

NEK Community Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2020 - 3pm - 4:30pm

Attendees: Mike Strait (Governing Board), Jami Jones (clerk), Christine Hallquist (admin), Evan Carlson, Jonathan Baker, Kristen Fountain, Nick Anzalone, William Piper (3-4:40pm), Kevin Fitzgibbons (NRTC), Noah Armstrong, Michael Birnbaum (Kingdom Fiber), Ed Vilandrie (Kingdom Fiber), Katherine Sims (3:45-4:40pm)

Agenda Review

Updates

- Action Items Check In
 - Contract for NRTC. There is a draft and can hopefully be nailed down soon.
- Administrative Update
 - Newport Center has joined the CUD. Will be meeting with Newport City soon. UTG (Unified Towns in Gores) is sending a member to the Governing Board meeting on Thursday.
 - Newport will try to get their paperwork in by Monday so that we can put them on the agenda
 - Call with Rob Fish about potential challenges with the proposal for the 460K. The budget adjustment act the commissioner of the public service department will continue to fund those projects, but doesn't say anything about changing or adapting projects. They would like for us to stay with the Concord project. If we were to withdraw, the senate finance would have to re-obligate that funding.
 - Recommended to reach out to the senate finance committee. Evan has drafted an email so that we can move on this early next week.
 - For CUD support. The funds are meant to support the business plan for the CUD. not as much about the addresses like the connectivity initiative.
 - Discussion over the email which will be sent.
- Meeting Roundup
 - Had a conversation with Kingdom Fiber, will discuss later.
 - About their business capabilities.

- Committee Updates
 - The Policy Committee had its first ad-hoc meeting. They are working on the Policy on Policies. They will remain ad-hoc, but create a high-level charter.
 - The Communications Committee is putting together a press release. Began to create some communications policies.
 - In the process of reviewing and continuing to get out a high-level plan.
 - The Executive Committee will be continuing to take a look.
 - Finance Committee took a look at their grant accounting again
 - Tech Committee is doing a Starlink Regional Survey
- Christine's Update
 - Looking at the network for the grant application and the contract for the NRTC
 - There is an issue with the Tilson Data. As the NRTC started combing through the network there were some discrepancies (double counting hardware and endpoints in the network design)
 - NRTC has to start from scratch

New Business

3:25 - NRTC Business Plan Check In

NRTC gave a timeline for Reporting with the NEK CUD.

- Been working on defining a true scope to serve every last member of the CUD.
- Need to agree on what the Key Data Points are and there is a corresponding map.
- Want to rework the fiber routes into backbone rings and would include other existing plans.
- Building a mapping microsite, a financial model, network design/architecture types.
- Need to narrow down the information to get a true financial model.

Katherine's Update

- Energy and Technology was passed out of the VT Legislature
- The house bill is to establish a new entity Vermont Community Broadband Authority (funding from the Universal Service Fund)
 - To provide leadership and accountability
 - CUD may be able to apply for subordinated debt to leverage for more funding from VEDA.
 - The state fiber transfer is in the bill. State fiber would be made available to the CUDs.

- Workforce development component with the Dept of Labor to have the lineworkers to build the fiber, and a property tax exemption for providers or utilities who are working with the CUDs: WEC, CV Fiber, Kingdom Fiber
- Changes to the connectivity initiative to focus in on CUDs or partners of CUDs
- Includes pre construction grants.
- Questions about working partnership with a CUD.
 - When in contract or agreement with. The CUD decides who they are in partnership with. DPS would vet the arrangement with the property tax exemption.
- Federal Level- Stimulus is 1.25 billion for states, another 100mil for water/sewer and broadband infrastructure. Up to the state and direct payments to towns. NEK needs to advocate with the governor and with the towns
 - Bookmark: putting a proposal together to communicate with the towns about stimulus funding.

3:45 - Kingdom Fiber Introductions

- **Motion to move to Executive Session with Jami Jones, Christine Hallquist, Michael Strait, and the Kingdom Fiber team to discuss potential partnership and contract details. Motioned: Kristen Fountain, Seconded: Nick Anzalone, Motion: Carried (7-0).**
- **Motion to exit Executive Session.**
- **Motion to recommend executing an MOU with Kingdom Fiber for some collaborative projects. Motioned: Kristen Fountain, Seconded: Jonathan Baker, Carried (5-0)**
- Discussion of an MOU with WEC.

4:10 - 2021 Project Update

4:20 - Governing Board Agenda

- MOU discussion
- 2021 Project updates
- Public Records discussion with Eli
- Newport Town admitted
- Approval to apply for grants (USDA RBGV)

Other Business

- Discussion over possible next steps and projects.
- Evan gave his email to review to the Executive Committee on pivoting the current 460K grant funding to a different project.
- Discussion on revisions to the Business Plan

Action Items

- Christine will discuss the contract with the NVDA and cc Kristen Fountain.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jami Jones, Clerk

