

NEK Community Broadband

# Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2020 - 3pm - 4:56pm

**Attendees:** Jami Jones (clerk), Michael Strait, Christine Hallquist (Admin), Nick Anzalone, Evan Carlson, Kristen Fountain, William Piper, Carrie Glessner (Communications Committee), Noah Armstrong

## Agenda Review - 2 Min

## Updates - 20 Min

- Action Items Check In
  - Pole numbers are in the GPS layers.
- Administrative Update
  - Call with VCF check in with the operations grant that they provided us and KPIs for monitoring. Follow-up to close out the grant. They seemed "happy" with how the CUD was using the money.
  - Things have been going well with Quickbooks and "grant" accounting.
- Meeting Roundup
  - Had meetings with Kingdom Fiber and individuals about legislation.
  - Kingdom Fiber has 22 blocks and 7.5 mil in subsidies and 20mil for the overall project, looking in the future at 50,000 addresses. Looking to NEK Broadband to help build infrastructure.
  - The CUD now needs to have an RFP for partnerships, a formal upfront process and criteria about how the CUD chooses their partners. Need a stance on "ownership" and what that looks like.
    - Having a strategy on how to engage with other companies for partnerships.
  - VCUDA testified at the legislature.
- Finance, Tech, Communications Committee Updates

- Communications Committee Update (Carrie Glessner) "Talking Points"
  - Information useful for Town Meeting: bullet points and narrative paragraph.  
Hoping to send it out for the Governing Board meeting.
  - Recommended in a .pdf format.
  - Recommendations were given on how to edit the document for final presentation.
  - The final draft will be given to Jami Sunday night or Monday morning
  - Carrie will speak at the Governing Board meeting about how to use the "Talking Points" document.
    - Carrie will also be requesting more information from the Board about what they need for town/annual meetings from committee.
- Tech Committee:
  - Went over the different tech, cost, updates for Althea, Starlink, and CBRS.
  - Michael Gaiss and Jock have been charged with finding 30-40 people within 3 miles of town center to see if Starlink and the CUD will be entering into partnerships.
- Finance Committee:
  - Meeting cancelled, but have been receiving updates from Jami and Kristen on the "grant" accounting.
- Christine's Update

## New Business - 40-70Min

### 3:25 - 2021 Construction Project Proposal

- Took the 8 projects from the Tilson Feasibility Study, and revised it to \$40K construction cost.
- VT Cares Concord will remain untouched for now, St J and Newport have cable. The USDA is our targeted start point. Those are the areas that we can borrow on. The other areas we cannot.
- Questions:
  - Why wasn't Barton, Sutton, Orleans chosen? It is a point of decision that the Executive Committee needs to make. The project could provide a core

network link. The logic was to be prepared for grant funding from the government or the state.

- We have a USDA grant opportunity coming due, and could apply that funding to the Barton-Sutton, Orleans-Coventry area.
  - Looking at a potentially strategically collaborative project with a for-profit company such as Kingdom Fiber or Ed Vilandrie
  - It was identified as an “equity investment” by Tilson.
  - Concerns about the project not fitting within the budget and or grants that we could potentially receive this year.
  - Suggested to have a priority list of projects and the report gives a good overall view of the CUDs potential.
  - Walden-the project to reallocate state funds is an RITC area and we would not have to be concerned about Consolidated Communications. Area in WEC. The NRTC was awarded to Kingdom Fiber to be the ISP.
  - Clarify what we are ready for.
  - RDBG grant is due February 26th
  - Governing Board needs to approve a proposal for the grant. Could be Walden or Groton-Ryegate.
    - We would need to pull apart the Tilson budget.
    - Moving forward aggressively and use USDA grants, choosing the projects that we can get done with the funds that we believe we will receive.
  - The CUD needs to have more in place to show that we have more specific plans going forward in order to receive the grants.
  - Looking to relocate the CARES grant funding, and would need to get the pole applications in right away.
  - Looking to get an MOU from Kingdom Fiber in the future for the Walden Circle.
  - Would like to see a more detailed process of steps for this year.
- Decide on the scope of the project that the Executive committee is recommending to the governing board.
  - Pros: working with likely partner, working with an amenable Utility company, and is a middle mile.
  - The Executive Committee will need the authority to move faster within the projects. There are a variety of projects available and here are the criteria that the Executive Committee is going to use when choosing which projects to rank them.

- Will present this document to the Governing Board as a Roadmap for the Governing Board in concept and the Executive Committee will put together a list of criteria that will funnel the projects. And then will receive proposals for approval of applying for grants.
  - State CARES and RDBG grants
  - Need to do a good job of explaining why these projects and why so fast?
  - We do not have our own funding to go wherever we want to go, we have to build up the asset base and go where the funding is for now.
  - Possible criteria for how projects become chosen: available finances, available infrastructure, available partners, available time, and available utilities.

**Motion to recommend to the Governing Board that the CUD pursue the projects identified in Chrstines report based on the criteria designed by the Executive Committee. Motioned: William Piper, Seconded: Nick Anzalone, Carried: (5-0).**

3:40 - Mapping Project Review

- Received a taxonomy

3:50 - Business Plan Proposal

- Shown that VPS and NRTC are the best to pursue the business plan. Notes are in the document. NRTC are RDOF winners and have worked in rural areas extensively. They work with Municipalities that work with the Co-operatives.
- NRTC will provide proof of insurance, and is well known.
- They're a not for profit, and thereby mission driven.

**Motion to recommend NRTC to the Governing Board. Motioned: William Piper, Seconded: Noah Armstrong, Carried: (5-0)**

- Discussion on the Executive Committees stance of Starlink.

4:10 - State Policy review

4:20 - Governing Board Agenda

Business Plans

Proposals

Talking Points

## Other Business

### Action Items

- Carrie will speak at the Governing Board meeting about how to use the "Talking Points" document.
  - Carrie will also be requesting more information from the Board about what they need for town/annual meetings from committee.
- Executive Committee will put together a list of criteria
- Will present this document to the Governing Board as a Roadmap for the Governing Board in concept

### Adjourn

**Motion to Adjourn. Motioned: William Piper, Seconded: Noah Armstrong.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jami Jones, NEK Broadband, Clerk

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "jami jones".