

NEK Community Broadband

Executive Committee Bi-Weekly Meeting Minutes

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

Attendees: Jami Jones (clerk), Kristen Fountain, William Piper, Morgan Wade, Evan Carlson, Katherine Sims, Nick Anzalone, Christine Hallquist (admin), Jonathan Baker, Christa Shute (3:40pm)

Agenda Review

Updates

- Action Items Check In
 - Updates on Selectboard meetings
- Administrative Update
 - Grant reporting- Christine filed the grant reports this week, can be found in her update.
 - Refining meeting minutes and communications strategies.
- Meeting Roundup
 - WEC update- May be ready to get the contract going for a high-level design. NEK CUD will be taking on an inforamatory role. NEK CUD is not signing a contract, therefore, we will not need to vote. ValleyNet, CV Fiber, and WEC are taking on the main roles
 - Question (William): Are there concerns with staffing changes and how that may affect WEC?
 - Answer: no, the board is committed to the actions.
- Committee Updates
- Christine's Update
 - RFP for pole survey is ready to go, pending a review from Evan. Will be sent next Friday with a deadline for response by August 15th.

New Business

3:20 - RFP Review

- Sub-committee met last week: Rudy Chase, Jonathan Baker, Fred Saar, Christa Shute, Christine Hallquist and Evan Carlson also reviewed with a decision matrix.
- Received good proposals, with good alignment and similar feedback from the committee.
- Consolidated has the largest capacity to build far and fast
- The respondents have limited knowledge of what a CUD is.
- Review of the scoring system
 - Question (Nick): Why was the “Engineering Acumen” rated so low?
 - Answer: The network is pretty standardized across the board, GPON.
 - Top were: NRTC, GWI, and Tilson. The recommendation of the subcommittee was to have discussions with these three respondents.
- The subcommittee will provide additional questions and points of negotiation to present to the respondents
- The Executive Committee will review the document and get approval to continue negotiations with a handful of the respondents.
- Suggested (Katherine): have a list of questions as well as a call to discuss questions with the respondents.

Motion for the Executive Committee to recommend the top reviewed RFP partners put forth by the Partnership Subcommittee. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: William, Carried (7-0)

- Suggested (Nick): In addition to the matrix, there could be a summary about the strengths and weaknesses among the candidates.
 - Belief that the comments and concerns have alignment across the board

3:40 - Executive Director/Staffing - Executive Session

Motion to go into executive session to discuss contracts, the premature disclosure would put us at substantial disadvantage. Motioned: William, Seconded: Kristen, Carried (7-0)

Motion to enter executive session under 1 VSA 313 to discuss contracts and labor negotiations with Christine Hallquist, Jami Jones and Christa Schute. Motioned: William, Seconded: Morgan, Carried (7-0)

Motion to exit Executive Session. Motioned: William, Seconded: Kristen, Carried: (6-0)

No action was taken in Executive Session. Christa and Morgan dropped off.

- Report on recommendations for hiring from the Finance committee
 - Increase Jami Jones hours from 10hrs per week to 15 hrs per week, retroactive to July 1st.
 - For the Executive Committee thought: a hire of a Network/Project Manager. May be able to hire in September, given some uncertainties, NEK may need to hire later than September.

Motion to increase Jami Jones's hours to 15 hours per week, starting as of July 1, 2021.

Motioned: Nick, Seconded: Katherine, Carried (6-0).

4:00 - Procurement Revisited

- Updates have been made to the procurement policy, and are tied to the bylaws for the Executive Committee.

Motion to approve the procurement policy as written. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Morgan. Carried: (6-0)

4:10 - Governing Board Meeting Agenda

- Bylaw & Procurement Policy (Not FYI)
- RFP & Next Steps Update
- Operator Model Discussion
- Business Plan (Talking Points) Discussion

4:20 - Business Plan Next Steps

- Discussion about what needs to be communicated about the RFP process.
 - Question (William): Asking the GB to negotiate with the top tier of respondents and the process between now and signing an agreement?
 - Suggested: report the process to the board and tell them where we are going, the Board would make the final decision of the partner, the contract once it is negotiated.
- The Executive Committee will review the "Next Steps" document thoroughly to make a strong recommendation to the Governing Board.
- Suggestion (Kristen): for the subcommittee to be present at the GB meeting on the RFP process.

- Discussion on the “Operator Model” and how to present it. The RFPs and business plan are both leaning in that direction.
- Discussion on giving the Governing Board ideas on how to engage with the business plan in their community.
- If a town is presenting, go through the powerpoint, Evan is willing to meet with the reps to help clarify the presentations. Keep it high-level, pricing strategy, and geographic location; slides are also contained in the appendix to give more info.
- Print outs given out at town meetings would need to be given back at the end of presentation to keep confidentiality. Preferred Executive Session discussion for detail. “Talking points” will be available for public discussion.
- Questions (William): How much communication has happened with the reps and the towns, Concord specifically?
 - Answer: Tilson did not discuss plans with Concord.
- Question (Katherine): Is it possible to write a draft email for the reps to send to the Selectboards?
 - Answer: Nick put out something similar, but may need to be more designed, quarterly, such as a newsletter.
 - If nothing else, give the “Talking Points,” we have a business plan, and it is attractive enough for a community project.
 - Nick will send a follow up link of materials that Bill can share with his selectboard.

Other Business

Motion to adjourn. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: William, Carried (6-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Jami Jones, NEK Broadband, Clerk

