

NEK Community Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2021 - 3pm - 4:30pm

Attendees: Jami Jones (clerk), Mike Strait, Evan Carlson, Kristen Fountain, Nick Anzalone, William Piper, Morgan Wade, Christine Hallquist (Admin), Jonathan Baker, Katherine Sims (3:22-3:45), Michael Brown (NRTC), Kevin Fitzgibbons (NRTC), Aaron Bennett (NRTC).

Agenda Review

Kevin will be joining at 3:30pm

Updates

- Action Items Check In
- Administrative Update
 - Vote to Amend May, 30 Meeting Minutes/June 4th Meeting Minutes

Motion to amend the minutes from May 30th to reflect the intent of the meeting.

Motioned: William, Seconded: Morgan, Carried (7-0)

- Public Meeting
- Meeting Roundup
 - Christine has been having a lot of RFP meetings, no VCUDA, update on 10-yr telecom.
- Committee Updates
- Christine's Update
 - Changes: CARES grant change and update the finances with outstanding balances.
 - Christine is working on spreadsheets to help the grant reporting for Rob Fish.
 - Responses for RFPs? We have received responses from different companies, GWI, Consolidated, etc. May have a special meeting next week to review the RFPs, suggestions for a small team rather than an Executive Committee.

- Suggestion for the RFPs to be made a public process to reach more entities.
- Question: Who is driving the WEC project? CV Fiber.
- Will include Netify (Dawn Dawson) on the next round, there will be updates made to the process to make it public.

New Business

3:20 - Timeline Review

- Took a look at the timeline for updates
- NEK has a full time administrator through the NVDA through the end of the year, and Executive Director next year.
- Question: Planning to vote on ISP partnership at the same time as discussing the operating model with the governing board?
 - We can only operate under certain models if we have ISPs to carry it out
 - Deciding on ISP and model concurrently because we cannot have one without the other, but after there are contract negotiations to hammer out details.
 - Still looking forward to giving the Governing Board all of the options for models and partnerships along with the Executive Committee's recommendations.
- In the next meeting, look at what the criteria is for choosing models and partners, and what is most important for the Governing Board to hear.
- The timeline has a specific process for efficiency. All of it affects when NEK Broadband actually begins construction.

3:30 - NRTC - EPP (Executable Project Plan), Design Engineering & Membership Recommendation

- Considering future work with NRTC. Member owned, customer service oriented, telecommunication arm for members, utility solutions, managed service practice, broadband practice, etc. NRTC does give patronage.
- What does it mean to take advantage of the NRTC resources? NRTC helped to work through a vendor management issue. They do not do the construction, but can manage it through electronic design, making sure that contractors deliver on the design.
- Looking for the Executive Committee to recommend membership with NRTC.

- Need to get design engineering done so that we can order materials, but we were looking to expand it for the Concord/Waterford project.
- Kevin & Christine will collaborate on the design engineering for the Concord/Waterford project expansion for discussion at the next meeting.
- Scope of work in the EPP and final deliverables:
 - Seen preliminary backbone routes, would take some of the modeling routes and look at the distributions, putting paths together, talk about the standards set that would feed the project, defining Roles and Responsibilities, looking at the beginnings of cabinet placing to be able to take to start preconstruction. The package can be handed over to the project manager.
- Question: Will it include safety standards?
 - NRTC will have to coordinate with the NEK to add that into the plan
- Concord project, if there is a design we may want to approve that to get it going?
 - Proposal specifies the distances based on pilot project, but can include the entire waterford/concord area.
 - Can have a proposal ready for the governing board very quickly and will have it to the Executive Committee for review beforehand.
 - Actual cost will bill based on units (end footage), this is an estimate.
- Is there a cost for the membership? Is it in the model?
 - It is not in the model, a one-time \$1500 fee.
- **Motion to become a member of NRTC. Motioned: William, Seconded: Nick, Carried: (7-0).**
- **Motion to recommend to the governing board the approval of the contract for the Executable Project Plan with NRTC. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Mike, Carried: (7-0)**
- Why don't we call an emergency meeting to place the urgent votes?
 - If we can get 20 towns, we can hold a meeting. For some time next week.
 - Direct pitch on the Engineering to decide the scope

Motion that we recommend hiring NRTC to design the pilot project in Concord/Waterford, but will continue to design the scope between now and the special meeting. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Nick, Carried:(7-0)

- Question: Plan for VEC northern expansion cost was lower than what you quoted for us?
 - The design deliverables have increased since the start, it is a different product and system. The pricing in the NEK model accurately reflects the

design engineering as it stands now. Would have to update the VEC model to the current standards. Because of the way that NRTC communicates the design and engineering cost now, the cost was displayed in different areas in the VEC model.

- The tech committee may be able to meet with Michael Brown to discuss more on design and engineering.
- Narrative will be presented next week.

3:40 - NRTC Business plan and communications

3:50 - ED & Staffing Discussion - Executive Session

- Will be discussed at the next meeting

4:10 - Policy - Procurement & Bylaw Change Recommendation

- ARPA funding and DPS requires a procurement policy, based on Lamoille Fibernet. Reviewed by Christa.
- Question: Changing the thresholds for incidental purchases?
 - Yes, ought to be modified, the federal is \$250K, policy reflects 3 tiers.
 - Incidental purchasing needs to change to reflect administrator or executive director, could increase incidental to the current executive committee threshold of 10K (match the federal thresholds)
 - Any expenditures that are in the budget will not require approval
 - What are the requirements for hiring?
- Question: Requiring public notice for certain procurements or thresholds?
 - Recommends public processes for RFPs
 - Up to 250K would not require an RFP
 - Federal guidance only requires a simplified bidding process. Could revise it to include some sort of publication?
- Could potentially wait to approve this before sending it to the governing board at a special meeting.
- Will give more time to look over at the policy for the next meeting. Will approve before the next governing board meeting

- Bylaw changes to give the Executive Committee more agility to make purchases and decisions to expedite these processes.

- precludes bylaw changes or changes that would affect the mission of the organization.
- Has been reviewed by Christa and Annie.
- Doesn't need another vote by the governing board, but they can change it.
- Set the threshold for procurement?
 - With the size and scope of the construction projects, how much would be enough to actually move? May need to change procurement policy to reflect a clause about the approved budget.
- Suggestion for \$30K? Perhaps a percentage of the Budget?
 - "Any major purchase, apart from the approved budget" changes to the procurement policy.
- Will have the bylaw reference the procurement policy.

Motion to recommend the bylaw change to the governing board. Motioned: Mike, Seconded: Morgan, Carried (7-0).

- Evan will send out the amended bylaws to the Governing Board
- Nick will send out a doodle poll for meetings later in the week for the GB.
 - EC Meeting to review the Design and Engineering plan, and the procurement policy. Monday evening. Evan will be at Do North. 5pm
- A Subcommittee to review the RFPS will be decided in email.
- Putting the items on the next scheduled meeting

4:20 - 10 Year Telcom Plan Review

- Will be discussed at the next meeting.

Other Business

Adjourn

Action Items

- Kevin & Christine will collaborate on the design engineering for the Concord/ Waterford project expansion for discussion at next meeting.
- Christine will connect Michael Brown with the Tech Committee on further discussion of the design/model.
- Evan will send out the amended bylaws to the Governing Board
- Nick will send out a doodle poll for meetings later in the week for the GB.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jami Jones, NEK Broadband, Clerk

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jami Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.