November was \$1,641,854.20.
6. Director Report/Year-End Review: Heather Johnson explained that EMDC from Planning grant round 3 would like to swap out a community. The options for discussion are ConnectME deny the community swap out and pro-rate the grant amount or approve EMDC's request. Ralph Johnson motions to deny EMDC's request. Jon Richards seconds the motion and all were in favor. Heather discussed that MDI from Infrastructure grant round 11 sent ConnectME an invoice for 85% of their project and explained they need more time to complete the project. Dick Thompson approved the 85% payment and said that MDI will need to put in a formal extension request and bring that request back to the Board at the next meeting for approval. Heather Johnson explained that during the Rulemaking adoption process at the beginning of the year a step was missed and we need to redo the process all over again. Heather Johnson reviewed the factsheet on the new ReConnect program with the Board. Dick Thompson would like a FirstNet update for the next Board meeting. Heather Johnson talked about an overview of 2018. The ConnectME Authority hired new staff, they completed a Statewide Action Plan, established new unserved definition, restructured planning grants, completed a community tour and gained access to Vetro Fiber mapping and CostQuest to obtain more accurate data.
7. Other Business: N/A
8. Public Comments: Ben Sanborn and Peggy Schaffer talked about their messaging and marketing meetings around what to do if we get a bond. Don Flewelling asked if they have been educating our legislatures and Ben Sanborn will be meeting with them.

Board meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.