

NEK Community Broadband

Governing Board Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2021 4:30-5:30pm

Physical Location: 142 Eastern Avenue, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Attendees: (see attached list)

Quorum is 26

Role Call & Agenda Review - 2 Min

- Approval of Governing Board Meeting [Minutes](#) from September

Motion to approve the September Meeting Minutes. Motioned: Morgan Wade, Seconded: Jennifer Barone, Carried: (26-0-1:for-against-abstain).

Public Comment - 5 Min

New Business

Elect Ray Lanier to Executive Committee

Motion to approve and appoint Ray Lanier of Westmore to the Executive Committee. Motioned: Bill Humphrey, Seconded: Erik Townsend, Carried: (26-0).

Payroll discussion

- We will be moving to a payroll system rather than contracted workers. Christa will stay on until the end of June on a Salary basis. We are also looking for a part-time worker. Payroll is through Quickbooks and they do all of the reporting and taxes within the system, about \$90/month.
- David G.- How many are on payroll?
 - Christa for now and would add more later on?
- Paul- Are we voting?
 - Kristen- it is in the budget, so it is an FYI
 - Paul- what is the Cost and Budget? Negotiations have not been finalized by the Executive Committee yet, they will be finalized at the next Governing Board Meeting.

Break-Out Groups - NEK Broadband Detail Design Issues

- Christa gave a short presentation.
- Please continue with the Survey, the next step is to select the OLT cabinets. More information will be put into a corresponding email as to specs on buildings, etc.
- Questions-
 - Dana- Will Kirby be a good spot since there is no central town.
 - Christa- we mainly need back-up power near the town center.
 - Bill H.- will it require 24hr access?
 - Christa- the preference is for it to be outside the building with 24hr access.
 - David G.- Does every town need to have a location for an OLT
 - Christa- No, there will be about 27 OLT throughout the Kingdom.
 - Paul- Does it make sense for the NEK to be so reliant on the towns? Is there a standard set of criteria that need to be met?
 - Christa- there will definitely be criteria around security and back-up power being maintained, by us or by the town. The default is to go to the substations, but the substations will need new electric service and additional work. First, we get the information, we look at the maps and look at a really high-level design, and then go back to the locations that were submitted and talk about whether it is a good location for the design. We would take an on the ground look at it, and have those people confirm that the location is viable.
 - Bill H.- Are we relying on an internal relay to swap between power sources (electric company vs. Backup)?
 - Christa- we were looking at using the power at the locations for back-up, so the relay that the town is using is the same relay that NEK would be using. Most will be pad mounted, some pole mounted.
 - Bill H.- Who will be paying for the powering of the OLTs?
 - Christa- it is up for negotiation between the CUD and the towns. It will balance the costs vs. the benefits.
 - Rob S.- OLT (Optical Line Terminal)- What does it mean? What is a cabinet? How do we explain that to the selectboard?
 - Ray- The Cabinet is sort of like a telephone office. The customers are connected via cables. It is the centralized communications unit. Everything branches out from that cabinet to the houses, to distribute connectivity to the internet to the customers.

- Christa- if it is not something that the town wants to put into the budget, they could bill the CUD for it
 - Bill P.- Are there preferred locations already in the minds of the designers?
 - Christa- it is possible that we would change where the backbone is to accommodate where the cabinets would be. There are certain sections that must stay the same. There is some flexibility to change some of the backbone design. The WEC areas and the middle of the NEK areas are undefined.
 - Scott- Are there other criteria or physical features?
 - Christa- the other main criteria is that we are trying to put it through unserved areas to maximize the use of the backbone, and looking for a continuous service route. The purpose is to provide redundancy.
- Break Out Topic – Detailed Design –

Questions

1. **Mission Issue:** Comments on switching from all premises to all premises with electric utility service.
2. **Universal Service Design.** Comments on how to address the very expensive addresses that have utility service but there are only two houses a mile down the road. Design for them, but stop short? Find alternative means of delivery – wireless etc?
3. **No utility service:** Should we allow towns to petition for off-grid service if they bring additional funding to support the build (such as Town ARPA or an EDA grant).
4. **Bad Data:** What do we do about bad cable data. Crowd fiber? Members assist?

Nick Anzalone joined the meeting at 5:04pm (quorum is still: 26).

- Dana- No_CCI means that CCI is there?
 - Christa- yes. We have limited grant funds to deploy and need to know how to use them. White Circles are yes's and Black Stars are "no" because CCI is saying they are bringing 100/100 service to that area.
- Dana- will off-grid homes get built out to?

- Christa- If we have already completed the build with the grant funds and are using revenue from the business rather than grant funds, we could go back and build areas that were not previously built.

Room 1

- Changing the mission is a functional thing that we ought to do, but now the underserved may remain underserved.
- Can we design for the future if we cannot afford it now. May be better to stick to the easier projects up front. What is the criteria for what Wireless is?
- Off-grid, plan for it just in case we get funding and set up a system where it will be possible, Let the towns petition. In small towns, the reps could do drive bys, or could reach out to a real estate agent

Room 2

- Fine with mission statement change to all premises with electrical utility.
- Have a design criteria, do not want to stress the cashflow. Help people understand why we are not coming to them. NEK wants to do the most good with the resources we have now and can recover the addresses at a later time. "The greatest good for the greater good."
- Towns could use their funding to build out to the off-grid homes/ could discuss a wireless option. Win-win for the towns
- Have a set of directions to look at the cable lines, a glossary of pics, send in photos to determine locations.

Room 3

- Should we include people who have wired telephone service? Is the main expense the poles? Have to have power for the equipment, but the service there may not be e911 safe. Add language "and other addresses as technically and financially feasible" to the end of the existing sentence, which would give the CUD the ability to add people if it becomes viable later. The CUD does not want to be a WISP early on.

Room 4

- It has already been determined. Happy with the mission statement.
- Design- must be flexible and do it in the most cost-effective manner
- Flexibility to work with towns to help them solve unforeseen issue

- Concerns related to what the members' knowledge would be, want to provide good data. The reps, with some assistance, could perform the tasks.

Room 5

- Regret moving away from the original mission statement, but it would be hard and unfeasible to serve off-grid homes, break the news gently.
- Would like to offer wireless to those in the last mile, would have to make a deal with another provider
- Som reps would be able to do the bad data in their towns and would need explicit instruction, some would not do it.

Room 6

- Agreed to change mission statement. Those with telephone service, could change to "utility served"
- How to address expensive addresses: Seek creative solutions, negotiate with existing providers on overbuild areas, or town subsidy services.
- Priority areas and need to serve full-time residents. Develop criteria to serve those on a case-by case basis.
- Christa offered to do open office hours where people could get onto zoom to answer questions.
- John- could do a 15 minute training session
- Christa will do one in the day and one in the evening. Thoughts on how to find people with Telephone service, but not utility service.
- Dana- when will the awards be made clear?
 - Evan- could be anywhere from 6 months to a year along with a whole period of building
 - Christa- it is possible that we will not be allowed to build in those areas with Grant funds, but we have been making the case that we should be allowed to build in those areas and we've been making a case of how we can provide services to the award winners while they still meet their obligation, we can own the fiber infrastructure. The answer is unclear, and we will probably not know until the end of November. We are moving forward with a mixed strategy for both RDOF awarded areas.

- Shawn T.- IF they have phone service that is overhead but no power, would the utility service own the poles? The phone service may not be available in overhead wires, it could be underground/unaccessible.
- Paul- The current data, in Hardwick, the first few addresses are on-grid, but all of the rest are off-grid? What is the ground truthing that needs to be done?
 - Christa- Hardwick doesn't have any data. Barton has really bad data. Christa will send an email separately to towns to try to identify where there is electric service.
 - Paul- Could we separate the street number from the street name to sort them easier?
 - Christa-yes.

Other Business

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. Motioned: John Kellogg, Seconded: Kathleen Monroe, Carried: (24-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Jami Jones

NEK Broadband, Clerk

Town	Delegate	P	V	Alternate	P	V	Alternate	P	V
Albany	Kristen Fountain	v	v	Rob Dewees	x	x			
Barnet	Kathleen Monroe	v	v	Jerri Kohl					
Barton									
Brighton	Michael Strait	v	v	Jonah Petre					
Brownington	Calvin Page			William Davis					
Brunswick	David Caron			Theresa Caron					
Burke	Jennifer Barone	v	v	Todd Vendituoli	x	x			
Canaan	Ann Morgan Wade	v	v	Alfred Buckley			Frank Sawicki, Jr		
Charleston	John Kellogg	v	v	Peter Moskovites					
Concord	Dale Urie			Bill Humphrey	v	v			
Coventry	David Barlow			Phil Marquette					
Craftsbury	Katherine Sims			Rudy Chase	v	v			
Danville	Jonathan Baker	v	v	Sean Frason					
Derby	Karen Chitambar			Bob Kelley			Grant Spates		
East Haven	Lyonel Tracy			Kerri Fillion					
Glover	Noah Armstrong			Shaun Campbell					
Greensboro	Carol Fairbank			Mary Metcalf					
Groton	Mike Gaiss			Michael Nahmias					
Guildhall	Susan McVetty			George Blakeslee					
Hardwick	Paul Fixx	v	v	Doug McClure					
Holland	Andrew Bouchard			Ed Brady	v	v			
Irasburg									
Kirby	Dana Caspersen	v	v	Malcom Doak	x	x			
Lowell	Marjorie Kramer			Faye Starr	v	v			
Lyndon	Shawn Tester			Marty Feltus	v	v			
Lunenburg	Harry Williams			James Peyton					
Maidstone	James Mewkill	v	v						
Morgan	Larry Labor	v	v						
Newark	Mark Whitworth	v	v	Ben Tilford	x	x			
Newport City	Woodman Page	v	v	Chris Vachon			Paul Monette		
Newport Town	Wendy Matthews			Cameron Thompson			David Ghelli	v	v
Peacham	Jock Gill			Jim Barlow					
Ryegate	Shawn Burroughs			Nelson Elder					
Sheffield	Annie McLean			Carolyn Crankshaw					
St. Johnsbury	Nicolas Anzalone	v	v	Scott Campbell	x	x			
Stannard	Steve Pickard			Johanna Polsenberg					
Sutton	Evan Carlson	v	v	David Tucker			Robert Simms	x	x
Troy	Robert Langlands			Gary Taylor			Mark Sanville		
UTGs	Anthony Soldo			Gina Vigneault					
Walden	Caro Thompson	v	v	Sarah Lyons	x	x			
Waterford	Bill Piper	v	v	Fred Saar					
Westfield	Carrie Glessner	v	v	Laura Emery					
Westmore	Erik Townsend	v	v	Linda Michniewicz			Ray Lanier	x	x
Wheelock	David Stahler Jr.	v	v	Stephen Amos					
Wolcott	Bruce Wheeler			Michael Davidson					

Date:

	P	V		
Delegates P/V	20	20	Member Towns	43
Alternates P/V	14	6	Towns Represente	26
Votes total	26		Quorum	Yes
Votes to pass	14			

Members of the Public

Staff in Attendance:

Christa Shute (ED)
Jami Jones (Clerk)