

NEK Community Broadband

Executive Committee Bi-Weekly Meeting

March 19, 2021, 3- 4:30pm

Attendees: Jami Jones (Clerk), Mike Strait, William (Bill) Piper, Jonathan Baker, Christine Hallquist, Kristen Fountain, Nick Anzalone, Kevin Fitzgibbons (3:30pm), Katherine Sims (4:11pm), Evan Carlson (4:21pm)

Agenda Review

Updates

- Action Items Check In
 - Christine will discuss the contract with the NVDA and cc Kristen Fountain. (3/5) Made the requested changes to the contract from “feasibility study” to “business plan.” Christine will send the latest draft of the contract.
 - We will be funding \$20K not from BIG and that can be pulled from VCF.
 - Christine will check in with VPSA on the poles (2/19). Is not happening.
- Administrative Update
 - Lamoille FiberNet. Going to be a support for them. Been talking about sharing resources, but it is currently temporary. The long-term plan would be to run it through the NEK under perhaps a joint operating program.
 - Think ahead about potential conflicts or confidentialities.
 - There is future potential learning from one another.
 - Should there be policy support on how to navigate potential conflict situations or what ought to remain confidential- policy committee (ISP partners, private companies, etc). Policy should come up with policy to allow Christine to encourage CUDs to work together.
- Meeting Roundup
 - Some discussion on sharing resources in VCUDA
- Committee Updates

- County level amounts may be distributed to the towns (coming within 60 days). Suggested for the communications committee to write a letter to the NEK towns lobbying for broadband investment (giving them some options for spending the large money that is coming down) Also potential to reach towns who are not members, but within NEK. The NEK is a resource and this is one way that we can help benefit those towns. Create a generic bulleted list about what would be helpful to the towns, if they are considering working on their broadband needs. Other suggested language: NEK is going to be building in your town this year, if you add money, then we can add x many streets.
- Christine's Update

New Business

3:25 - NRTC Business Plan Check - Kevin Fitzgibbons

- Key data point file. Everything listed by town. Modeling, not designing, so there is a margin of error until we get into design. In the main center of town there is access to some sort of cable providers (with access to 100Mbps), but not into the more rural areas, which means the NEK will have to go through some of the cable routes to get out to other areas that are underserved.
- Showed a draft of the model. Trying to get the actual scope of the NEK project nailed down.
- Now we have total demand points of about 40K passings, about 3400 total miles average density of 8 homes/mile. Unserved Service Points about 21K with about 3100 total miles.
 - Will get the financial spreadsheet in the near future.
- Questions: Fiber that is considered "trade secret" How do we know where the areas are that are over built by ISPs.
 - Next steps are to get loaded into a model. Need agreements on the table that are accurate (approval), and a proposed backbone route. Will leverage existing mile or proposed routes (state networks, ISPs, or Co-op routes).
 - Looking to have a VT microsite to show all of everyone's routes.
- Are you going to be working with EC Fiber?
 - We need to coordinate in places like South Ryegate. They have shared files previously, and if they are comfortable with sharing, NRTC can share

- It's a lot of miles and the densities are low because we all assume there is going to be 3-5% of homes that will not be viable for fiber. Is there a way to model that mileage?
 - Might be able to create another category for (less than 4 homes per mile) Kevin will think through it.
- The timeline: committed the month of April to build relationships with partners so that they do not get leased to other ISPs before us/ overbuilt.
 - NEK needs to have a discussion about Consolidated RDOF areas because it may be 4-5 years for them to get to our towns, build it and then they can negotiate with us. Could build more so that we have enough to lease to them.
- Cable is to see where it is and find out the subscriber rate in those areas.
 - Policy: were not going to just build cabled areas, but if we have to go through to get to underserved areas, we will.
 - RDOF winners can dismiss 15% of their areas without feeling financial ramifications

3:40 - RBDG Grant Application

4:10 - Status of State Grant & Project

- The State has approved the proposal for the Concord/Waterford project was including USDA RBDG funds.

Motion to go into executive session to discuss the details of the Concord Project.

Motioned: Nick Anzalone, Seconded: William Piper, Carried: (4-0)

Katherine Sims and Evan Carlson joined during executive session.

Motion to exit executive session. Motioned: Jonathan Baker, Seconded: Kristen Fountain, Carried: (6-0)

3:50 - CUD & ISP Partnership Roles & Responsibilities

- What are our roles and responsibilities vs. an ISP roles and responsibilities?
- Criteria on who will do what and where.
- Option: separate projects with a partner and fiber swaps. Co-dependent, could be hairy if the ISP cannot deliver
- Option: Project oversight or administration, they could do the engineering.
- Specifically roles within a construction project.

- Service is defined contractually: want to have service quality, customer quality, and other characteristics
- we need to be able to quit the relationship if it is not working.
- Kingdom fiber will have to operate the network at the end of the year.
 - Will have a contract with them by the end of May. Christa is working on the contract, but we will need to build before then.
 - Will have a draft of the contract before the next meeting.
 - We need to have a clear understanding of who owns what when laying the groundwork (like pole applications).
 - Are roles may need to be sustainable so that perhaps we can take on other projects in the future?
 - As our first project, this is the pilot, and we can take this opportunity to find out where we excel and where the ISP partner may as well.
 - What are the roles?
 - NEK could retain umbrella project management responsibilities.
 - Kingdom fiber is looking for different means for construction, do we need to have separate construction groups working at the same time to get the project done this year. (funded through the cost of the project)
 - The committee would like to see what Christa and Christine can put together.
 - How do we illustrate this. Organization charts for the options.
 - Christine will put together the key project areas and an organization chart.
 - Kingdom Fiber is interested in leasing from the CUD.
- RGDB- will let the EC know what it will look like by monday

Other Business

Action Items

- Christine will put together the key project areas and an organization chart.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. Motioned: Evan Carlson, Seconded: Kristen Fountain, Carried:5-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Jami Jones, Clerk