

CONNECTMAINE

May Meeting Minutes

26 May 2021

Temporary Recording: <https://networkmaine.zoom.us/rec/share/m8dhVi8jE1xkX12spkPHdBdSf6DzlBQXqFDL-p8fk2m1GacOKZA9oxbAQvXrbZKV.jgdzmDL.Pb2USQzIN>

Authority Members

Nick Battista, Chair
Jasmine Bishop
Fred Brittain
Susan Corbett
Heather Johnson
Jeff Letourneau
Liz Wyman

Introductions of Members and Staff

Nick Battista, Susan Corbett, Jasmine Bishop, Liz Wyman, Fred Brittain, Heather Johnson, Jeff Letourneau, Peggy Schaffer, Stephenie MacLagan

Meeting Kickoff

Potential rearrangement of agenda for member attendance—Nick

- May need to jump to voting on broadband infrastructure grants before 11am

Recent ConnectMaine successes—Nick

- Magnitude of funds increased over the last year

Remembering back to when ConnectMaine had to push out over \$6 million to connect kids, it was our introduction to Tilson Technology as a consultant to support grants programs.

- Public engagement has greatly increased with new structure and processes

Consultants have been very helpful in scaling our programs. Providing resources and networks for communities to expand broadband has increased.

- Leadership in the national space

The lack of broadband is a multifaceted challenge and much more work ahead.

Notes of Last Meeting

Approval of the April minutes: Fred motioned, Susan 2nd, 7:0

Review of Operations

Executive Director's Report—Peggy

- Infrastructure grants & operations

New structures and processes have greatly improved our programming, and being ready for scaling up the grants program.

- Federal funds

Some more information has been released, but there's more to come.

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Board Discussion

- Liz: Regarding the Treasury's interim rules, are there two streams of funds to the counties and another for localities; have we thought about coordinating these?

Peggy: Correct, and one of the places of uncertainty is that we don't know that the state has any authority to restrict the use of the funds streaming to municipalities. Another place is the reference to 25/3mbps for eligibility of funds, which greatly affects cities across the country. We are all trying to make sure everyone knows about the opportunities of these funds and potential stacking.

Heather: This kind of coordination also needs to happen outside of broadband, and Peggy's been helping figure out coordination there, too.

Nick: NTIA deadlines sometime this summer, we should be starting those conversations and what's the roles of ConnectMaine and others.

Updates on Governance and Maine Connectivity Authority—Nick & Heather

- Debrief decisions and new timeline

Starboard Leadership was hired to help and provided a report of recommendations. Based on that and the uncertainty from legislative bills, we decided to pause this work, but we can pick this up with Starboard as needed after the legislative session. Similar strategic planning efforts are paused, until we can think about the role of ConnectMaine and the new Authority.

- Debrief state legislation & work session

The bill language establishing the Maine Connectivity Authority is being finalized, even with a meeting with the EUT Committee today, which mostly relates to legal elements. Work session has been rescheduled.

- Update on decision to contract for support services

Preparing processes for collective thinking on how to structure the Maine Connectivity Authority and ConnectMaine, especially since the work session is pushed out. Setting aside the statute, we looked at a couple of models for operationalizing the new authority. An advisory committee has been formed to identify key questions and decision points. Hiring Consensus Building Institute after being so helpful in public engagement last year and in setting up other state structures. Additional certainty around the federal funds will become available in June. Goal is to have key questions identified by July.

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Financials and Budgeting—Nick & Staff

- Context

Time to look over financials; it's tough to follow the flow of funds, so trying to take the next month to think about how we're presenting financials. There will also be some cash carried forward into the new fiscal year, so now is the time to be thinking about how we use assessment funds versus bond funds versus federal funds as clarity increases.

- Review memo of current financials

Feel free to reach out to staff with questions or ideas around cashflow, initiatives over the next year, as certainty about structures and federal revenue increases.

- Drafting FY22 budget for approval at a future meeting

Even in the midst of uncertainty, we still should be thinking strategically about the use of ConnectME Fund from assessments. Ideas on how to simplify, clarify or visualize the various revenue streams and spending are welcomed.

- FY21 audit update

Bringing on board auditors, and figuring out if some of the coronavirus relief funds can pay for that piece of the audit. It's ongoing work. It's been a complicated year financially, but hopefully won't be as complicated next year.

Decisions on Broadband

Designation of Broadband Service—Nick

- Debrief public forum & public comments received so far

Comment period continues this week. Industry comments coming in the last few days have been captured and will be shared with board members end of week. Those still submitting comments should tailor them to address the categories that ConnectMaine can consider. The meeting binder will contain all public comments submitted.

- Discuss timeline and actions

The timeline proposed was to identify unserved areas by the July meeting, but to dig into the comments on the unserved areas we'd have to hold off the vote on this until the June meeting or we'd have to hold a special meeting earlier in June that will still give us time needed to fully consider comments received.

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Board Discussion

- Liz: Which providers have filed comments? Generally really pleased with the amount of comments coming in, which are really helpful given the difficult situation the rule puts us in.

Stephenie: In addition to TAM, Redzone, another wireless company, Charter & Comcast, LCI and Axiom Technologies all filed comments.

Nick: There really were some in-depth comments from different perspectives.

- Jeff: If we were to adjust the designations, waiting until the June meeting to vote on designations trigger another 30-day comment period, and going into July is dragging this out too long. Can we see all the comments, and in a couple weeks hold a special meeting to vote to keep up pace?

Fred: I think we can and should do that. Echoed by Liz.

Heather: We might also have more information from the federal government by then.

Action: Plan on a one-hour emergency meeting being scheduled in about two weeks.

Broadband Infrastructure Grants—Committee (Nick, Jeff & Fred)

- Debrief the review process

Applications were reviewed with support from staff and Tilson, which was appreciated by the committee. This improved process led to high confidence in the recommendations, and it'll be easily scaled up as available funds and number of applications increase—the limiting factor will be on the applicant side moving forward. Working with the contractors has been a great learning process, and a lot of effort was put into applicant outreach. We'll be thinking about how to improve the application to hopefully get the information needed upfront. The previous process used wouldn't have scaled up to the level of even this round.

- Review committee recommendations

These are captured in the meeting binder.

Board Discussion

- Liz: Did the committee find that the two tracks was a successful change?

Nick: I found it helpful, and I look forward to hearing Tilson's recommendations; part of their contract is to provide feedback on the process for future improvements.

- Jasmine: Would the applicants unsuccessful this round be given preference next round?

Nick: There are a number of applications that we've seen before, but we didn't have the funds to award this round, but we'll know more about other opportunities in June and July.

Peggy: Once again, the amount of match had a significant impact on the score.

Approval of awarding broadband infrastructure grants as recommended by the grants committee, which are identified in the grants committee memo: Heather motioned, Liz 2nd, 6:0, Susan Corbett abstained.

Action: Staff to provide feedback on less competitive applications toward future applications for state or federal funds.

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No Other Business

Public Comments

Comments on the designation of broadband service should be emailed. There was a public meeting on that earlier this month.

- Sarah Davis: Appreciation for the effort of staff during the broadband infrastructure grants process. On NTIA federal funds, will ConnectMaine be able to reserve matching funds?

Peggy: There's still a lot of conflicting information, and we're unable to answer questions like that until we get more certainty on how NTIA will funnel those funds. When we get more information in the next week or two, we'll share that.

Nick: We have to work the process to get there, and having Tilson and VETRO on board will also help us.

- Brian Lippold: Will be able to see the scoring criteria? It'd be helpful see the scores broken down by categories.

Peggy: The scoring criteria were in the application.

Nick: There are multiple components to this, including the outreach to applicants about how to be more competitive, work with Tilson, and capturing and incorporating what was learned from this round.

Approval of adjournment: Jasmine motioned, Heather 2nd, unopposed.

April Meeting Minutes

28 April 2021

Temporary Recording: https://networkmaine.zoom.us/rec/share/cKRe8QscMffH-7HvfMC6w1jEgTsN-Fu6GF2_ZL7AufNKBlm29LrwwggFq0hz6YiP7.umANKw8u1-RDtl60

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Meeting Kickoff

New student able to upload educational content thanks to Connect Kids Now! grant—Nick
Thoughts from Town Manager of Stonington cites broadband as saving lobster-based community—Nick

Reorder Agenda—Jeff

Approval of moving Designation of Broadband Service and Decisions on Broadband Planning: Susan motioned, Fred 2nd, 6:0

Notes of Last Meeting

Approval of the March minutes: Fred motioned, Liz 2nd, 6:0

Designation of Broadband Service

Update from Staff—Peggy & Nick

- Review memo of staff recommendation

Following last board meeting, staff directed to make recommendation on the designation of broadband service. Staff conversed with board members and industry, and researched state of the market within the state broadband leaders network and with consultant support. Rule requires designation of broadband service based on common applications and service networks. Staff recommendation is 100/100mbps. This impacts designation of unserved areas for grants eligibility, and staff recommendation is to use 50/10mbps. This ensures people who have worse service are still prioritized for grants. It's more transparent to have a designation of unserved areas rather than address this in grants scoring. While this would change the number of subscriber locations in unserved areas, it doesn't largely change the estimated cost of universal broadband (\$600 million) and we'll have to figure out identification of unserved areas.

- Discuss timeline and actions

Today's vote is to open up the required comment period, and another vote will be taken at the May meeting. ConnectMaine isn't proving these service levels today, but putting these out for public comment.

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Board Questions

- Fred: Recommendation in the memo includes more than just 100/100mbps, includes latency of 20ms. How was the recommended latency level determined?

Peggy: We haven't had latency reported, but we can work on adding this. While many factors affect latency, industry is moving in this direction. Latency is really important, because that's what the spinning wheel of death looks like. 20ms is kind of what the industry standard is for certain kinds of electronics, and in terms of use it's the level you need for use. Beginning to look at latency as part of getting away from technology per se.

- Liz: How does it work to have a different designation for unserved areas? Why wouldn't unserved areas be determined by the designation of broadband service?

Nick: We have to first designate broadband service, then we also have to designate unserved areas. One of the key features is that unserved areas can't get broadband service, which would be a significant part of the state. For grants, the recommendation is to designate unserved areas using 50/10mbps instead of 100/100mbps. A family of four should be able to use the internet without worrying for remote work and remote school at the same time. Separately, we're working to have the right numbers of for broadband service while also constructing these in a way that the designation of unserved areas as a geography for grant eligibility is administratively feasible or workable for staff. Considered challenges of served having 25/3mbps or faster service, and desire to increase this without being over inclusive in unserved areas for grants eligibility.

Stephenie: Quotes from the memo are shared in the chat—Yes, historically the designation of broadband service has been the sole criterion for the designation of unserved areas but that is not required and other things can be considered. In fact, because that's the way we had done it, and the designation of broadband service was so low at 25/3mbps, the build standard was created. Also, recent rulemaking ties the designation of broadband service to Common Applications and Network Service, and the 100/100mbps is build around that; then looking at that service level, it was obvious that it'd too greatly affect the designation of unserved areas. Staff leaned on the statute to consider other things than just the designation of broadband service in the designation of unserved areas.

Peggy: I understand where Liz is coming from, because I was stuck there too for a while. We are splitting this into two designations, two service levels now.

- Jasmine: Is underserved between these two service levels? What is the group between 50/10 and 100/100mbps? Can someone who can get 60/20mbps also apply for grants?

Nick: Underserved is a function of geography. This proposal starts to say broadband service is this level of service while unserved areas are designated by looking at other things as well. If you have 60/20mbps, you're not "served" but for purposes of grants eligibility public dollars are targeted to areas that don't have access to 50/10mbps.

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- Jeff: Is 100/100mbps the build-to standard then?

Nick: The 50/10mbps service level isn't the "unserved standard" but rather a factor in how unserved areas are designated which is a geography.

- Jeff: Should the designation of unserved areas be based on something easier to measure than 50/10mbps, such as 100/10mbps? This could be addressed in public comments submitted.

- Susan: Do you want to add to the motion that comment about built-to standard?

Stephanie: Clarifying again, there's a distinction between "build standard" and "designation of broadband service"

Nick: The designation of broadband service is what we're doing, and it'll effectively become the build-to standard. Jasmine agreed.

- Liz: Even though we're hosting a public forum, are we also going to allow written comments to be submitted? Do you need a motion on that?

Stephanie: Absolutely. While you can't submit comments through the website, we'll have information on the website about the public comment period, and written comments can be submitted by email. We don't need a motion on the action item of holding a public forum.

Approval of the designation of broadband service as at least 100/100mbps, and the use of 50/10mbps for the designation of unserved areas: Nick motioned, Susan 2nd: 6:0

Action: Direct staff to host at least one public forum during the required 30-day comment period. ConnectMaine anticipates a vote at the May meeting to confirm these designations.

Decisions on Broadband Planning – Part I

Community Broadband Planning Grants—Staff & Committee (Susan, Nick & Jeff)

- Debrief changes

For brevity, please read the agenda and draft grants application in the meeting binder.

- Budget for planning grants: \$132,750 available this round

Based on the annual budget of \$200,000 less the last round's awarded grants.

- Review timeline

Proposing to open the window now through May 27, to make decisions at the June meeting.

Vote on opening application window for community broadband planning grants through May 27, with anticipation of awarding grants at the June meeting: Liz motioned, Nick 2nd, 6:0

Review of Operations

Executive Director's Report—Peggy

- Community resources and federal funds

There's a tsunami of federal funds coming, but the problem is that we don't know the full size, structure or what's going to get hit. We're still waiting for more certainty, which will unfold over the next several months. Guidelines may come out May 10, but they're being clear that it won't necessarily be a notice of funding opportunity. Many providers have signed up for the FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit, but it is very complicated.

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- External communications

Susan and Jeff did an encore event for the Portland Press Herald last night. Nick and I have participated in Bangor Daily News's four-session series.

- Infrastructure grants & operations

Lots of staff time spent on operations these last few weeks. Many more applications are streaming in, and Tilson Technology has extremely helpful. Woodline as the project manager has been a great help. With her, we're developing Salesforce as a grants platform for us. Keeping track of the connections among these projects will help us develop systems that will be more efficient and for us to be more responsive to constituents and the public. Over \$5 million has been requested in grants in the provider expansion project track alone. About half of the \$15 million bond is available for grants this round.

Board Questions

- Jasmine: Is there a pager on the EBB?

Peggy: With the uncertainty, it's hard to publish information that would be accurate.

Susan: The National Digital Equity Center is working on ways to support people to take advantage of programs, including those who don't have internet access. When the funds for this benefit run out, that's the end of the program.

Jeff: Universal Service Administrative Company is also developing materials.

Decisions on Operations

Update on Governance—Peggy & Committee (Jasmine, Liz & Nick)

- Debrief meeting with consultant

A consultant was hired to help with governance and has met with staff and board members.

- ConnectMaine required to do Audit

The governance committee will be asked to develop the RFP for the audit this Friday.

- Review timeline

The governance committee will meet this week to go over the recommendations and next steps from the consultant, such as development of bylaws or those kinds of things.

Updates on Data Intelligence Platform—Peggy & Committee (Jeff, Fred & Nick)

- NBRC grant funds

ConnectMaine acquired a grant from Northern Border Regional Commission to cover the cost of the Broadband Intelligence Platform.

- Responses and debrief decisions

VETRO was the only respondent and has been contracted to provide this platform.

Board Questions

- Liz: How much was the contract?

Peggy: I think the contract was for \$940,000 for two years, maybe

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Update on Industry—Committee (Heather & Nick)

- Debrief meeting with industry

Notes are in the meeting binder. We talked about doing monthly meetings to ensure information flow, and doing reports back to the board. Others welcome to join in the future.

Updates on Strategic Planning—Stephenie & Committee (Fred, Susan & Jeff)

- Review vision & goals

Committee has been having conversations with the rest of the board and in tandem with other committee work.

- Review timeline

As the committee moves forward there will be additional memos or updates on the ConnectMaine vision and goals, which will be developed to kickoff strategic planning later this summer.

Annual Budgeting—Stephenie

- Review timeline & expense items

Looking to align annual budgeting with setup of the required FY21 audit. Staff is working with the Controller's Office to align the audit with the federal reporting on coronavirus relief funding. This is a different audit process than has been undertaken in the past. The audit has to be approved by the board and submitted by mid-October, so staff is aiming to have it ready for approval by mid-September. Some of our expenses can't be estimated for FY22 without conclusion of FY21, but staff has begun calculating projected expenses where known. Staff has also created a system for tracking separately our various revenue sources and accounts.

- Discuss board engagement

While staff can work with DAFS and OIT for projected expenses, it would be helpful to have input on what initiatives to include in the draft annual budget and how various revenue sources should be applied. Staff hasn't experience undertaking the type of audit required for FY21, and future audits will also be done external to state government. There isn't a finance committee; do any board members want to volunteer for involvement in the development of the annual budget or supporting the FY21 audit?

Board Questions

- Jeff: Board wouldn't be involved in the mechanics of the audit, but I have a lot of experience with various auditing processes.

Stephenie: We have a support from DAFS and Controller's Office, but once we get to the point of developing the report for board approval, if anyone wants to be involved more than at these meetings, let staff know.

Nick: Also if you're working on a committee be thinking about any large expenses or needs for contracting, to be flagged for the budget.

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Decisions on Broadband Planning – Part II

Needed Community Planning Assistance—Stephenie

- Resources and peer learning

ConnectMaine gets a lot of requests for more assistance that we've had capacity to provide. Development of resources and networking support has been backburned.

- Digital inclusion

There's been awareness of needing to address digital inclusion more so in the planning process, what requirements should be included in planning grants, etc.

- Consultants

A while ago, a couple of board members and staff met with an external partner about the development of resources, including a list of consultants or potential consultants, even the possibility of vetting consultants someday. ConnectMaine hasn't dropped the ball so much as to recognize its limited headcount.

- Potential Community Committee (Fred, Susan & Jeff)

Does development of these resources and networking support for communities require a committee? Should staff capacity be focused on this or are we acknowledging the lack of capacity to bring this work from the backburner?

Board Questions

- Liz: You're trying to come up with an approach to provide information in an objective fashion?

Peggy: Whether we can advise on contracting for services, etc. We want to facilitate resources to communities, but it's figuring out who's working on it.

- Fred: Where does this work fit with everything else we're doing? Should we wait to see the result of LD1484?

Peggy: Right, there's still uncertainty since that legislation was just introduced. It'd be helpful to be able to do a frequently asked questions about use of federal funds for example, but we don't know any of that yet.

Other Business

None

Public Comments

- Joline Bell, Litchfield: Communities that have been planning could and should share information with other communities.

Jeff: Yes, nothing better than peer learning and networking.

- Elain Higgins, Freedom: Consider new terms such as "minimally served" for the service level used for the designation of unserved areas.

Jeff: Please submit public comments like that.

Approval of adjournment: Fred motioned, Liz 2nd, unopposed

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Executive Director's Report

26 May 2021

Peggy Schaffer, Executive Director

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Active grant awards

The planning grants for Franklin County and Sanford should be closed out by the end of the fiscal year, as ConnectMaine anticipates awarding the next round at its June meeting.

The three active infrastructure grants and the Connect Kids grants are progressing, with reports due before the end of June or in some cases this summer. Axiom is still facing significant pole attachment delays for 3 roads in Whiting. We are requesting an extension for this grant so that it can continue to make progress past the June 30th deadline. LCI, after a delay because of their Connect Kids project, has started the Bremen project.

Local and regional planning support

Staff hosted a virtual workshop for potential applicants of community broadband planning grants. Staff is starting to get a sense of potential number of applications, possibly 15, increasing over past rounds.

GEO Partners, the company working with Maine Broadband Coalition on the speed testing initiative, is rolling out a new feature to help towns identify costs and opportunities to build in areas. This will be a big help to towns as they work through options for building out. We are getting training on it in the next couple of weeks and will roll it out to communities after that. Maine West demoed this feature a year or so ago when GEO Partners first started it.

Staff continues to attend MBC's open "let's talk broadband" which is every Friday at 11:00, lead by Kendra Jo Grindle, Island Institute. We also presented at the Maine Philanthropy Conference and are offering a more in-depth dive into broadband issues to that group of funders and foundations in June.

Staff and program management

Applications for infrastructure grants requested nearly \$14 million in total. There an agenda item related to awarding about half of the \$15 million bond funds this round.

Staff held kickoff meetings with contracted consultants toward building a Broadband Intelligence Platform for ConnectMaine. The purpose of this includes software for mapping, for better data management, analysis and visualization, to understand what is happening on the ground and plan for funding opportunities. Staff and the project manager meet multiple times a week as a Salesforce platform is developed for our grants program.

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These two contracts, plus the support of the project manager have really allowed us to step up our game on grants. The review process for this round yielded a very solid process to verify information, ensure eligibility of applicants on multiple fronts (location, technical, financial) and made the final decisions focused. This will allow us to ramp up our grantmaking capacity with confidence as we look to more federal funds.

Staff hosted the public forum on the designations of broadband service and unserved areas, and is compiling public comments due tomorrow. There is an agenda item related to this.

State legislative activities

The Administration presented an amendment on Senator Bennett's bill to include equity investments as an authority of ConnectMaine, which now proposes to set up the Maine Connectivity Authority in order to do equity, co-investment, loans and build out of middle-mile, and other potential investments that can help the state lower the cost of builds. There's an agenda item on this.

Federal funding update

Treasury announced their guidelines for the use of municipal and county funding available through the American Rescue Plan. Municipal money is generally flowing through the state, though there is not authority in the interim rules for the state to approve or ask information about municipal use of funds. County funds will flow directly to the counties. Staff presented in Rangeley on funding options including ARP. We are working with the MBC, and have reached out to the Maine Municipal Association, on an outreach strategy to counties and towns for how & why to use the ARP funds for broadband. This is a significant opportunity, however there are multiple competing uses for these one-time funds.

NTIA has also released the NOFO for the \$288 million for broadband infrastructure in the Consolidated Appropriations Act. These funds are available to partnerships between a public instrumentality and a private provider. There is no match requirement. Grants are suggested to be between \$5M and \$30M, and there is a line suggesting a level of state approval. Grants are due in Mid July, with decisions in November. We will be thinking about doing a state application that might cover multiple projects.

Federal partnership activities

The Emergency Broadband Benefit rolled out a little shaky, but over 1M people nationally have signed up in a week. The FCC rules that run everything through the provider makes it difficult to overlay programs like "give IT. get IT" for equipment or NDEC programs. No provider so far (nationally or in Maine) have opted to distribute the \$100 devices stipend the program allows, for various reasons including administrative burden. There continues to be a push at the national level to make the EBB benefit more permanent.

Lots of talk about the American Jobs Plan, but details are still pretty scarce.

ConnectMaine Authority Financials

FY21 Current Accounts

FINANCIALS	DETAIL	PROPOSED	OBLIGATED	ENCUMBERED	Q3	Q4	ACTUAL	REMAIN
REVENUE	Carryforward	\$1,451,280.05	\$1,451,280.05	\$1,469,620.69	\$1,808,065.54	\$1,785,778.86	\$1,469,620.69	
Fund	Assessment Fees & Interest	\$1,716,285.00	\$1,716,285.00	\$1,716,285.00	\$418,875.00	\$371,813.63	\$1,649,182.89	\$67,102.11
State	Refunds, excluding Assessment Withdrawls	\$525.00	\$525.00	\$525.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$525.00	
NECEC	NECEC Broadband Fund	\$500,000.00	\$2,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00		\$1,000,127.26	\$1,000,127.26	\$999,872.74
NBRC	NBRC grant funds	\$178,571.43	\$178,571.43			\$0.00	\$0.00	\$178,571.43
Bonds		\$15,000,000.00	\$15,000,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$15,000,000.00
Relief	Federal funds	\$12,000,000.00	\$12,000,000.00	\$6,201,842.08	\$6,201,842.08	\$2,251,764.41	\$6,201,842.08	\$5,798,157.92
SUBTOTAL		\$30,846,661.48	\$32,346,661.48	\$10,388,272.77	\$8,428,782.62	\$5,409,484.16	\$10,321,297.92	\$22,043,704.20
Available	excluding Bonds & Relief	\$3,668,090.05	\$5,168,090.05	\$4,186,430.69	\$2,226,940.54	\$3,157,719.75	\$4,119,455.84	\$1,066,974.85
EXPENSES								
Financial	DAFS & Solix	\$28,296.00	\$38,370.00	\$21,648.00	\$11,648.00	\$5,074.00	\$31,196.00	\$7,174.00
Website	InforME, OIT & Sewall	\$34,950.00	\$110,159.00	\$35,437.71	\$32,452.90	\$364.30	\$35,802.01	\$74,356.99
Administration	Salaries, etc.	\$232,910.22	\$234,741.37	\$40,304.43	\$69,440.10	\$20,139.81	\$194,436.94	\$40,304.43
Cellphones		\$1,058.40	\$1,058.40	\$246.00	\$245.40	\$81.96	\$901.06	\$157.34
Travel	Central Fleet	\$0.00	\$831.48		\$207.87	\$207.87	\$568.18	-\$568.18
Bond Fees		\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
Personnel	temporary hires	\$50,000.00	\$22,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
Support Services	systems setup & facilitation	\$100,000.00	\$53,030.00	\$37,615.00	\$12,571.75	\$2,360.00	\$14,931.75	\$85,068.25
Mapping	excluding Sewall	\$70,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,000.00	\$40,000.00
Planning Grants		\$285,410.00	\$152,660.00	\$121,535.00	\$35,875.00	\$4,375.00	\$92,285.00	\$193,125.00
Operations	conference fees or sponsorship	\$15,000.00	\$3,500.00	\$2,700.00	\$1,700.00	\$2,700.00	\$4,400.00	\$10,600.00
Digital Inclusion	device deployment	\$70,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	\$60,000.00
Digital Inclusion	affordability program	\$2,000,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000,000.00
Grant Matches		\$1,000,000.00	\$500,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$0.00	\$75,000.00	\$925,000.00
Infrastructure Bond		\$14,990,000.00	\$14,990,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$14,990,000.00
Infrastructure Relief		\$10,000,000.00	\$6,201,842.08	\$6,201,842.08	\$3,950,077.67	\$0.00	\$3,950,077.67	\$6,049,922.33
Infrastructure Fund	including NECEC Broadband Fund	\$762,790.85	\$662,790.85	\$662,790.85	\$190,625.00	\$0.00	\$487,478.35	\$275,312.50
Miscellaneous	covers likely deviations	\$20,000.00	\$42.00	\$8,360.21	\$1,395.66	\$0.00	\$1,452.34	\$18,547.66
TOTAL		\$29,670,415.47	\$23,051,525.18	\$7,247,479.28	\$4,391,239.35	\$35,302.94	\$4,928,529.30	\$24,829,000.32
BALANCE		\$1,176,246.01	\$9,295,136.30	\$3,140,793.49	\$4,037,543.27	\$5,374,181.22	\$5,392,768.62	\$2,607,472.50
Difference	excluding Bonds & Relief	\$997,674.58	\$3,318,406.95	\$3,140,793.49	\$1,785,778.86	\$3,122,416.81	\$3,141,004.21	\$2,428,901.07
ALLOTMENT	excludes personal services	\$1,046,334.83	\$1,046,334.83	\$1,022,530.47	\$945,789.07	\$25,431.06	\$1,022,530.47	\$0.00

ConnectMaine Authority Financials
FY21 State Primary Account

Rev. 05.03.21

FINANCIALS	DETAIL	PROPOSED	OBLIGATED	ENCUMBERED	Q3	Q4	ACTUAL	REMAIN
REVENUE	Carryforward	\$1,451,280.05	\$1,451,280.05	\$1,451,280.05	\$1,349,818.04	\$942,106.36	\$1,451,280.05	\$0.00
Fund	Assessment Withdrawal	\$400,000.00	\$400,000.00	\$400,000.00			\$400,000.00	\$0.00
Refunds		\$525.00	\$525.00	\$525.00			\$525.00	\$0.00
SUBTOTAL		\$1,851,805.05	\$1,851,805.05	\$1,851,805.05	\$1,349,818.04	\$942,106.36	\$1,851,805.05	\$0.00
Available								
—								—
EXPENSES								
Financial	DAPS & Solix	\$28,296.00	\$23,370.00	\$10,500.00	\$6,648.00	\$2,574.00	\$23,696.00	(\$326.00)
Website	InforME, OIT & Sewall	\$34,950.00	\$110,159.00	\$31,350.00	\$32,452.90	\$364.30	\$35,802.01	\$74,356.99
Administration	Salaries, etc.	\$232,910.22	\$234,741.37	\$40,263.08	\$69,440.10	\$20,139.81	\$194,436.94	\$40,304.43
Cellphones		\$1,058.40	\$1,058.40	\$246.00	\$245.40	\$81.96	\$901.06	\$157.34
Travel	Central Fleet	\$0.00	\$831.48	\$277.16	\$207.87	\$207.87	\$568.18	\$263.30
Personnel	temporary hires	\$50,000.00	\$22,500.00				\$0.00	\$50,000.00
Support Services	systems setup & facilitation	\$13,030.00	\$13,030.00	\$13,030.00	\$12,571.75		\$12,571.75	\$458.25
Mapping	excluding Sewall	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00			\$30,000.00	\$0.00
Planning Grants		\$90,410.00	\$90,410.00	\$90,410.00	\$9,125.00		\$61,160.00	\$29,250.00
Digital Inclusion	device deployment	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00		\$10,000.00	\$30,000.00
Grant Matches		\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00		\$75,000.00	\$0.00
Infrastructure Fund		\$662,790.85	\$662,790.85	\$662,790.85	\$190,625.00		\$487,478.35	\$175,312.50
Miscellaneous	covers likely deviations	\$15,000.00	\$42.00	\$8,360.21	\$1,395.66		\$1,452.34	\$13,547.66
TOTAL		\$1,273,445.47	\$1,303,933.10	\$972,227.30	\$407,711.68	\$23,367.94	\$933,066.63	\$413,324.47
Internal								
—								—
BALANCE		\$578,359.58	\$547,871.95	\$879,577.75	\$942,106.36	\$918,738.42	\$918,738.42	\$505,413.95
Difference								
—								—
ALLOTMENT	excludes personal services	\$1,046,334.83	\$1,046,334.83	\$1,022,530.47	\$945,789.07	\$25,431.06	\$1,022,530.47	\$0.00

ConnectMaine Authority Financials

Northern Borders Regional Commission Grant

FY21 Q4 thru FY24 Q2

Rev. 05.06.21

FINANCIALS	DETAIL	PROPOSED	OBLIGATED	ENCUMBERED	Q4	ACTUAL	REMAIN
REVENUE	Carryforward					\$0.00	\$0.00
NBRC	excludes match	\$1,250,000.00	\$1,250,000.00				\$1,250,000.00
SUBTOTAL		\$1,250,000.00	\$1,250,000.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$1,250,000.00
Available	includes matching funds from Fund		\$1,350,000.00				-
-							-
EXPENSES							
Financial	DAFS or Solix					\$0.00	\$0.00
Personnel	ancillary services, temporary hires					\$0.00	\$0.00
Technical Services	grants verification & validation, consultants		\$200,000.00			\$0.00	\$0.00
Broadband Intelligent	data collection, analysis & mapping		\$940,000.00			\$0.00	\$0.00
Miscellaneous						\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL		\$0.00	\$1,140,000.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$0.00
Internal	includes matching funds from Fund		\$1,240,000.00				-
-							-
BALANCE		\$1,250,000.00	\$110,000.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$1,250,000.00
Difference							

ConnectMaine Authority Financials
FY22 DRAFT Annual Budget

Rev. 04.07.2021

BUDGETS	DETAIL	FY20	FY21	ACTUAL	PROJECTED	INITIATIVES	PROPOSED	Q1
REVENUE	Carryforward	\$0.00	\$1,451,280.05	\$1,469,620.69				
Fund	Assessment Fees & Interest	\$2,975,000.00	\$1,800,000.00	\$1,649,182.89	\$1,800,000.00		\$1,800,000.00	
State	Refunds, excluding Assessment Withdrawals			\$525.00			\$0.00	
NECEC	NECEC Broadband Fund		\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,127.26	\$2,000,000.00		\$2,000,000.00	
NBRC	NBRC grant funds				\$714,285.71		\$714,285.71	
Bonds			\$15,000,000.00	\$0.00	\$15,000,000.00	\$30,000,000.00	\$45,000,000.00	
Relief	Federal funds		\$10,000,000.00	\$6,201,842.08	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
SUBTOTAL		\$2,975,000.00	\$28,251,805.05	\$10,321,297.92	\$19,514,285.71	\$30,000,000.00	\$49,514,285.71	\$0.00
Available	excluding Bonds & Relief		\$3,251,805.05	\$4,119,455.84	\$3,800,000.00		\$3,800,000.00	
EXPENSES								
Financial	DAFS, Solix, audit, bank charges	\$35,951.00	\$28,296.00	\$31,196.00	\$81,600.00		\$81,600.00	
Website	InforME, OIT & Sewall	\$81,234.68	\$34,992.00	\$35,802.01	\$79,275.00		\$79,275.00	
Administration	Salaries, etc.	\$258,700.17	\$232,910.22	\$194,436.94			\$0.00	
Cellphones		\$830.24	\$1,124.74	\$901.06	\$1,080.00		\$1,080.00	
Travel	Central Fleet	\$7,278.85		\$568.18	\$415.74		\$415.74	
Bond Fees			\$10,000.00	\$0.00			\$0.00	
Personnel	ancillary services, temporary hires		\$50,000.00	\$0.00			\$0.00	
Technical Services	grants verification & validation, consultants		\$100,000.00	\$14,931.75	\$150,000.00		\$150,000.00	
Broadband Intelligence	data collection, analysis & mapping, excl. Sewall	\$10,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$30,000.00			\$0.00	
Planning Grants		\$144,060.00	\$285,410.00	\$92,285.00		\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	
Operational Services	subscriptions, conferences	\$3,536.33	\$15,000.00	\$4,400.00			\$0.00	
Digital Inclusion			\$70,000.00	\$10,000.00			\$0.00	
Grant Matches		\$50,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$75,000.00			\$0.00	
Infrastructure Bond			\$14,990,000.00	\$0.00			\$0.00	
Infrastructure Relief			\$10,000,000.00	\$3,950,077.67			\$0.00	
Infrastructure Fund	including NECEC Broadband Fund	\$932,128.68	\$762,790.85	\$487,478.35			\$0.00	
Miscellaneous			\$20,000.00	\$1,452.34	\$20,000.00		\$20,000.00	
TOTAL		\$1,523,719.95	\$27,670,523.81	\$4,928,529.30	\$332,370.74	\$200,000.00	\$532,370.74	\$0.00
Internal	excluding Bonds & Relief		\$2,670,523.81	\$978,451.63	\$332,370.74		\$532,370.74	
BALANCE		\$1,451,280.05	\$581,281.24	\$5,392,768.62	\$19,181,914.97		\$48,981,914.97	\$0.00
Difference	excluding Bonds & Federal		\$581,281.24	\$3,141,004.21	\$3,467,629.26		\$3,267,629.26	
ALLOTMENT	State Acct excludes personal services		\$1,046,334.83	\$1,022,530.47				

ConnectMaine Authority

Public Comment on the designation of broadband service & unserved areas

Highlight indicates relevant comments for consideration

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Additional Research by Treasury

State of the Market

In considering the appropriate speed requirements for eligible projects, Treasury considered data usage patterns and how bandwidth needs have changed over time for U.S. households and businesses as people's use of technology in their daily lives has evolved. In the few years preceding the pandemic, market research data showed that average upload speeds in the United States surpassed over 10 Mbps in 2017, and continued to increase significantly, with the average upload speed as of November, 2019 increasing to 48.41 Mbps; attributable, in part to a shift to using broadband and the internet by individuals and businesses to create and share content using video sharing, video conferencing, and other applications. A video consultation with a healthcare provider or participation by a child in a live classroom with a teacher and fellow students requires video to be sent and received simultaneously. Broadband statistic from June 2020, the largest percentage of U.S. broadband subscribers have services providing speeds between 100 Mbps and 1 Gbps.

Service Levels Required

Treasury considered estimates of typical households demands during the pandemic. Using the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Broadband Speed Guide, for example, a household with two telecommuters and two to three remote learners today are estimated to need 100 Mbps download to work simultaneously. In households with more members, the demands may be greater, and in households with fewer members, the demands may be less.

As an example, some video conferencing technology platforms indicate that download and upload speeds should be roughly equal to support two-way, interactive video meetings. For both work and school, client materials or completed school assignments. This is often done by uploading materials to a collaboration site, and the upload speed available to a user can have a significant impact on the time it takes for the content to be shared with others. These activities require significant capacity from home internet connections to both download and upload data, especially when there are multiple individuals in one household engaging in these activities simultaneously.

Minimum Throughput

As OpenVault noted in recent advisories, the pandemic significantly increased the amount of data users consume. Among data users observed by OpenVault, per-subscriber average data usage for the fourth quarter of 2020 was 482.6 gigabytes per month, representing a 40 percent increase over the 344 gigabytes consumed in the fourth quarter of 2019 and a 26 percent increase over the third quarter 2020 average of 383.8 gigabytes. OpenVault also noted significant increases in upstream usage among the data users it observed, with upstream data usage growing 63 percent – from 19 gigabytes to 31 gigabytes – between December, 2019 and December, 2020. According to an OECD

Unserved Areas

That is why Treasury is requiring or strongly suggesting a 100/100mbps standard. Treasury is still using 25/3mbps for unserved, which leaves vast swaths of people with the very type of service widely acknowledge as inadequate. This is still be considered while the interim rule is out.

May Public Forum

Comments on Broadband Service

The state of the market

- Industry standard of XGS-PON—10 Gigabit Symmetrical Passive Optical Network
- No public comments on the state of the market consideration

Service level required for Common Applications and Network Service

- More commonly faster than 10/10mpbs service
- Public comments on the service level required

Ben Sanborn: 100/100mbps is good.

Maximum monthly throughput for Common Applications and Network Service

- The average household has 12 connected devices now, and that is expected to grow to 20 by 2025.
- No public comments on the data levels required

Other performance criteria for common applications and network services

- Besides capacity, speeds and bandwidth, these include latency—the lower the better—and affordability—price of service offerings.
- No public comments on other performance criteria for broadband

Comments on Unserved Areas

Consideration of broadband service in the designation of unserved areas

- For transparency on the priority for grants: 50/10mbps
- Public comments on broadband service for designation of unserved areas

Ben Sanborn: 50/10mbps unnecessarily expands the digital divide.

Josh Gerritsen: Why 50/10mbps?

- Peggy: Partly due to the capacity of cable and partly due to current data collection, analysis & visualization capabilities.

Bob O'Conner: Shouldn't have two different service levels; use 100/100mbps.

Other considerations for the designation of unserved areas

- Designation of unserved areas includes but isn't limited to consideration of the designation of broadband service.
- No public comment on the designation of unserved areas

Questions & Comments

Questions about the processes

- Ben Sanborn: Has two different service levels been run by the attorney general's office?

Peggy: ConnectMaine will run this by its assistant attorney general.

- Ben Sanborn: Are there data sources for the considerations behind the designations? Will you know how much of the state has these service levels available?

Peggy: Datasets aren't available. Proxies were used to calculate the current estimated cost of \$600 million to expand broadband service availability statewide.

- Ben Sanborn: Are there data reporting issues?

Peggy: ConnectMaine is working with its contractor on improving broadband service availability reporting.

Additional public comments not yet raised

- No public comments

Written Comments emailed in May

Small Businesses

Zachary M. Stoler, Cribstone Communications

Cribstone Communications, LLC. would like to comment on the designation of unserved areas. We believe that a designation of 50/50 should be used for unserved areas. We do support the definition of 100/100 as broadband. We believe that **symmetrical speeds are extremely important in this age of working from home.**

Cristos Lianides-Chin, Anchor-Buoy Software

As a small business owner in Maine, I'm writing to encourage the adoption of a broadband definition of "100/100 Mbps" symmetric connections. In order **to expand our workforce, upload speeds of 100Mbps and download speeds of 100Mbps are both critical for employees and subcontractors to connect** from wherever they may be, whether at home or in an office.

Hannah Weddle, BackLot Consulting

I support the **100x100 speed, which is essential for video conferencing, which is key for remote working opportunities.** Getting this speed is essential to get Maine competitive in the modern world and to attract new residents. Many folks might not want to live here because of the long winters, but think of the Scandinavian countries, or our neighbors to the North in Canada. They have arguably harsher winters, but yet their population thrives with the support of reliable and fast broadband connectivity. We need to attract people to Maine by providing the best broadband access that we can so that nobody should be able to say they can't work in Maine because of the lack of internet speeds!

Michelle Keyo, Michelle Keyo Design Inc.

I am an independent programmer living in a region of Maine where those speeds sound incredibly fast, but I routinely work with clients in **other states who have connections of 300/100. Maine needs to step up efforts and to provide residents with functional connection speeds** that will allow us to work, go to school and live better, more connected lives. This is a step in the right direction.

Tim Schneider, Tilson Technology

the bandwidth needs of Maine homes and businesses will continue to grow as the internet becomes more essential to their daily activities. Upload speeds, long neglected, are especially important for **remote work, distance education and telehealth, applications that require video upload, not just download. The proposed 100/100 standard would meet these needs.**

The proposed definition will make this funding available to a broader swath of the state, and correctly defines for state policy makers the true scope of Maine's broadband challenges. **This standard is also technology neutral:** it can be met using fiber, modest upgrades to existing cable facilities to support DOCSIS 3.1, and current generation wireless technologies.

Maine Residents & Organizations

Tracy Scheckel, Maine resident

I disagree with the 50/10 designation as unserved, particularly if there is consideration for common applications. We are a household of 2 telecommuting adults with no smart home or telehealth devices in operation and 10 Mbps upload will not provide the bandwidth necessary for simultaneous video conferencing — which is continuous throughout our workdays. I had to purchase Spectrum Business class to get anything more than 10Mbps up and the best I could get was 350/35. It's a ridiculous amount of down bandwidth, but that was the only way to get the upload speed we need. (\$114/month BTW). Pretty pricey.....

Add a student or 2 and even the 35 up might not be enough. I think the unserved designation should be 50/50 or at the very least 50/35 since we know docsis is capable of that as evidenced by my service.

Kendra Jo Grindle, Island Institute

The Island Institute is in full favor of the proposed changes to the unserved and broadband designations put forth by the staff and board. Throughout our 5+ years working on community-driven broadband in Maine, we've regularly struggled with the speeds set by the state and federal government when translating them into real world practice. The definition of 25/3, as it currently stands, is not enough to consider a household or business adequately served for the needs and demands of our digital world. Additionally, the recognition of symmetrical speeds for broadband creates an expectation that local and state taxpayer dollars will be invested in future-forward technology that grow and adapt with Mainers instead of being the anchor that holds us back. While less than 50/10 for unserved and 100/100 for designating broadband will not always be the right standard, it is an active step in the right direction for the state and the needs of residents today and into the future. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and weigh in on this critical move forward.

Kevin Woodbrey, Raymond

I am worried that the definition of broadband connectivity is being set so low. When you visit a website and stream a moderate quality video you use about 4 megabits per second. When you stream a high quality or HD video you use 10 to 20 megabits per second. If you use the current standard of 4k or ultra high quality video you use 25 to 50 megabits per second.

So what we see is that just one user accessing just one application can potential use 50 megabits per second of the internet link. Another problem with current offerings is the upstream bit-rate. Current offerings for residential service have very limited upstream bit-rates. What this means is that the current offerings in our area do not meet the demands that household or a small business require. Most areas that are now being serviced by fiber optic transmission offer a minimum transmission rate of 1 gigabits per second in both upload and download directions. This is considered the standard for minimum high speed internet service by Information Technology professionals. In other areas of our country and around the world higher bit-rates up to 10 gigabits per second are being offered to residential and SMB customers.

Ray Soucy, Orono

Please consider eliminating the language of "and the use of 50/10mbps for the designation of unserved areas" and keep a single definition of broadband as 100/100.

Alternatively, please consider making the **minimum upload at least 20 Mbps.**

Many aspects of the Internet, especially video streaming, are not reliable at 10 Mbps and calling 10 Mbps broadband will leave people behind as applications assume more bandwidth is available.

Reuben Mahar, Waldoboro

I'm the Chair of the Waldoboro Communications and Technology Committee. I'm writing today to show my support for an updated Broadband definition of 100 x 100 Mbps. The current definition is simply too low to meet modern use cases, let alone future growth. In a world where Telemedicine, AR, and Even VR are available to those with the right amount of bandwidth, this change is critical. **An upload of 100 Mbps would mean a family of four, all working over a single shared broadband connection,** would be able to pull high value from the experience.

My wife and I both often work from home. I'm the Endpoint Architect for MaineHealth, and She is a workflow coordinator for a local call center. We pay nearly 100.00 a month for a 400 x 20 Mbps internet connection. We're fortunate, our careers allow us the resources to afford a "high end" internet connection. **Two of us working at the same time push our 20 Mbps upload to its limit.** To further show my point, I've attached a photo of my home network. The change to 100 x 100 will make the opportunities we enjoy available to more people. Most people can't afford to do what we're doing and that needs to change

Al Kelly, Lincoln

Internet speeds need to be 100 Mbps or better in order to properly work as a stable platform on a consistent basis. Any less is just old school tech. I have battled with crap internet since it started in Maine. I now have Starlink and the future is here and on my roof right now. Please don't spend exorbitant amounts of money to extend wires to every remote area of Maine. More towers and wire is not the way to handle this problem when the newer tech is now at our door. I have cancelled all my other forms of internet and my Dish TV. I can run 6 TVs if I want to and still use my office machines. And this is in BETA! It is getting better all the time as Starlink adds additional satellites. This is not at all like other satellite systems, such as Hughesnet. Starlink works, both up and down. It is extremely easy to install. You just need a clear view of the sky.

Jeff Boulet, Saint George

I fully endorse changing the definition of broadband to 100/100 mbps. Changing this definition infers that all new infrastructure will be fiber - essentially saying that Maine is open for business and wants you to relocate here. **As a web developer and designer, I create content for the internet all day long. I currently have Spectrum with speeds around 400/35 mb/s. Downloads are fine but upload speeds are slow and limiting.** In 5 years it'll be worse.

Dean Tyler, Hancock

I fully endorse changing the definition of broadband to 100/100 mps. My spouse tele-commutes and requires a VPN connection, video conferencing and large document upload\download. I am a professional photographer who uses about 90 gb in upload per month to deliver projects to clients. Raising the bar would greatly improve our ability to work. The only provider on our street offers 1.5 mbps, so we use our phones and hotspots for data. It is terrible and restricts our ability to work. If you want higher income, low impact jobs in Maine and what young people to stay, this issue must improve.

William T. Frysinger, Northport

As a homeowner who has struggled to find adequate internet access I want to weigh in on the proposed changes to the designation of broadband service: I agree with the designation of broadband service as at least 100/100mbps. I do not agree with the proposed designation for underserved. To allow effective work from home I argue the designation should require AT LEAST 20mips upload, and preferably symmetrical 50/50.

Mary Becker, Springfield

I'm hoping Maine catches up with the rest of the world in internet communication. I'm "lucky" enough to have DSL (currently not much better than the old dial up with the amount of information on internet pages now) .. and I am hoping to increase from my measly 4 mb / 1 mb which is slow as a turtle and drops to 2 mb at times.. to something more out of the stone age. I see a push to make 100 mb a standard for minimum.. I would love that. I see so many friends in other states who are flaunting gigs for their internet speed. But please.. with this speed.. also consider cost to user. Right now to increase my 4mb to 12 mb, I'd be paying something like \$25 more a month or so! My phone / internet combined bill is already over \$110 / month and they keep upping the cost every few months!!

Amy McDonald, Charlotte

Most of the infrastructure improvement projects I'm seeing as well as the infrastructure minimums that many providers are installing (Consolidated, Premium Choice, Pioneer, etc.) are now gigabit service with 100/100 as a bare minimum. We recently rejected Spectrum as an option for our community because they didn't offer 100 upload. In that way, we're already using 100/100 as our baseline for decision-making.

That said, our community is operating on DSL now, and is largely unserved even by the 25/3 standard. My concern with redefining "unserved" as 50/10 is that grant guidelines have just this year been adapted to level the playing field for small communities like Charlotte that frankly don't stand a chance of getting an ISP to invest here because of our small population density. Increasing the definition potentially brings a lot more competition for public funding, potentially keeping us at the bottom of the list for funding, and we can't build our infrastructure without it unless we leave our fate in the hands of the federal RDOF program, which effectively sold us without our knowledge or permission to an ISP that has consistently underserved us from Day 1. Perhaps there's some grant scoring mechanism to consider that awards more points to a community starting from a lower current service baseline?

Liz Trice, Portland

I'm writing to support raising the minimum broadband speed to 100/100.

I've owned a Coworking space in Portland for over ten years, and have met thousands of remote workers who live in Maine. What's great is that people moving to Maine are doing so for great reasons: they want to be closer to their families, have more time in nature, and live a slower lifestyle. They typically bring good incomes and education, and want to belong to, and participate in, their local communities. Higher internet speeds will allow people with good jobs to live close to the people and communities that they love, and share their resources with the community around them. **The bare minimum needed per person zoom calls is 10x10, so really a family needs 50x50, and I expect over time the basic standard of what's needed will only increase. Obviously specialized work and businesses can require much more.**

Also, I urge you to ensure that any networks built belong to the public. The need for broadband networks is that of a public utility, so we should not be handing out this infrastructure for free without long term public ownership.

Julian Sheffield, Northport

I whole heartedly endorse changing the definition of broadband to 100/100. **Collaborative business and education places heavy demand on upload as much as on download speeds.** Providers who advertise broadband must be required to deliver broadband that actually supports these activities. Underserved **areas that are effectively unserved need to be so classified.**

Charlene Hamiwka, Camden

25/3 is not enough for true remote work. For properties that I sell, the first question a buyer asks is what the internet access speed is. These are typically higher end customers looking for a home that will allow them to work remotely. We have seen several sales fall through because the internet speed has been too slow to support the streaming and uploads they need. If someone is looking to relocate their business to Maine, they need the higher speeds, which eliminates many areas from benefiting from internet based businesses. **Anything below 50/10 is definitely underserved** in my opinion.

Communications Service Providers

Michael Forcillo, Redzone

Abridged: **Current applications do not require symmetrical speeds.** While the actual use of upload bandwidth is growing, download traffic is growing too. It is highly unlikely actual use of networks will ever approach symmetry.

State allocation of public broadband subsidies should be structured in a way that accounts for the ability to scale up network speeds. Legislators should preserve flexibility for different technologies that can best serve different areas of the state.

Extreme changes to the broadband standard may even increase the digital divide, as many **providers would likely spend subsidies in relatively low-cost areas already covered under the previous definition of broadband,** simply using funding to upgrade networks where economic return is easier, rather than deploying new networks to truly unserved areas.

Symmetrical requirements would ultimately mean fewer high-cost locations are served or less money is available to address affordability, digital literacy, and other impediments to adoption. **However, the definition of “broadband” should be updated to reflect reasonable expectations of future demand,** which likely means increasing baseline upload speeds from 3 Mbps, even though doing so would make coordinating with existing subsidy programs more difficult.

In a hypothetical example of a typical family, four people are surfing the Internet: Two of them are simultaneously making video calls (Zoom and Skype), one is watching an HD movie on Netflix, and the fourth person is playing games on Xbox. There is also a family nest camera outside continuously streaming footage. In this scenario, the family would leverage **18 Mbps for downstream traffic and 7.8 Mbps for upstream traffic,** demonstrating a clear demand for download bandwidth over upload bandwidth, even with multiple, concurrent video calls.

Mark Radabaugh, Amplex Internet

Abridged: A recent independent industry body – BITAG – noted, **“Even with the growth in the use of upstream intensive applications such as video conferencing, the downstream-to-upstream traffic ratio is still highly asymmetrical and illustrates that asymmetrical broadband fulfills the requirements for most residential broadband users.”** Most all communications networks are asymmetric, because that is how we deliver the best experience for customers who largely prefer to watch Netflix and play video games over uploading terabytes of data to the cloud. (Hint: no one needs to upload terabytes of data to the cloud.)

Ben Sanborn, Telecommunications Association of Maine

Abridged: Everyone acknowledges that there are places in Maine that continue to lack even the current

baseline of service at 25/3 Mbps. Before the State starts to fund areas that exceed this baseline, we must first bring everyone in the State up to this minimum level of broadband service. Even if the scoring is tilted to

rank a bid higher if it is going from below 25/3 Mbps to some higher tier of service, **there are many other factors that still impact score**, including most importantly the price per home passed... communities with service

would get more service, and communities without would be left behind. Thus the digital divide in Maine would grow...

... **backhaul capacity, which is not a function of the**

"minimum performance" of broadband service. To accurately reflect the "state of the market" the Authority must be clear about what market is being addressed. In this instance, for purposes of the Statute and Rule, **the market is the end user broadband service market**. This reality is clearly reflected in the "common applications and network services", all of which reflect end user uses.

Audio and

Video streaming do not require 10 Mbps upload speed, or even 1 Mbps upload speed. Nor indeed do they require 10 Mbps download speed. The FCC's Broadband Speed Guide indicates that streaming HD video requires 5 – 8 Mbps download speed, while HD video conferencing requires 6 Mbps download, and multiplayer online gaming requires 4 Mbps download speed. The upload speeds required are even less, Zoom indicates that for 720p HD group video calling you need 2.6 Mbps, or 2 Mbps for gallery view with 25 participants on screen.

TAM does not oppose a build to standard of 100/100 Mbps.

Melinda Kinney, Charter Communications and Comcast

The Authority's recommended designation of broadband eligible for funding as 100/100 Mbps, however, would do precisely that in failing to account for scalable technology that can incrementally deliver the speeds that align with the way consumers will use broadband, including scaling up to 100/100 Mbps, but **that is already widely available throughout areas served by Charter and Comcast.**

It is also important to note that **consumers' broadband usage remains highly asymmetrical** – with downstream bandwidth usage nearly 16 times higher than upstream usage, even while accounting for the shift to increased teleconferencing associated with working and learning from home due to COVID-19.

Mark Ouellette, Axiom Technologies

I am writing to fully endorse and enthusiastically support the ConnectMaine Board efforts to increase the speed standard definition of broadband to 100/100Mbps and definition of unserved as 50/10Mbps.

Frankly, the public is already demanding this level of service. Axiom has already adjusted our Broadband speeds to be symmetrical across the board and has begun to increase our minimum package for internet broadband to 50/50Mbps. Increasingly we are seeing our mix of customers who take higher speeds requesting even higher speeds. And we are seeing a change in the mix of customers at the bottom tier who are now taking higher level speeds.

With the stay-at-home demands of work and school, and multiple people working at the same time AND the increase use of cloud-based services such as Microsoft teams, Zoom and Dropbox bandwidth usage at an individual home has never been higher. We do not see this demand dropping even as kids return to in-person learning and employees begin to return to the office. We are beginning to have demand for speeds of 200/200Mbps up to a 1/1Gig. In our minds the proposed increased standards perfectly reflect the marketplace demand that we are seeing.

Fletcher Kittredge, GWI

According to a high regarded Ookla speed test site, Speedtest, in April of 2021, the average broadband speed in the US is 192/68mb/sec. In that context, setting the minimum speed to be considered as broadband to 100/100mb/sec and the definition of unserved as less than 50/10mb/sec is reasonable.

In the market today, there are a variety of technologies that are capable of delivering 100/100mb/sec

service: fiber optic networks are a leading source, but under the right circumstances hybrid fiber/coax and

Fibered Wireless Access (FWA) are both potential solutions.

Fiber networks are being built out very rapidly. One provider, AT&T, has promised to connect up an

additional 3 million customers this year. A projection made by the research firm RVA LLC is that \$60 billion

will be spent building fiber in the US over the next five years. In this case, a significant majority of residences and businesses would be served by fiber.

Users'

internet bandwidth grows by 50% per year. While Nielsen's law is just an observational rule of thumb, it

was first formulated in 1998 based on data between 1983 and 1998, it has a phenomenal track record having accurately predicted the growth of internet speeds through 2021. I have seen no credible evidence

that the slope of the curve will change in the next five years.

Alan Hinsey, Lincolnville Communications, Inc.

In the spirit of "don't let the perfect become the enemy of the good," LCI/Tidewater strongly supports the 50 x 10 Unserved standard and the 100 x 100 "build to" requirement. This is clearly a step in the right direction. While this evolution is a welcome change, we also encourage the ConnectME Authority (and the soon-to-be Maine Connectivity Authority) to consider ways to incentivize the upgrading of older technology to support a 100 x 100 minimum standard, sooner rather than later. We realize that incentivizing the overbuilding of existing older technology is an issue that will require much discussion among the public, end users, policy-makers, local units of government and private providers. But we also realize that **Maine will not truly reach its full economic, social and humanitarian potential until a robust symmetrical upload and download broadband standard is applied** at every address in the state. LCI/Tidewater is happy to continue to be a part of that ongoing important policy discussion for Maine. Onward.

Unknown Affiliations

Chuck Staples

Maine needs broadband improvements, period.

Expanding the definition of unserved and underserved with respect to broadband access highlights the need but doesn't solve the problem. Even before this change in definition, rural Maine areas have been unserved or underserved for years with minimal improvements there. Don't let the argument over what areas are now considered "underserved" detract from the fact that many areas effectively have NO service. **Improving speeds for concentrated urban areas is an easy win but doesn't help those rural areas which have poor service and little hope for improvement.**

Broadband improvement statewide is a critical need for sustained growth in Maine.

Support Designations

JoAnne Taylor, Sandy River Plantation
Linda Jones, Dallas Plantation
Dwayne Young, Town of Weston
Ann S. Roberts, Whitefield
Robert Butler, Waldoboro
Tom Ploch, Swan's Island
Brian deLutio, Rangeley Lakes Regional
School Board
Marybeth Allen, Orland
Gerry Nelson, Greenwood
Doug Cowan, Brooksville
Renee Fox, Jackson
Joan Cook, Fayette
Jason A. Kates, Westport Island
Frances Gendreau, Madawaska
Robin George, Rangeley
Rick Palazola, Trenton
Josh M. Portland
Jeff Packard, UVEC
Jeff Willmann, Blue Hill
Carl Rogers, Mount Vernon
Morrison Webb, Portland & Chebeague
Island
Sukey Heard, Arrowsic
Mark Tully, Madison
Larry Wright, Lambert Lake Township
Anne Mommers, Brownfield
Piotr Urbanski, Portland
John Carpenter, York
David R. Hill, Chebeague Island
Irene Schell, Fryeburg
Ann Rittenberg, Sedgwick
Tim MacLeod, Auburn
Joanne and Jonathan Bacharach, Gorham
Rick Alexander, Blue Hill
Brian Withers, Bremen
Henry Goldberg, Bremen
Robert Publicover, Sedgwick
John Hough, Edmunds Township
Gary Vincent, Harpswell
Frederick Elliot, Brooksville
Sharon Darling, Millinocket
Robert G. Bing-You, Blue Hill

Stan Moody, Topsham
Peter Suber, Brooksville
Doreen Culcasi, Harrison
Chris Johnson, Somerville
John Flaherty-Stanford, Portland
Josh Raymond, Franklin
Lisa Saffer, Brownfield
Margaret and August Schau, Buckfield
Shirley and Lynn Hayward, Northport
Lawrence Goldfarb, Northeast Harbor
Charlene Marshall, Mount Desert
Jennifer Richardson, Mount Desert
Rick Wheeler, Tremont
Bill Skocpol, Mount Desert
Judy and Ron Benson, Northeast Harbor
Carol Boden, Bethel
Christine Benken, Jefferson
John Covell, Augusta
Jerry Wetterskog, Sedgwick
Deirdre Good, Northport
Timothy B. Clark, Northeast Harbor
Kathy Woolgar, Bridgton
Judyth S. Herrick, Sedgwick
Audrey Farber, North Yarmouth
Todd Keene, Brunswick
Scot Casey, Owls Head
Blake Foote, Owls Head
Louis Carrier, National Digital Equity Center
Janann Sherman, Vinalhaven
John Gibbons, Union
Debra Hall, Midcoast Internet Coalition
Donna Beninati, Peninsula Broadband
Coalition
Bill Hahn, Thomaston
Diane Giese, Thomaston
Michael Sheahan, Sedgwick
Ann Frenning Kossuth, Northport
Brady Brim-DeForest, Northport
Marshall J. Kaiser, Deer Isle
Zoe Tenney, Sedgwick
Pat Field, Deer Isle
Mary Penfold, Deer Isle
Anne Schroth, Sedgwick

René Colson Hudson, Stonington
Eric Marshall, Deer Isle
Cheryl and Steve Curtis, Deer Isle
Sarah O'Malley, Sedgwick
Clifford C. Dacso, South Thomaston
Elaine Hewes, Sedgwick
John & Maureen O'Reilly, Sedgwick
Carol Bischoff, Deer Isle
Charlotte Podolsky, Deer Isle
Richard Davis, Deer Isle
Karen Farber, Falmouth
Catherine R. McCullough, Owls Head
Rod Greenwood, Deer Isle
Acacia Springsteen, Sedgwick
Jenna Billings, Stonington
Marcia Hart-Quinby, Sedgwick
Beverly Hawkins, Sedgwick
Doug Drown, Sedgwick
Kimberly Grindle, Union
Sandy Moore, Thomaston
Linda Milton, South Thomaston
Judy and Peter Robbins, Sedgwick
Julie Wilson, Sedgwick
Heather Davis, Deer Isle
Alissa Wagner, Sedgwick
Damian Bebell, Sedgwick

James Fisher, Deer Isle
Les Weed, Stonington
Julie Wilson, Brooklin
Jennifer Larrabee, Sedgwick
Jennifer Mayo, Deer Isle
Kathleen Kazmierczak, Brooklin
Dawn Nault, Deer Isle
Marti Brill, Sedgwick
Kathleen Gielarowski, Brooklin
Vanessa Gray, Sedgwick
Joanne Parker, Sedgwick
Cassie Gross, Sedgwick
Vanessa Carter, Sedgwick
Matthew Larsen, Deer Isle
Lynne Witham, Sullivan
Faith Chapman, Brooklin
Elizabeth Moss, Sedgwick
Chris Elkington, Sedgwick
Tracie Morey, Stonington
Tara McKechnie, Sedgwick
Dolphin Thalhauser, Sedgwick
Jil Blake, Brooklin
Sarah Doremus, Sedgwick
Amy Billings, Sedgwick
Zel Bowman-Laberge, Thomaston
Matthew Watkins, Deer Isle

Unknown Affiliations

Ray Myers
Steve Hoad
Lee Schilling
Joe Aloisio Jr.
Richard Imbrogna
Jody Norton
Owen Fetzer
Andrew K Kimball
Emily Frawley
Nancy Leonard
Colin Vettier
Scott Powers
Barbara Grandolfo
Josh H.
Albert Boardman

Nancy Goodspeed
James Hathaway
David Bartlett
Jared Donisvitch
Granville Toogood
Judy Leadley
Branden K.
Scott F.
Jim Lyons
Sydney Winthrop
Letitia Roberts
Cheryl Willette
Phil Moriarty
Heather R Evans
Carol Welsh

Christine Larson
Bob Knight
Thomas Kreilkamp
Judy Pelletier
Fred Farber
Don & Linda Powell
Neal Kennerk
Jonathan Doolan
Autumn Stupca
Kyle Hardy
Kassie Dammier
Jeannie Hatch
Darlene Allen
Benjamin Moss

Two additional unidentified emailers

Broadband Infrastructure Grants

26 May 2021

Grants Committee Recommendations

Authority Members

Nick Battista, Chair
Jasmine Bishop
Fred Brittain
Susan Corbett
Heather Johnson
Jeff Letourneau
Liz Wyman

Awards

Following eligibility, project scope and financial reviews, the grants committee reviewed applications, which were scored based on the guide provided in the applications. The grants committee recommends awarding the top scoring applications that resulted in a cumulative amount of about \$8.7 million in grants requested. These applications also maintain diversity of communications service providers and state geography. Enclosed are the lists of community-driven broadband projects and provider expansion projects recommended for awards and the list of less competitive applications.

Background

On February 25, the ConnectMaine Authority opened application windows for broadband infrastructure grants to award about half of the \$15 million state bond passed in July 2020. The remaining amount is anticipated for awards in a second round of grants this fall. Aligning with the state broadband action plan, projects were proposed in one of two tracks: community-driven broadband projects and provider expansion projects. The application windows closed in April. Of the 38 applications reviewed, 20 are recommended for awards. Of the more than \$13.6 million requested, \$8,671,323.16 in grants are recommended.

Actions

Vote on awarding broadband infrastructure grants to the projects recommended by the grants committee.

Action: Direct staff to provide feedback on less competitive applications toward future applications for state or federal funds.

ConnectMaine Authority

Broadband Infrastructure Grants

Community-Driven Broadband Projects

Awards	Communities	Firms	Score (100pts)	Cost	Commitment	Grant
Alexander Community-Owned Broadband Infrastructure	Alexander	Pioneer Broadband	94	\$491,429.00	\$344,429.00	\$147,000.00
Appleton & Hope Community-Driven Broadband Project	Appleton, Hope	LCI	87	\$1,764,380.00	\$1,058,628.00	\$705,752.00
Somerset Community-Driven Broadband Project	Big Moose, Harfords Point, Jackman, Long Pond, Misery Gore, Moose River, Moosehead Junction, Rockwood Strip T1 R1 NBKP, Sandwich Academy Grant, Sapling, Taunton & Raynham Academy Grant, Tomhegan	Premium Choice Broadband	94	\$5,068,500.00	\$3,243,840.00	\$1,824,660.00
Bristol Community-Driven Broadband Project	Bristol	LCI	90	\$876,582.16	\$735,432.16	\$141,150.00
Eastbrook Community-Driven Broadband Project	Eastbrook	CCI	94	\$1,162,500.00	\$752,500.00	\$410,000.00
Georgetown Community-Owned Broadband Infrastructure	Georgetown	Axiom Technologies	89	\$3,712,043.00	\$2,853,678.00	\$858,365.00
Indian Township Community-Driven Broadband Project	Indian Township	Pioneer Broadband	88	\$424,768.00	\$319,712.00	\$105,056.00
Long Island Community-Owned Broadband Infrastructure	Long Island	CCI	92	\$731,317.00	\$342,517.00	\$388,800.00
Less competitive applications - Not awarded grants						
Baileyville Community-Driven Broadband Project	Baileyville	Pioneer Broadband	85	\$76,740.00	\$4,478.40	\$72,261.60
Bradford Community-Driven Broadband Project	Bradford	Premium Choice Broadband	83	\$1,870,800.00	\$1,002,480.00	\$868,320.00
Calais Community-Driven Broadband Project	Calais	Pioneer Broadband	83	\$97,229.26	\$5,662.00	\$91,567.26
Franklin County Community-Driven Broadband Project	Carthage, Perkins, Temple, Washington, Weld, Wilton	Matrix Design Group	83	\$10,494,080.00	\$8,368,473.00	\$2,125,607.00
Somerville Community-Driven Broadband Project	Somerville	Premium Choice Broadband	83	\$1,426,283.00	\$667,250.00	\$759,033.00

ConnectMaine Authority

Broadband Infrastructure Grants

Provider Expansion Projects

Awards	Communities	Firms	Score (110pts)	Cost	Commitment	Grant
Dedham Area Provider Expansion Project	Dedham, Ellsworth, Holden	Premium Choice Broadband	97	\$3,289,690.00	\$2,088,953.00	\$1,200,737.00
Dover-Foxcroft Area Provider Expansion Project	Dover-Foxcroft, Garland	Premium Choice Broadband	101	\$380,600.00	\$226,457.00	\$154,143.00
Greenville Provider Expansion Project	Greenville	Premium Choice Broadband	99	\$652,600.00	\$339,352.00	\$313,248.00
Minot Provider Expansion Project	Minot	FirstLight Fiber	99	\$302,598.94	\$201,732.63	\$100,866.31
Monson Provider Expansion Project	Monson	Premium Choice Broadband	101	\$1,156,800.00	\$579,557.00	\$577,243.00
Northport East Expansion Project	Northport	GW	92	\$403,092.00	\$75,548.00	\$327,544.00
Northport West Provider Expansion Project	Northport	GW	94	\$437,785.00	\$109,920.00	\$327,865.00
Orland & Surry Provider Expansion Project	Orland, Surry	Premium Choice Broadband	96	\$1,125,800.00	\$619,190.00	\$506,610.00
Burlock Road Provider Expansion Project	Presque Isle	Pioneer Broadband	99	\$248,189.00	\$86,866.15	\$161,322.85
Saint George Provider Expansion Project	Saint George	Charter Communications	91	\$437,554.00	\$333,283.00	\$104,271.00
Aroostook Townships Provider Expansion Project	Sinclair Township, Van Buren Cove Township	Charter Communications	92	\$350,569.00	\$259,421.00	\$91,148.00
Westport Island Provider Expansion Project	Westport Island	Charter Communications	92	\$626,507.00	\$400,965.00	\$225,542.00
Less competitive applications - Not awarded grants						
Belgrade Provider Expansion Project	Belgrade	Charter Communications	36	\$85,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$68,000.00
Anderson Road Provider Expansion Project	Dayton	Charter Communications	85	\$76,723.00	\$40,827.00	\$35,896.00
Buzzell Road Provider Expansion Project	Dayton	Charter Communications	41	\$70,027.00	\$35,005.00	\$35,022.00
Edgecomb Provider Expansion Project	Edgecomb	Charter Communications	77	\$25,825.00	\$12,138.00	\$13,687.00
Fort Kent Provider Expansion Project	Fort Kent	Charter Communications	84	\$181,337.00	\$92,855.00	\$88,482.00
Fryeburg Provider Expansion Project	Fryeburg	Charter Communications	88	\$218,945.00	\$118,230.00	\$100,715.00
Lovell Mountain View Pines Provider Expansion Project	Lovell	Charter Communications	85	\$75,680.00	\$36,326.00	\$39,354.00
Norridgewock Provider Expansion Project	Norridgewock	Charter Communications	90	\$456,326.00	\$239,250.00	\$217,076.00
Robbinston Provider Expansion Project	Robbinston	Charter Communications	88	\$451,256.00	\$243,678.00	\$207,578.00
Flanders Corner Provider Expansion Projects	Waldoboro	Charter Communications	76	\$35,454.00	\$18,082.00	\$17,372.00
Finntown Road Provider Expansion Projects	Waldoboro	Charter Communications	36	\$134,126.00	\$33,531.00	\$100,595.00
Storer Mountain Road Provider Expansion Projects	Waldoboro	LCI	71	\$32,000.00	\$14,400.00	\$17,600.00
Whitefield Provider Expansion Project	Whitefield	Charter Communications	89	\$230,466.00	\$136,877.00	\$93,589.00