

NEK Community Broadband

Governing Board Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2020

Attendees: See attached list of meeting participants

Evan C. (Chair) called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Roll Call

Annie M. (Clerk) called the roll and established that a quorum was present.

Agenda Review

Evan C. provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda

Evan C. provided an overview of the consent agenda.

- Approve May 28, 2020 Governing Board Meeting Minutes.
- FYI:
 - Signed LOI & NDA for the transfer of Northern Enterprises Fiber Assets;
 - Memo from House Energy & Technology for broadband funding;
 - Letter of Support for Dept. of Public Service; and,
 - Executive Committee Minutes (5-29-20; 06-05-20).

Motion to approve the consent agenda (M: Shawn T., S: Noah A.) – motion carried 22-0.

- Administrative - Evan C.
 - The Executive Committee will table making a recommendation on the addition of new towns due to more pressing priorities. Mike S. will rally other Essex County Towns to join, Eden, Irasburg, and Wolcott have already been approved to join NEK Community Broadband, and Derby has expressed interest.
 - Dave S. is finalizing the CUD bank account. Funds should be available for administrative costs next week.

- A certificate of formation has been sent to the S.O.S. by Evan C. - confirmation is expected next week.
- The Finance Committee will develop financial policies and review schedules. The feasibility study will provide clear financials for the cost of buildout for current member towns. There are more subsidies available to Essex County towns and new towns may add or reduce overall cost depending on available subsidies.
- Partnership Communications:
 - VELCO & Green Mountain Power (GMP) are considering going to FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) auctions with Tilson. Washington Electric Co-op (WEC) & Vermont Electric Co-op (VEC) are potentially partnering to go to RDOF with NRTC (National Rural Technology Cooperative).
 - Vermont Electric Co-Op (VEC) & Washington Electric Co-Op (WEC) are potentially partnering to go to RDOF.
 - Bill P. has been keeping NEK Community Broadband in the loop with the smaller municipal electric utilities, who under VPPSA, are not committed to either consortium at this time.
 - Consortium conversation - CUD collaboration is not looking like the best option for RDOF.
 - NEK Community Broadband has not committed to any consortium for RDOF and is still exploring partnership options.
 - RFI responses were received from GWI, Firstlight, VTel, Tilson, Kingdom Fiber. Evan C. and Kristen F. had a conversation with GWI and noted that GWI looks at community first and has a track record of providing service to very rural areas in Maine. A list of questions was sent out to all respondents and responses are pending.
- Funding Updates:
 - The State will be making \$800,000 available for CUDs as well as 2 Million for line extension programs up to 1,000 feet, and \$11,000 for shovel ready projects.
 - NEK Community Broadband's USDA RBDG could provide money for clerking.
 - There may be U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding via construction a grant for infrastructure in Essex County.

Mission Statement, Service Goals, and Operating Principles

Nick A. provided an overview of the [mission, service goals, operating principles, and immediate priorities doc](#). Kudos to Nick A. for spearheading this process and generating the living document, which will be crucial for business planning and the feasibility study as

well as RDOF partnerships. Discussion followed. Doug M. mentioned including language in support of apprenticeship programs in the next revision cycle.

Motion to approve the NEK Community Broadband CUD Mission Statement, Service Goals, and Operating Principles as presented with an allowance for small grammatical and redundancy edits. (M:Katheine Sims, S: Bill Piper) – motion carried 22-0.

Operating Models for Consideration

Evan C. provided an overview of the potential ownership models for NEK Community Broadband: Retail Owner Operator; Hybrid Public-Private Operator (Executive Committee recommends this model); Wholesale Owner Operator; and Facilitation/Community Advocacy. Discussion followed.

Motion to approve the Hybrid Public-Private Operator model in concept and authorize the Executive Committee to pursue partnerships that align with this model (M: Mark W., S: Jock G.) – motion carried 22-0.

RDOF Partnership & Process

Evan C. outlined the different consortiums developing within the state for the purpose of going to RDOF.

- VELCO, GMP, and (possibly) Tilson;
- Vermont Electric Co-Op (VEC) & Washington Electric Co-Op (WEC);
- Consolidated Communications; and/or,
- NEK Community Broadband CUD & potential partner.

The primary bidder is responsible for the deployment of the network and partners may have some financial responsibility. The short form application is due July 15th. If NEK Community Broadband commits to a partner it shuts out the opportunity to talk with other partners. There are roughly 20,000 addresses located within the current NEK Community Broadband CUD with 5,000 subsidence addresses that are RDOF eligible ([see Auction 904 Initial Eligible Areas map](#)). Discussion followed.

Feasibility Study Vendor Recommendation

Kristen F. noted that the only RFP response was from Tilson and there is concern that Tilson will be a bidding party for RDOF. NVDA recommends that we go back out to bid on the RFP to ensure that we get an impartial party.

Other Business

None.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn (M: Bill P., S: Jock G.) – passed 21-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m. Next meeting is July 9, 2020.

Action Items

Respectfully submitted,

Annie McLean, NEK Community Broadband Clerk

NEK COMMUNITY BROADBAND GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

OTHER MEETING ATTENDEES

Town	Delegate	P	V	Alternate	P	V	Alternate	P	V
Albany	Kristen Fountain	X	X	Robert DeWees	X		Jeremy Wintersteen		
Barnet	Kathleen Monroe	X	X	Charlie McAlpine			Carolyn Holliday		
Barton	Philip Roberts								
Brighton	Michael Strait	X	X	Jonah Petre					
Burke	Jennifer Barone	X	X	Todd Vendituoli					
Concord	William Humphrey								
Coventry	David Barlow			Phil Marquette					
Craftsbury	Katherine Sims	X	X	Rudy Chase	X		Brian Machesky		
Danville	Jonathan Baker	X	X	Sean Franson					
East Haven									
Glover	Noah Armstrong	X	X	Shaun Campbell	X				
Greensboro	Carol Fairbank	X	X	Mary Metcalf					
Groton	Mike Gaiss	X	X						
Hardwick	Paul Fixx	X	X	Doug McClure	X				
Kirby	Dana Caspersen	X	X	Malcolm Doak	X				
Lowell	Marjorie Kramer	X	X	Faye Starr					
Lyndon	Shawn Tester	X	X	Marty Feltus	X				
Newark	Mark Whitworth	X	X	Jean Paul Calderone					
Peacham	Jock Gill	X	X						
Ryegate	Shaun Burroughs	X	X	Nelson Elder					
Saint Johnsbury	Nick Anzalone	X	X	Scott Campbell					
Sheffield	Anne McLean	X	X	Carolyn Crankshaw					
Stannard	Steve Pickard			Joanna Polsenberg					
Sutton	Evan Carlson	X	X	David Tucker	X				
Waterford	Bill Piper	X	X	Gary Allard			Fred Saar		
Westfield	Carrie Glessner			Laura Emery	X	X			
Wolcott									
Wheelock	David Stahler	X	X	Tyler Harter					
Treasuer (non-voting)	Dave Snedeker	X							

Carol Caldwell Edmonds – Belvidere
 Doug ? - Johnson
 8027300132
 8028885020
 9788726526
 Bobbie Wagner

Delegates P/V	21	21	Member Towns	28
Alternates P/V	8	1	Towns Represented	22
Votes total	22		Quorum	Yes
Votes to pass	12			