

CONNECTME



State of Maine
ConnectME Authority
59 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0059
Connect.ME@maine.gov
www.Maine.gov/connectme/

Authority Members - Denise Garland - Susan Woods - Bruce Williamson – Fred Brittain - Ralph Johnson

June 28, 2019

ConnectME Authority – Meeting Notes

1. Introductions: Authority Board Members: Denise Garland, Ralph Johnson, Jeff McNelly and Nick Marquis.

Authority Staff: Brooke Johnson and Peggy Schaffer.

Members of the public were asked to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of Grants: Peggy Schaffer explained the selection committee looked over all grants received and scored them based on the scoring criteria that was recently approved by the board. One handout is the recommendation for Infrastructure grants and the other handout is the recommendation for Community Planning grants. The selection committee recommended to fund the Infrastructure project for Bowdoinham, Alton, Cambridge and Alna totaling \$642,500 with potential connections of 867 locations. Denise Garland motions to approve the suggested 4 Infrastructure grants and Jeff McNelly seconds the motion. All were in favor. The selection committee recommended to fund the Community Planning grants for WKLCBA Phase 1, Swans Island Phase 2, Argyle Phase 1 and Franklin County Phase 2 totaling \$89,275. Denise Garland motions to approve the 4 planning grants as recommended and Nick Marquis seconds the motion. All were in favor.
3. Bond Discussion: Peggy Schaffer explained that the Governor had submitted a bond package and \$30 million was for Broadband. She explained that the bond failed in enactment in the House and did not get taken up in the Senate. The thought right now is that there might be a special session before September but if not, it will get carried over to next session.
4. Budget Discussion: Peggy Schaffer explained that ConnectME did get an additional assessment in the budget that will total \$1.9 million a year for two years and could continue if approved. Peggy Schaffer also explained that we usually present a budget for approval, but we need to delay that until the Fall due to many factors, one being the potential for bond money. Peggy Schaffer explained the transition process ConnectME is currently going through to move from OIT to DECD.
5. Review of Monthly Financial Report: Brooke Johnson explained the May financial activity. The ConnectME Authority received \$6,640.54 in assessment money and she noted that we are missing a chunk of our assessment money but has notified Solix to investigate it. ConnectME paid \$4,162.50 in grant payments. The ending balance for the month of May was \$1,523,421.32.

CONNECTME

6. Approval of April 26, 2019 Minutes: Denise Garland motions to approve the minutes for April 26, 2019 and Ralph Johnson seconds the motion. All were in favor.
7. Director Report: Peggy Schaffer briefly talked about her recent speaking engagements. Peggy Schaffer explained that we are trying to figure out this mapping problem and we have been in talks with VetroFiber & Sewall to see if we can work with them to help fix this issue. She also talked about the work that MLab does in regard to speed tests and she explained the study they did in Pennsylvania. We are currently working on the best way to have useful live maps on our website. Peggy Schaffer mentioned that we are putting together names for the vacant seats on the Board and we will be sending those resumes to the Governor soon.
8. Other Business: Ralph Johnson notified the audience that he resigned from the ConnectME Board and has taken a position in DC.
9. Public Comments: Ben Sanborn talked about Beth Osler who was recently a witness at one of the Congressional Committee hearings in DC with regards to broadband mapping and that she testified in support of the bill. Ben Sanborn spoke about the new bill Senator Collins just introduced yesterday called ABBA. The goal of this bill is to work with State organizations whose goals are to help support broadband. This legislation would give federal support of up to 50% for a project. Brian Lippold expresses his gratitude for the Board voting to approve the Franklin County, Swan's Island and WKLBCA projects and that the projects will help 43 communities.

Board meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.