

NEK Community Broadband

Governing Board Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2020

Attendees: See attached list of meeting participants

Evan C. (Chair) called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. noting that the Northeast Kingdom Community Broadband Communications Union District is now doing business as NEK Broadband.

Roll Call

Annie M. (Clerk) established that a quorum was present without a formal roll call.

Agenda Review

Evan C. (Chair, Sutton) provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda Policy Vote

Evan C. (Chair, Sutton) provided an overview of the proposed consent agenda policy.

Motion to adopt the consent agenda policy (M: Evan C., S: Bill P.) – motion carried 24-0.

Consent Agenda

Evan C. provided an overview of the consent agenda.

- Governing Board Meeting minutes
- Accept membership and representatives of Town of Westmore; accept representatives from Town of Wolcott
- Credit/Debit Card Policy

Motion to approve the consent agenda (M: Katherine S., S: ???) – motion carried 24-0.

Administrative & Committee Updates

Evan C. referenced the “updates” summary in the meeting packet and asked for questions.

Paul F. asked if the Governing Board has the technical expertise to respond to proposals/opportunities as they arise. Krisen F. referenced the Finance Committee job descriptions for a clerk and consultant/CUD manager, noting that USDA Rural Business

Development Grant (RBDG) funding as well as Corona Relief funding could be used to fund these positions. The Executive Committee hopes to have candidates and recommendations by the next Governing Board meeting following the USDA grant announcements, which will be made the first week in August. Dave S. (Treasurer) noted that funds may be spent immediately in anticipation of reimbursement. There was additional discussion concerning Corona Relief (CRF) funding available under H:966 and the FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) auctions partnerships.

Motion to grant temporary authority to the Executive Committee to provide letters of support or objection for proposed H:966 CRF projects until a formal NEK Broadband policy is in place (M: Mark W., S: Dana C.) -discussion followed, motion was tabled.

Motion to grant authority to the Executive Committee to enter into RDOF partnerships (M: Mark W., S: Bill P.) – motion carried 24-0.

Feasibility Study Vendor Recommendation

Evan C. and Kristen F. reviewed the Executive Committee recommendation for the feasibility study vendor. Two vendor responses to the reissued feasibility study request for proposals (RFP) were received: 1) [Tilson](#); and 2) [Magellan Advisors](#). Tilson has more contextual background (2 prior feasibility studies), local personnel, and is highly recommended. Magellan has done past work with the Vermont Department of Public Service (DPS) and built out the business plan for Kingdom Fiber. Both RFP responses were complete and thorough. The main disqualifier for Magellan was travel restrictions as the team is based in South Carolina. The Executive Committee unanimously voted to recommend Tilson. Kristen F. noted that Magellan had sent an update this afternoon stating that they could likely come to Vermont but would need to quarantine. Jock G. noted that he believes the scope of the RFP to be too narrow and that it may exclude “good enough” solutions (other than fiber-to-the-home) that are more cost effective. Dave S. noted that the RFP contains a provision for the scope to be modified. Kristen F. noted that the existing scope is consistent with the NEK Broadband Mission Statement. The Technology Committee will review the scope and work with the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA), the actual grant recipient, and the selected consultant to ensure all options are explored.

Motion to approve the Executive Committee recommendation for NVDA to hire Tilson as the consultant for the Feasibility Study (M: Jen B., S:???) – motion carried 24-0.

VCUDA

Evan C. gave a brief overview of the Vermont Communications Union Districts Association (VCUDA). Potential benefits include shared policy positions and lobbying as well as resource sharing, e.g. bylaws, feasibility study feedback, software license sharing, etc. There is no financial liability or commitment. NEK Broadband must appoint a primary and alternate representative to the VCUDA Board. Discussion followed.

Motion for NEK Community Broadband to join VCUDA and appoint Evan C. and Kristen F. as the primary and alternate members until a potential NEK Community Broadband employee can take on one of these roles (M: Paul F., Bill P.) – motion carried 24-0.

CRF H.966 Project Ideas

Nick A. led a discussion on Corona Relief Funding available under H:966. Guidelines on how these funds will be distributed are forthcoming from VT DPS. The Governing Board will need to advocate for and suggest changes to proposed projects. Once guidance is issued, Governing Board members will need to provide community specific feedback on what projects are needed. Discussion followed. Line extension programs can include both DSL and cable but must meet the 25/3 mbps standard. NEK Broadband town representatives were requested to engage with their local selectboards and bring back community specific information, however Board Members expressed the need for more specific information to present to local selectboards. Evan C. provided additional information on the DPS point award system. Jen B. is working with the NEK schools districts to compile information on underserved addresses. Funds awarded under H:966 must be allocated and spent by mid October, which likely means that the able to complete a project will be the incumbent internet service providers (ISPs).

Other Business

Motion to approve the two proposals for Connected Communities Resiliency Program contained in the meeting packet (M:Jen B., Bill P.) – motion carried 24-0

Motion (*previously tabled*) to grant temporary authority to the Executive Committee to provide letters of support or objection for proposed H:966 CRF projects until a formal NEK Broadband policy is in place (M: Mark W., S: Dana C.) - - motion carried 24-0.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn (M: S: Noah A.) – passed 24-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. Next meeting is August 13 , 2020.

Action Items

- Reach out to Google and Starlink and attend initial meeting with NVDA and Tilson - Technology Committee
- One-pager for selectboards that highlights examples of feasible projects - Executive Committee
- Create guidance document for towns and individuals to help connect with DPS and ISPs to find out what services are available - Executive Committee

Respectfully submitted,

Annie McLean, NEK Community Broadband Clerk

NEK COMMUNITY BROADBAND GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

OTHER MEETING ATTENDEES

Town	Delegate	P	V	Alternate	P	V	Alternate	P	V
Albany	Kristen Fountain	x	x	Robert DeWees			Jeremy Wintersteen		
Barnet	Kathleen Monroe	x	x	Charlie McAlpine			Carolyn Holliday		
Barton	Philip Roberts								
Brighton	Michael Strait	x	x	Jonah Petre					
Burke	Jennifer Barone	x	x	Todd Vendituoli					
Concord	William Humphrey								
Coventry	David Barlow			Phil Marquette					
Craftsbury	Katherine Sims	x	x	Rudy Chase			Brian Machesky		
Danville	Jonathan Baker	x	x	Sean Franson	x				
East Haven	Lyonel Tracy	x	x	Francie Loynd			Kerri Fillion		
Glover	Noah Armstrong	x	x	Shaun Campbell	x				
Greensboro	Carol Fairbank	x	x	Mary Metcalf					
Groton	Mike Gaiss	x	x						
Hardwick	Paul Fixx	x	x	Doug McClure					
Irasburg									
Kirby	Dana Caspersen	x	x	Malcolm Doak	x				
Lowell	Marjorie Kramer	x	x	Faye Starr	x				
Lyndon	Shawn Tester			Marty Feltus	x	x			
Newark	Mark Whitworth	x	x	Jean Paul Calderone					
Peacham	Jock Gill	x	x						
Ryegate	Shaun Burroughs	x	x	Nelson Elder					
Saint Johnsbury	Nick Anzalone	x	x	Scott Campbell					
Sheffield	Anne McLean	x	x	Carolyn Crankshaw					
Stannard	Steve Pickard			Joanna Polsenberg					
Sutton	Evan Carlson	x	x	David Tucker					
Waterford	Bill Piper	x	x	Gary Allard			Fred Saar		
Westfield	Carrie Glessner			Laura Emery					
Westmore	Erik Townsend	x	x	Linda Michniewicz	x				
Wolcott	Michael Davidson	x	x	Bruce Wheeler					
Wheelock	David Stahler	x	x	Tyler Harter					
Treasurer (non-voting)	Dave Snedeker	x	x						

Bobbie Wagner

Delegates P/V	23	23	Member Towns	30
Alternates P/V	6	1	Towns Represented	24
Votes total	24		Quorum	Yes
Votes to pass	13			