NEK Community Broadband

Executive Committee Bi-Weekly Meeting

April 2, 2021 - 3pm - 4:30pm

Attendees: Jami Jones (clerk), Christine Hallquist (admin), Eric Wilson (member of the public), Kristen Fountain, William Piper, Evan Carlson, Michael Strait (GB member), Jonathan Baker, Nick Anzalone

Agenda Review

Updates

- Action Items Check In
  - Christine will put together the key project areas and an organization chart.
    - For next meeting

- Administrative Update
  - Confusion on RDGB and funding from the Northern Forest Center. Some of those funds are not accessible as planned and will need to rearrange funding.
  - Question: Are there implications that we should understand?
    - Concord project will not be a problem.
    - The Kingdom Fiber project may not use all of the funds. Will still leave $22K to use for that project. Christine has spoken with Michael Birnbaum.
    - Want to make sure that we have funding to be able to cover our current expenses and optimize the Northern Enterprise funding.

  - Motion to approve the reallocation of money from the Kingdom Fiber project in our CARES grant in the way recommended by the Finance Committee. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Nick, carried: (5-0)

  - Motion that we request a grant of $12,000 from Northern Enterprise for 2021, $10,000 of which to be used for the business plan and $2000 for general operating. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Nick, Carried (5-0)
• Meeting Roundup
  ○ Next week is a busy week for meetings (the telecommunication advisory board). CUDs may be there to make public comment.
  ○ CUDs will give testimony to the center of finance on Tuesday.
  ○ Evan will be participating in a round table on public infrastructure with Sen Leahy, on Wednesday.
  ○ VCUDA sent a letter to the US treasury to ensure that we are able to receive the capital projects funding from the American Rescue Plan directly from the treasury.
  ○ Request for meeting with the Executive Committee for a 90 min meeting to go in depth about the model and when the “break even date” could be. Could afterward do a webinar for the entire board. The meeting could answer some in depth questions.
  ○ Wendy Matthews is officially the rep for Newport Town

• Committee Updates
  ○ Tech- Ray Lanier gave a presentation on different tech and network layouts that the committee could inspect. Dug into the Starlink Survey
    ■ Would like to discover what the performance metrics for ISPs are?
  ○ Communications- tracking spreadsheet. Carrie will not be able to be the chair. Could make a plug to get more members at the governing board meeting or Organizational meeting. Got the press release out. Working on reappointing and an overview for the organizational meeting.
  ○ Finance- talked about how we could approach towns about the rescue plan money, and coordinating with the communications committee
  ○ Policies- no lead on the policy committee, is looking for someone.

• Christine’s Update
  ○ Submitted 2 letters of interest and will need to have an application in place by May 14th, a joint CUD proposal may be more competitive.

New Business

3:25 - NRTC Business Plan Check In
Would like to schedule a meeting for a deep dive perhaps next week. 60-90 min to show the model and a review of the steps that the business took to get there. Can customize the model based on NEK CUDs specifics.

The model will help find the metrics we need for an ISP

When everyone is grounded, we can move through the next several steps pretty well and will be able to move to that Draft Report (scheduled for May 7).

A piece needs to be added that we enter our grants when we “receive” them. Hoping to have that in the model by next week.

Will be meeting 5-6:30 pm on Tuesday evening.

3:45 - WEC MOU Discussion - Executive Session

- MOU is between the electric co-op who will be setting up fiber and would like to go into executive session to discuss a further partnership. (Statute 1 V.S.A. § 313)
- **Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss and MOU with Washington Electric Co-op under 1 V.S.A. § 313** with Mike Strait, Christine Hallquist, and Jami Jones. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Nick, Carried: (5-0)
- **Motion to exit Executive Session** Motioned: Jonathan, Seconded: Nick, Carried: (5-0)
- No actions were taken in Executive Session.

4:05 - Concord Project Update

- Maximize RDBG funding. Original route went from Loon Ln to the bottom of Oregon Rd, now able to go pretty far out on Leonard Hill Rd, to get us to a USDA eligible area. A number of businesses have less than 4/1. Made a project that reflects the CUD mission better. On the arcGIS website.
- Question: with competition will we be able to find someone to meet our needs and budget?
  - That is the next thing to solve.
- On the spur is a 3rd Generation Bakery and the Waterford Elementary. Will be asking Waterford and Concord if they wish to expand the network with their American Rescue funding.
- Up next, get pole applications ready for the project. 6-9 month timeline for the make-ready to be complete.
  - Have to wait to submit the pole applications until we receive an application complete letter from the grants.
  - File for a Certificate of Public Good with the Utilities Commission
NBRC applications and build to strategize around approaching these towns.

- What would we potentially want to ask them to contribute to projects.
- We cannot serve every town. The pitch needs to be targeted to serve everyone quickly.
- The CUD could go to the Selectboards with an ISP partner with a plan.
  - Kingdom Fiber
  - Tilson
  - GWI
- Who will be pushing the plan forward?
  - The model will help us show what areas we want to be focused on within the first five years and the representatives in those towns (where we can build within 2 years) can help advocate for the plan.
  - Can make a big impact in a town even if it is only 10 mi.
  - Money must be spent before 2024.
  - The towns do not know if the townspeople will have to vote on how they money will be spent.
  - Presenting as an optional opportunity to improve Economic Development and living in the town.
  - Have the governing board members reach out to Select Boards of targeted towns with the opportunity.

4:20 - Governing Board Agenda

- Concord Project Update- Christine
- NRTC Model/Update
- American Rescue Plan Update/ Town-by Town allocations
- Organizational Meeting Updates
  - Changes to the bylaws regarding Chair rotations and appointments
- Admin update- what will the model do for us? Comprehensive, with phases.
- Approval to apply for the NBRC grants, assigning people to sign documents.-Kristen
- Letters of Intent/Project Map/ NRTC visuals
- Link to the google drive (RDBG grant)
- Spreadsheet of Town funding- Kristen

Other Business

Action Items
- Christine will put together the key project areas and an organization chart.
  - For next meeting
- Christine will send out a doodle pole for when we could have a meeting

**Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn, Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Jonathan, Carried: (5-0)**

*Respectfully Submitted,

Jami Jones, NEK Broadband, Clerk*