

NEK Community Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

June 5, 2020

Attendees: Evan Carlson, Kristen Fountain, Nicolas Anzalone, Noah Armstrong, Jonathan Baker, Bill Piper, Katherine Sims (3:06), Mike Strait, Andy Mosdale, Annie McLean

Evan Carlson called the meeting to order at 3:02.

Agenda Review

A discussion of G-Suite and @nekbroadband.org issues was added to other businesses.

Administrative Updates

- Evan sent a notarized Certificate of formation to SOS for official formation of CUD.
- Northern Enterprises LOI - Assets are important, should be signed next week. Ready to sign as of the end of the meeting!
- Kristen is in the process of scheduling a finance committee meeting.
- Katherine or Kristen may attend an upcoming Craftsbury Selectboard Meeting to discuss possible transfer of assets.
- Wolcott Selectboard has voted to join CUD and will make appointments at their next Selectboard meeting.
- Meeting Roundup
 - Meeting with other CUDs in the State. Carole Monroe expressed concerns with ECFiber going to RDOF on behalf of all CUDs. She felt they may not have the funds to hold up a letter of credit and scope of work might be out of their range. Tilson, Velco, and the GMP consortium may be the best option...ECFiber may not be a realistic option for RDOF. The short form application needs to be submitted July 15th. If we go as a consortium, we need to have agreements drawn up by the end of month.
 - GWI meeting - GWI is in the process of standing up BCorp status and are interested in being an ISP if electric utilities are involved! GWI seems like a

realistic partner and is willing to use other organizations assets to connect!
They come highly recommended by Northern Forest Center.

- Media Response
 - Evan highlighted the [Timothy & Leslie Nulty: Rural broadband the right way](#) OpEd in VTDigger. This commentary is by Timothy Nulty and Leslie Nulty, who are respectively, CEO and CFO of Mansfield Community Fiber Inc., in Jericho, a new company currently providing Fiber-to-the-Premises broadband services in parts of Underhill, Cambridge, Fletcher and later this year, Fairfax. Both authors were original organizers and managers of East Central Vermont Communications District (ECFiber) from 2007-2014.
 - Katherine noted that she had reached out to Justin trombly at VTDigger and asked if there was a place where NEKCB marketing and outreach currently lives. Kristen noted that the RBDG funds could be used to hire a marketing person.

Set Governing Board Agenda

Evan provided a draft agenda for the June 11, 2020 Governing Board Meeting:

- Approve mission and strategy.
- Make recommendation on BIG Grant to governing board for vendor for NVDA (need proposals from Dave in front of GB). Establish a precedent that EC can make certain decisions that need to happen quickly. EC make recommendation for RFP.
- Table of business model structures sent out by Evan. Vet and commit to a model.
- Lay out RDOF decisions that need to be made. producing a timeline that outlines urgency of decisions that need to be made.
- Recommendation on adding Towns...postpone and table future requests to join. Reaffirm commitment to work with all 55 towns in NEK. Discuss creation of an possible expansion subcommittee lead by Mike Strai

Glossary review & updates

Jenn laid out and Evan elaborated and some additional edits from EC.

RDOF Partnership Criteria Review

Finalize [NEK Community Broadband Questionnaire for RDOF Partner and ISP Operator](#). Call with GWI talk through questions, send out to all: GWI, Firstlight, VTel, Tilson. Do as interviews or ask for written responses? Important to document responses whether on call or written.

RFI & RFP Updates

Deadline for RFP next Wednesday. Expect one from Tilson and perhaps Landry Alton. What is the best structure to retain control network as being built and best position for RDOF? Need to have community interests at the center and keep taxpayer dollars circulating in our region. GWI has done lots of municipal builds..mission driven social entity. Capacity in planning network didn't want to respond to RFP thought it was a conflict of interest to recommend themselves. GWI is really comfortable with RDOF hired architect of past two auctions as their primary consultant. Nervous about idea of consortium...don't want to be in position where entity entering consortium with won't be able to come up with initial capital to build network to receive subsidy. In first year you have to come up with your own funds. More comfortable with us as a CUD than other CUDs do to proximity to their existing network and our middle mile assets. Evan will share notes. Economies of scale with on contractor for all RDOF blocks in ME, VT, NH. Also just happy to be contracte as an ISP. Looking at ways to collaborate with ValleyNet. Fascinated with clearing house/open access to networks that are built, i.e. Multiple ISPs on the network. Net steps: get them additional info about community, demographic data, pole attachment info,

Mission & Goals Review

Nick gave update on call last night. Trying to keep track of all stakeholder input. Barnet, concord, Craftsbury, Peacham, kirby, Scott Campbell. Two main tensions: 1) Owning assets; and 2) Striking right balance between fiscal responsibility and immediate service needs. talking about business models and rationale and where Northern Enterprises may play a role. 100 symmetrical mandate Jock Gill doesn't like. Specifically doesn't think it's our job to define what speeds should be for technology. FTTH is only technology that can deliver these speeds. David Martin proponent of new wireless technology. Michael b new CBRS antennas at burke latest and greatest 700 megahertz spectrum. Upwards of 25/5...we will see and evaluate.

Discussion; Who are we and why do we exist? Bonding to purchase and buy assets is why towns joined for community ownership. Asset ownership? Poll of ec all in favor if ownership. Katherine concerned...center values around serving the community with strong MOU better efficiencies of scale with a public-private partnership. Katherine doesn't CUD exist to provide service, ownership is secondary? Craftsbury happy to give us network, Kristen wants to keep it public. Pub-private could be with a vt comp.

Evan gave an overview of the models of ownership: Retail Owner Operator; Hybrid Public-Private Operator (Evan recommends this model); Wholesale Owner Operator; and Facilitation/Community Advocacy.

Other Business

Evan, Jonathan, and Annie will schedule a call to discuss G-Suite and @nekbroadband.org user accounts. Andy Mosdale introduced himself and offered his assistance and expertise, especially in the IT field and asked a few questions.

Action Items

- Share RFPs with Governing Board - Dave
- Draft recommendation for tabling the addition of new towns - Katherine, Kristen
- Create welcome/orientation packet - Mike
- Finalize questions for potential RDOF partners - Executive Committee
- Share notes from GWI call - Evan
- Cross Reference immediate priorities with NEK Collaborative and EBAP - Nick
- Create organizational chart for each ownership model - Evan, Nick
- Add marketing strategy discussion - Evan
- Schedule G-Suite and @nekbroadband.org user accounts call - Annie

Evan made a **motion to adjourn**. Kristen **seconded the motion**. **Motion carried 7-0**. The Meeting adjourned at 4:39.