

NEK Community Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

August 14, 2020

Attendees: Evan Carlson, Kristen Fountain, Nicolas Anzalone, Noah Armstrong, Jonathan Baker, Bill Piper, Katherine Sims, Mike Strait, Annie McLean, Christine Hallquist

Evan C. (Chair) called the meeting to order at 3:06.

Administrative Update

- First payment to Brian Webster has been made.
- NEK Broadband P.O. Box was set up in Lyndonville.
- Jonathan pulled together a W9 for (which grant application???) and we may need a DUNS, which Evan C. has begun the process of obtaining.

Meeting Roundup

- Krista S. is interested in working with the CUD to help strategize about leveraging assets in the RDOF partnership, particularly obtaining IRUS for state owned assets. Christine H. noted that EDA views IRUs as assets. Evan C. noted that the CUD should be looking to have MOUs in place to take over state-owned assets prior to the close of RDOF.
- Tilson will provide a more definitive timeline for their work and begin weekly check-ins with Christine H., Evan C., Kristen F.
- No regular VCUDA meeting. Rob Fish arranged for VELCO to speak with CUDs about their needs for the creation of a statewide format to collect pole data. David H. (CV Fiber) will come up with standards for GIS data collection and each CUD will prioritize data collection areas.

Finance & Tech Committee Updates

Christine H. will attend Finance Committee meetings and engage with the Tech Committee and the CUD Treasurer (TBD in October) will take over as Chair of the Finance Committee.

Jonathan B. noted that the Tech Committee is eagerly awaiting Brian Webster's wireless maps so they can do some initial analysis and assess the easiest build sites for wireless. Evan C. has requested a highlighted buffer on the line extension maps that is one mile out from the end of existing lines to help discern what addresses might be in range for the line extension program. Kristen F. asked for an excel readout of these addresses that fall within that buffer.

Introduction & Updates from Christine

Christine H. gave a brief update of her work since being hired as project manager, noting that she has been working on internet access since 2003. She added that the CUD goal for the NEK would be a lower entry price for service. Kristen F. noted that the CUD was not yet committed to being an internet service provider (ISP). Evan C. noted that the CUD also wants to support local incumbent providers. Katherine S. asked about a work plan and supervision for Christine's role. Christine will participate in a weekly check-in on Mondays with Evan C. and Kristen F. as well as the weekly Executive Committee meeting and Finance Committee meetings. Katherine S. suggested that Christine conduct Individual check-ins with each Board member or develop a survey concerning engagement. Discussion re: CUD priorities over the next 3-6 months followed. Christine H. saw a preview of Brian Webster's line extension maps and will meet with Krista S. on Monday.

New Town On-boarding Packet

Evan C. noted that Derby is looking to join the CUD and that Mike S. and Annie M. have been working to pull together an onboarding packet for new member towns. Mike S. and Annie M. gave a quick update on the status of the packet, which should be ready early next week.

Governing Board Recap

The infrastructure-based fiber model was suggested by Jock G. (Peacham) at the Governing Board meeting. Bill P. expressed concern about this model, noting that the Vermont Legislature set up the CUD model because municipalities don't have enough tax revenue to provide internet infrastructure. Coops are different from municipalities in that they generate revenue from ratepayers. Paul F. (Hardwick) emailed concerns to the Executive Committee about the lateness of the information being provided to the Governing Board and lack of opportunities for Board Members to participate. Discussion followed. Kristen F. provided the following suggestion: Policies be provided in draft form for the first Governing Board meeting and then added to the consent agenda for approval at the next month's Governing Board meeting for approval. Jonathan B. asked how seriously are objections to being taken to the Connectivity Initiative projects. Evan C. noted that project approvals would be public on Tuesday.

Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m. Next meeting is August 21, 2020.

Action Items

- Form an RDOF asset working group - Christine H., Krista S., Bill P.

- Request excel read-out of line extension maps from Brian Webster - Evan C.
- Generate immediate priorities (next 3-6 months) list - Executive Committee, Christine H.
- Revisit one-pager on wireless "myths" - Christine H. and Tech Committee
- Outreach to key RDOF towns in Essex County - Kristen F. (send town list) Mike S., Nick A.
- Update (*of some sort*) for Governing Board/Selectboards - Nick A.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie McLean, NEK Community Broadband Clerk