

NEK Community Broadband

Governing Board Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2021 5:30-7pm

Attendees: (see list)

Role Call & Agenda Review - 2 Min

Public Comment - 5 Min

Kristen is running for the board for Vermont Electric Co-op. She will be reaching out to the town reps.

Consent Agenda - 2 Min

- Approval of Meeting Minutes
- Accept Town of Morgan and their representatives into NEK Broadband
- FYI: Northern Enterprise NDA, NBRC Letter of Interest, Exec. Comm Minutes; Finance Comm. Minutes, Tech Comm. Minutes, Christine's weekly updates
- **Motion to approve Consent Agenda. Motioned: Kathleen Monroe, Seconded: Mike Strait, Carried: (21-0)**
- Welcome Wendy Matthews (Newport Town) and Larry Labor (Morgan).

Updates

5:45 - Administrative & Committee Update Discussion

5:50 - Updates from District Administrator

- No questions were asked about the administrative updates

New Business

6:00 - Concord Project Update

- Christine showed the maps of the Concord Project
- Currently avoiding the cable routes so that the NEK can focus on the underserved addresses.
- Was originally an 8mile project, is now a 22 mile project with 200 addresses passed. Will also serve multiple businesses and an elementary school.
- Questions:
 - Does the project rely on the 190K grant?

- Proposed partnership on the project with Kingdom Fiber. The CARES funded piece would go forward as planned, but the extension would not be funded
- Take rate/cost for the customer?
 - Take rate approach is 50% for rural areas. Cabled areas 18%. We are still completing the MOU and looking at performance standards to assess what the cost would be for the customer.
- Does partnering with an ISP mean it will be the standard ISP rate?
 - There needs to be enough revenue to service the IRUs, but the prices may not be the same that they are already offering. (NEK goal is to make it affordable) There are dependencies.
 - As a pilot project, we may not get to a global agreement.
- Does the address have to be on the line? Or how far away do they need to be?
 - Within 400 feet of the line. Kingdom Fiber offers the first 400 feet for free, which is a standard procedure in cost sharing.
 - USDA Grant would offer some subsidy for installation costs to businesses.
- Installation cost to the customer?
 - The current cost with KF is free with a 2 year contract. The actual cost would be around \$1200.
- Substation to network VELCO Fiber?
 - Known plan: first light splice for backhaul (where the hub is located)
 - KF: would like to go to VELCO because backhaul cost would go down.
- The reach is long?
 - It may be reaching the limits of the fiber, but within the specs.
- No other hubs?
 - True. In the future we will be looking for more redundancy
- Ownership?
 - We own the fiber and lease it to the ISP.
- KF builds to VELCO they would own it?
 - Installations, any equipment that would be built extra. We would build the main network to lease. The ISP partner would own the drop (ideally). Would look into fiber swapping to have a continuous line for other uses (public safety, public service, etc.
- Early design notes will be getting deleted.

- Next steps: get the MOU executed, certificate of public good (applying for pole applications)- looking at doing that within the next 3-4 weeks
- A pilot project that we were awarded with the CARES fund, but doesn't take in the whole goal of the CUD to connect the NEK. Looking forward to that model and design with NRTC.

6:20 - NRTC Model - how it works?

- There might be future changes to the model, therefore the model may not be public ready yet. Discussion on going into Executive Session.
- Proposed financial modeling to construct the network, will utilize grants, bond funding, or other debt.
- **Motion to go into executive session to review the proposed financial models under 1 VSA §§ 313 including Christine Hallquist, Jami Jones, and Woodman Page. Motioned: Mark Whitworth, Seconded: Malcolm Doak, Carried: (21-0)**
- Noah Armstrong joined at 6:20pm
- Annie Mclean left at 6:28pm
- **Motion to exit executive session. Motioned: Caro Thompson, Seconded: Kathleen Monroe, Carried: (21-0)**
- No action was taken during the executive session.
- What happens when we have paid back our loans? What does the business plan do at that point? (rhetorical question)

6:35 - American Rescue Act (ARA) Town & County Funding

- Kristen shared a proposed diagram of the allocation. It is an estimate based on what the legislation says they are going to do.
- Are there towns that we know we will be building within the next 2 years where it would be beneficial to get further investment from the town? If the town could invest some money, we would be able to build out faster or farther throughout your town. These are proposals on how the towns could spend some of their money to help connect the people of their towns. We will not be going to every town because we will not be able to offer something tangible to every town within the next 2 years.
- May- NRTC plan will lay out a phased buildout plan, which will show when and how we can build out to every town in the NEK.
- The state is to distribute the funds to the towns. Within 60 days of the American Rescue plan passing (50%). Do not know how long it will take to shift that money, but looking at a month.
- The money has to be spent by 2024 and to be spent on the COVID crisis. Selectboards are looking at how they can spend it. The money is not just for

broadband. Can include assistance to households, businesses, non-profits, essential worker pay, water, sewer, or broadband, etc. Can also be spent jointly in towns.

- Going forward the NEK would like to go to towns with proposals with an ISP partner prepared.
- It was previously communicated that towns will not fund the CUD?
 - The town cannot be on the hook if they fail to bring money they promised. NEK needs to be aware of how they communicate this from a legal standpoint.
 - Do not want to overask the towns because we are also getting funding from the state.
 - We are only presenting this as an option for the town's advantage, it will not move towns to the end of the line. No repercussions for not taking advantage of the opportunity.

6:50 - Organizational Meeting Plan

- Please reach out to selectboards for reappointment. The elections at the organizational meeting are for the Executive Committee. If a rep would like to be on the Executive Committee, reach out. Reps are expected to be at the Friday meetings and participate on other committees along with work between the meetings. We would like to include one rep from each county on the Executive Committee. Total of 7 members.
- Bylaw change proposed. Term limit for the chairs (2years) can be reappointed non-consecutively. Any other bylaw proposed changes should be put forth.
- If there are current chairs or committee members who need reprieve, please contact Evan.
- Questions:
 - Committees ought to do a summary of what they do.
 - Evan will add a segment for the committee chairs (commitments, seats available, etc.)

6:55 - NBRC Grant Application approval

- **Motion to approve NEK Community Broadband making an application for Northern Border Regional Commission Economic Infrastructure Grant along the lines of the letter of intents included in the packet and allow Christine Hallquist as the administrator to sign documents related to that application and grant, should it be received. Motioned: Kristen Fountain, Seconded: William Piper, Carried (21-0)**
- Will be submitting one letter of intent, and will come down to which partner is most capable of carrying out the letter.

- The map came from Tilson (data has not changed), and could have flawed information.
- Typos will be corrected.

Other Business

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn Motioned Nick Anzalone, Seconded: Mark Whitworth, Carried: (21-0)

Other Business

Adjourn

Respectfully Submitted,

Jami Jones, NEK 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			Jeremy Wintersteen		
Barnet	Kathleen Monroe	x	x	Charlie McAlpine			Carolyn Holliday		
Barton	Philip Roberts								
Brighton	Michael Strait	x	x						
Brownington	Calvin Page			William Davis					
Burke	Jennifer Barone	x	x	Todd Vendituoli	x				
Concord	William Humphrey								
Coventry	David Barlow			Phil Marquette					
Craftsbury	Katherine Sims			Rudy Chase			Brian Machesky		
Danville	Jonathan Baker	x	x	Sean Franson					
East Haven	Lyonel Tracy			Francie Loynd			Kerri Fillion		
Glover	Noah Armstrong	x	x	Shaun Campbell					
Greensboro	Carol Fairbank	x	x	Mary Metcalf					
Groton	Mike Gaiss	x	x						
Hardwick	Paul Fixx	x	x	Doug McClure					
Irasburg									
Kirby	Dana Caspersen			Malcolm Doak	x				
Lowell	Marjorie Kramer			Faye Starr					
Lyndon	Shawn Tester	x	x	Marty Feltus	x				
Morgan	Larry Labor								
Newark	Mark Whitworth	x	x	Ben Tilford	x				
Newport City									
Newport Town	Wendy Matthews	x	x	CJ					
Peacham	Jock Gill			Jim Barlow					
Ryegate	Shaun Burroughs	x	x	Nelson Elder					
Saint Johnsbury	Nick Anzalone	x	x	Bobbie Wagner			Keith Whitmore		
Sheffield	Anne McLean	x	x	Carolyn Crankshaw					
Stannard	Steve Pickard			Joanna Polsenberg					
Sutton	Evan Carlson	x	x	David Tucker	x				
Walden	Caro Thompson	x	x						
Waterford	Bill Piper	x	x	Gary Allard			Fred Saar		
Westfield	Carrie Glessner	x	x	Laura Emery					
Westmore	Erik Townsend			Linda Michniewicz			Ray Lanier	x	x
Wolcott	Michael Davidson	x	x	Bruce Wheeler					
Wheelock	David Stahler	x	x	Tyler Harter					
Administrator (non-voting)	Christine Hallquist	x							
Clerk (non-voting)	Jami Jones	x							

woodman page
Karl scott
andrew mcgregor
scott campbell
sarah lyons

Delegates P/V	21	21	Member Towns	35
Alternates P/V	6	1	Towns Represented	22
Votes total	22		Quorum	Yes
Votes to pass	12			