

CONNECTME



State of Maine

ConnectME Authority

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

September 27, 2019

ConnectME Authority – Meeting Notes

1. Introductions: Authority Board Members: Sue Woods, Bruce Williamson, Fred Brittain and Doug Birgfeld

Authority Staff: Brooke Johnson and Peggy Schaffer.

Members of the public were asked to introduce themselves.

2. NETC Presentation: Mike Reed from Mission Broadband explained the Rural Health Care Pilot Program and back in 2006 NETC (New England Telehealth Consortium) received the largest award of \$24.6 million. NETC includes hospitals, clinics, community health, behavioral health and medical schools (over 500). The goals of NETC are, private network linking rural and urban health care providers throughout New England, diversity and redundancy, access to internet, expand telehealth across New England, utilize federal money to subsidize the cost and a services-based network. Mike Reed explained that the NETC network is a private/redundant network with a 140GB backbone, supports quality service, symmetrical bandwidth, commodity internet and supports IPv4, IPv6 and BGP. Mike Reed explained that this network is in addition to the facilities current provider to help with redundancy. NETC has brought over \$43 million in federal money to Northern New England. Mike Reed talked about the new Rural Health Care Program called the Healthcare Connect Fund (2012) and that NETC spearheaded a health care user group and expanded to over 1000 healthcare providers and has moved beyond New England to help health care providers across the U.S.
3. Strategic Plan: Peggy Schaffer briefly updated about the State's Strategic Plan and that at the beginning broadband was not included because the State already has a Broadband Plan but after several feedback sessions broadband is included, and she has put together a working group of individuals to figure out what our broadband goals should be and what are the steps to get there. This plan is a 10-year plan and the broadband goal is by 2030 for everyone to have a gig. The working group came up with 4 goals, capitalize a loan guarantee program at the FAME to attract both private (bank and investors) and federal investment, rebrand ConnectME as the Office of Broadband and expand its role and capacity to directly support community planning activities, capitalize grant programs and launch a large-scale telehealth pilot in an area with an adequate broadband network to build the business case for further expansion. The plan is due to the Governor by November 15, 2019.
4. LD1603: Peggy Schaffer explained that the Senate President put in a bill and in its original form had some problems. The original bill directed the State to install cell transmitters on State facilities where there was little or no service. The bill was amended, and Peggy Schaffer has been working with a few

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other individuals and they have come up with what they think is an approach to this bill. That approach is a State policy about how private providers can approach State agencies with potential use of their facilities for cell transmitters in areas where they need them. Next steps this group is asking the cell companies to come and meet with them one at a time and the report is due on February 1, 2020.

5. Budget Discussion and Monthly Financials: Brooke Johnson reviewed the new monthly financials put together by DAFS. ConnectME paid \$80,347.12 in grant payments for the month of September and the ending balance after current obligations is \$1,011,701.58. Peggy Schaffer reviewed each line item on the new proposed budget. Bruce Williamson and Sue Woods had some concerns about the new initiatives. Peggy Schaffer will re-work the numbers for the new initiatives and bring the budget back for review in October.
6. Approval of June 28, 2019 and July 26, 2019 Minutes: Doug Birgfeld motions to approve both minutes at the same time and Bruce Williamson seconds the motion. All were in favor
7. Director Report: Peggy Schaffer updated the Board on her speaking engagements and that she will be traveling to DC to speak at the SHLB 9th Annual Conference. Peggy Schaffer briefly spoke about the FCC Comments ConnectME submitted regarding telemedicine and the RDOF programs. Peggy Schaffer also spoke about the MBC conference coming up in October and that we are currently waiting for the new board appointments but should know shortly. Peggy Schaffer discussed that we will have our public viewing map hosted by Sewall available soon.
8. Other Business:
9. Public Comments: Ben Sanborn reminded the Board that we will need to do a Rulemaking soon regarding the new funding source.

Board meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.