

NEK Community Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2021 - 3:30pm -5pm

Physical Location: 142 Easter Ave, St Johnsbury, VT 05819

Attendees: Jami Jones (clerk), Christa Shute (ED), Evan Carlson (Chair), Kristen Fountain, Ray Lanier, Michael Strait, William Piper, Morgan Wade, Jonathan Baker

Not Present: Nick Anzalone (quorum is 6)

Agenda Review

Motion to add Construction Contractor approval and ARPA discussion to the agenda.

Motioned: Mike, Seconded: Ray, Carried:(6-0)

Updates

- Administrative Update
- Meeting Roundup
- Committee Updates
- Christa's Update
 - OSP- we are identifying the cabinet locations, and have gotten locations from key towns. We will be incorporating those into the design where we can. The cabinets need to be near the substations. There are some Materials shortage issues. We will have a list at the beginning of next week. An RFP will be going out. We will have three distributors for the equipment and materials for the near future.
 - We are continuing to do work on Workforce Development. There is a course at VTC, apprenticeship, instructors, a pole yard, and we are working through the state process to put together a survey and the people who need to take that survey. The survey gets information so the state would help the businesses pay for their employee costs.
 - Evan- When is the deadline for the survey?
 - Christa- It will be going out the second week in November.
 - There is some funding through state and private investments. It is part of NEK Broadband's mission to keep jobs local, and Christa is collaborating with

Steve Shepherd to attract employees and students to this internship and development work.

- Evan- have we talked with St. Johnsbury Academy? They are situated well to grow high-schoolers into this field of development.
- Christa- VTC works with all of the CTE programs and St. Johnsbury Academy is a CTE program. We would be talking to St. Johnsbury Academy as well. Christa will touch base with Maureen (VTC). It would be ideal to get something into the spring semester. Non-traditional and prison transitions could also be potential out-of-house workers.
- Concord- Christa proposed that Eustis Cable be the contractor. We have reduced make ready to 2 poles being replaced rather than 6, which will lower the amount of time. Splicing workers are lined up for VELCO. We can add the tree trimming to Eustis as make-ready, they can also do work on behalf of CCI. Our first easement has been signed and notarized. We have fiber and parts delivered. All parts should be in by next week, to be stored in St. Johnsbury. Looking to preregister people through Crowd Fiber so that we can hand the information to WCVT.
- Contract Discussion-
 - We received 3 responses. Eustis was considerably lower than the others. It is about \$60K over our projected budget, but considerably under. Christa spoke with them about timing and crews. They are putting the "A Crew" on it. They would like to continue collaboration with us, and are motivated to make this project work on a priority timeline.

Jonathan Baker joined at 3:40pm, (quorum is now 7)

- Evan- How do they plan to handle press around "unclean" fiber sites and "EC Fiber" situation? What strategy/ criteria do we have in place to ensure clean sites?
 - Christa- Contract is very thorough from NRTC. It is a master services agreement. Christa made modifications to it. The stated issues are made very clear in the contracts. We have people inspecting their work within a day or two. They will be doing this with a tablet, where the information will be uploaded to the GIS every night. Tree chippers will need to be put into place. We could look for outside chipping services.
- Evan- How are we handling concerns presented about the construction crew from community members?

- Christa- Concerns could be given to the check-in subcommittee and if they are larger concerns are then presented to the larger Executive Committee. The meetings with NRTC and Mission Broadband are daily, if there are issues, they will come up in those meetings.

Motion to approve Eustis Cable as a contractor for the Concord/Waterford Project.

Motioned: Mike, Seconded: Jonathan, Carried: (7-0)

- State Fiber- Christa has the contracts. They are well done and give ownership retroactive to Sept 30th. State will pay for the maintenance until the end of the year so that we can RFP the maintenance. We are continuing to get more information.
 - We will also be working on the Northern Enterprise transfer in the future.
- Action Items Check In - Approve Minutes ([October 1](#), [October 4](#), [October 8](#), [October 22](#))

Motion to approve the minutes. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Bill, Carried (7-0).

- Personnel discussions including Executive Director, Grant Manager / Treasurer

Motion to find that the discussion of personnel could substantially disadvantage the CUD and the parties involved, if prematurely disclosed. Motioned Mike, Seconded: Morgan, Carried (7-0)

Motion to enter into Executive Session under 1 VSA 313 with Jami Jones and Christa Shute to discuss personnel and hiring. Motioned: Morgan, Seconded: Mike, Carried (7-0).

Motion to Exit Executive Session. Motioned: Morgan, Seconded: Mike, Carried: (7-0)

No action was taken in Executive Session.

Motion to accept the resignation of Kristen Fountain from NEK Broadband and the Executive committee, effective the end of the Executive Committee on October 29, 2021. Motioned: Mike, Seconded: Ray, Carried: (6-0-1) (Kristen abstained).

Motion to hire Kristen Fountain as the Grant Manager for NEK Broadband. Motioned: Morgan, Seconded: Bill, Carried: (6-0-1) (Kristen abstained).

Motion to approve the posting of Executive Director job description. Motioned: Mike, Seconded: Morgan, Carried (7-0)

Motion to appoint Jonathan Baker to the seat at VCUDA. Motioned: Kristen, Seconded: Mike, Carried (6-0-1) (Jonathan abstained).

- Discussion: Ray- What is VCUDA? Jonathan does not need to be the Vice Chair unless he would like to. VCUDA is (Vermont Community Union District Association) it is an organization as a lobbying body and joint services.

Motion to recommend the appointment of Morgan Wade as Vice Chair of NEK Broadband to the Governing Board. Motioned: Mike, Seconded: Ray, Carried: (6-0-1) (Morgan abstained).

- Partnership Discussion

Motion to find that the discussion of Partnerships would prematurely disadvantage the CUD and the partners involved. Motioned: Mike, Seconded: Kristen, Carried: (7-0).

Motion to enter Executive Session under 1 VSA 313 to discuss partnerships with Jami Jones and Christa Shute. Motioned: Mike, Seconded: Ray, Carried: (7-0).

Motion to Exit Executive Session. Motioned: Mike, Seconded: Ray, Carried: (7-0).

No action was taken in Executive Session.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. Motioned: Morgan, Seconded: Mike, Carried: (7-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Jami Jones, NEK Broadband, Clerk

