

CONNECTME



State of Maine
ConnectME Authority
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Dick Thompson
Chair

Authority Members - Denise Garland - Susan Woods - Bruce Williamson - Sandy Saunders - Ralph Johnson

July 27, 2018

ConnectME Authority – Meeting Notes

1. Director Report: Heather Johnson explained the Broadband Community tours that we just completed in partnership with the USDA. We had good representation from federal delegation and a lot of candidates from local races. We went to six different communities and those locations were driven by the local Economic Development groups. Over 125 people attended across the six meetings. We are currently working on a roadmap for communities to help them with where to start, what is next and what steps they might encounter along the way. Sue Woods asked what the format was like for these meetings. Heather Johnson explained that we spoke about the Statewide Broadband Action Plan and Bob Nadeau spoke about the USDA programs available. Then we had an open dialogue with the communities covering several topics. Assistant to the Secretary Ann Hazlett attended the ribbon cutting in Cranberry Isles and Heather Johnson had an opportunity to spend time with her and highlight some unique assets Maine has and our ability to turn funding into impact quickly. Solicitation for Comment on the \$600 million omnibus bill, now named the e-Connectivity Pilot Program opened today and the deadline to submit comments is September 10, 2018. Heather Johnson explained her expectation is that many of us will work together to provide consistent comments from Maine and the more comments from Maine the better.
2. Introductions: Authority Board Members: Dick Thompson, Sue Woods, Ralph Johnson and Denise Garland.

Authority Staff: Heather Johnson and Brooke Johnson.

Members of the Public were asked to introduce themselves.

3. CMP Thorn Dickinson, Vice President, Business Development: Thorn Dickinson explained the CMP Transmission project and how discussion around it started back in 2013. Massachusetts is a big driver of this project. Thorn Dickinson has been spending time out in the communities explaining the project to people and he stated that he met Heather Johnson a few years back and started discussing fiber optics with her and it lead to the current agreement. Thorn Dickinson explained the maps he handed out. The blue line on one map showed the new transmission line from Lewiston to the Forks. Another map showed why they selected that area for the new transmission line and that is because there is very few people there and it is a heavily logged area with no commercial roads. Thorn Dickinson described the benefits of the project and those included, energy cost savings, 1,700 new construction jobs just in Maine, low energy prices drive economic growth and cleaner air.

4. Approval of June 22, 2018 Minutes and Financial Report: Susan Woods motions to approve the minutes for June 22, 2018 and Denise Garland seconds the motion. All were in favor. Brooke Johnson explained the June financial activity. The ConnectME Authority received \$159,428.09 in assessment money and paid \$45,387.50 in grant payments. The ending balance for the month of June was \$1,470,399.12
5. Other Business: Heather Johnson talked about getting data from earlier grants and explained the letter and questionnaire that will go out next week. This will give us those cornerstones we need. Heather Johnson also explained that the next grant round we would add a stipulation to the grant, making this data a requirement. Dick Thompson asked if we couldn't put something on the website with the data we received from these questionnaires. Heather Johnson talked about the RFP we are currently working on for a third-party validation consultant and that if we do get a generous sum of money that we will need to be verifying these projects. Heather Johnson spoke about the Maine Development Foundation releasing its 2018 Making Maine Work Report and broadband is in the top 3 of the goals.
6. Public Comments: Ben Sanborn reminded everyone about the TAM Annual Convention on September 12, 2018. Chris Lynch from Matrix explained that his company is looking to expand to rural Maine towns to help deploy fiber optics and wanted to let ConnectME know that they were doing this and if we have any questions they are more than willing to meet. Don Flewelling asked if there will be another infrastructure grant round in the fall and Heather Johnson explained that we spent the remainder of the approved funds on the planning grants so most likely we will not open another round this year.

Dick Thompson motions to go into executive session and Denise Garland seconds the motion. All were in favor.

7. Executive Session: Confidential
8. Audit Approval: Dick Thompson explained about the RFP proposal that the ConnectME Authority accepted with MacPage roughly 3 years ago. Dick Thompson suggested we go back out to RFP in April before we resign another contract with them. Ralph Johnson motions to approve \$22,500 for the MacPage audit and Susan Woods seconds the motion. All were in favor. Dick Thompson approved for Heather Johnson to sign the MacPage audit engagement letter.

Board meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.