

NEK Community Broadband

Executive Committee Bi-Weekly Meeting

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

Attendees: Jami Jones (clerk), Christine Hallquist (admin), Eric Wilson (member of the public), Kristen Fountain, William Piper, Evan Carlson, Michael Strait (GB member), Jonathan Baker, Nick Anzalone

Agenda Review

Updates

- Action Items Check In
 - Christine will put together the key project areas and an organization chart.
 - For next meeting
- Administrative Update
 - Confusion on RDGB and funding from the Northern Forest Center. Some of those funds are not accessible as planned and will need to rearrange funding.
 - Question: Are there implications that we should understand?
 - Concord project will not be a problem.
 - The Kingdom Fiber project may not use all of the funds. Will still leave \$22K to use for that project. Christine has spoken with Michael Birnbaum.
 - Want to make sure that we have funding to be able to cover our current expenses and optimize the Northern Enterprise funding.
 - **Motion to approve the reallocation of money from the Kingdom Fiber project in our CARES grant in the way recommended by the Finance Committee. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Nick, carried: (5-0)**
 - **Motion that we request a grant of \$12,000 from Northern Enterprise for 2021, \$10,000 of which to be used for the business plan and \$2000 for general operating. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Nick, Carried (5-0)**

- Meeting Roundup
 - Next week is a busy week for meetings (the telecommunication advisory board). CUDs may be there to make public comment.
 - CUDs will give testimony to the center of finance on Tuesday.
 - Evan will be participating in a round table on public infrastructure with Sen Leahy, on Wednesday.
 - VCUDA sent a letter to the US treasury to ensure that we are able to receive the capital projects funding from the American Rescue Plan directly from the treasury.
 - Request for meeting with the Executive Committee for a 90 min meeting to go in depth about the model and when the “break even date” could be. Could afterward do a webinar for the entire board. The meeting could answer some in depth questions.
 - Wendy Matthews is officially the rep for Newport Town
- Committee Updates
 - Tech- Ray Lanier gave a presentation on different tech and network layouts that the committee could inspect. Dug into the Starlink Survey
 - Would like to discover what the performance metrics for ISPs are?
 - Communications- tracking spreadsheet. Carrie will not be able to be the chair. Could make a plug to get more members at the governing board meeting or Organizational meeting. Got the press release out. Working on reappointing and an overview for the organizational meeting.
 - Finance- talked about how we could approach towns about the rescue plan money, and coordinating with the communications committee
 - Policies- no lead on the policy committee, is looking for someone.
- Christine’s Update
 - Submitted 2 letters of interest and will need to have an application in place by May 14th, a joint CUD proposal may be more competitive.

New Business

3:25 - NRTC Business Plan Check In

- Would like to schedule a meeting for a deep dive perhaps next week. 60-90 min to show the model and a review of the steps that the business took to get there. Can customize the model based on NEK CUDs specifics.
- The model will help find the metrics we need for an ISP
- When everyone is grounded, we can move through the next several steps pretty well and will be able to move to that Draft Report (scheduled for May 7).
- A piece needs to be added that we enter our grants when we “receive” them. Hoping to have that in the model by next week.
- Will be meeting 5-6:30 pm on Tuesday evening.

3:45 - WEC MOU Discussion - Executive Session

- MOU is between the electric co-op who will be setting up fiber and would like to go into executive session to discuss a further partnership. (Statute **1 V.S.A. § 313**)
- **Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss and MOU with Washington Electric Co-op under **1 V.S.A. § 313** with Mike Strait, Christine Hallquist, and Jami Jones. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Nick, Carried: (5-0)**
- **Motion to exit Executive Session Motioned: Jonathan, Seconded: Nick, Carried: (5-0)**
- No actions were taken in Executive Session.

4:05 - Concord Project Update

- Maximize RDBG funding. Original route went from Loon Ln to the bottom of Oregon Rd, now able to go pretty far out on Leonard Hill Rd, to get us to a USDA eligible area. A number of businesses have less than 4/1. Made a project that reflects the CUD mission better. On the arcGIS website.
- Question: with competition will we be able to find someone to meet our needs and budget?
 - That is the next thing to solve.
- On the spur is a 3rd Generation Bakery and the Waterford Elementary. Will be asking Waterford and Concord if they wish to expand the network with their American Rescue funding.
- Up next, get pole applications ready for the project. 6-9 month timeline for the make-ready to be complete.
 - Have to wait to submit the pole applications until we receive an application complete letter from the grants.
 - File for a Certificate of Public Good with the Utilities Commission

NBRC applications and build to strategize around approaching these towns.

- What would we potentially want to ask them to contribute to projects.
- We cannot serve every town. The pitch needs to be targeted to serve everyone quickly.
- The CUD could go to the Selectboards with an ISP partner with a plan.
 - Kingdom Fiber
 - Tilson
 - GWI
- Who will be pushing the plan forward?
 - The model will help us show what areas we want to be focused on within the first five years and the representatives in those towns (where we can build within 2 years) can help advocate for the plan.
 - Can make a big impact in a town even if it is only 10 mi.
 - Money must be spent before 2024.
 - The towns do not know if the townspeople will have to vote on how they money will be spent.
 - Presenting as an optional opportunity to improve Economic Development and living in the town.
 - Have the governing board members reach out to Select Boards of targeted towns with the opportunity.
 - Communications committee

4:20 - Governing Board Agenda

- Concord Project Update- Christine
- NRTC Model/Update
- American Rescue Plan Update/ Town-by Town allocations
- Organizational Meeting Updates
 - Changes to the bylaws regarding Chair rotations and appointments
- Admin update- what will the model do for us? Comprehensive, with phases.
- Approval to apply for the NBRC grants, assigning people to sign documents.-Kristen
- Letters of Intent/Project Map/ NRTC visuals
- Link to the google drive (RDBG grant)
- Spreadsheet of Town funding- Kristen

Other Business

Action Items

- Christine will put together the key project areas and an organization chart.
 - For next meeting
- Christine will send out a doodle poll for when we could have a meeting

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn, Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Jonathan, Carried: (5-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Jami Jones, NEK Broadband, Clerk