



Governing Board Meeting Minutes (Draft)

August 11, 2022 - 5:30 - 7pm

In-Person Location: None - see note re ACT 78 below.

Attendees: See Attached List

Public Comment - 2 Min

Consent Agenda - 1 Min

- Approval of Meeting Minutes
- Committee Minutes

Motioned: Dana Casperson Seconded: William Piper	For	Against	Abstain
Motion: to approve the Consent Agenda.	33	0	0

- **Discussion Summary:** no discussion.

Executive Committee Action Review & Affirmation

Motioned: Dana Casperson Seconded: William Piper	For	Against	Abstain
Motion: that the Governing Board affirms receipt and confirmation, with no proposed revision or alteration, of the Executive Committee Actions document.	33	0	0

- **Discussion Summary:** no discussion.

Administrative Update and Board Capacity

- **Discussion Summary:** We have switched the office and PO Box from Hardwick to St. Johnsbury. Christa gave an introduction to Danielle Sukkaew, who has been hired to take care of inventory, bookkeeping, and grant reporting. NEK Broadband is currently hiring for a Treasurer, Operations Manager, and Administrative Assistant (www.nekbroadband.org/careers). Evan will be taking a temporary leave for family

commitments. He is hoping to re-engage in early October. Morgan Wade the Vice-Chair will be stepping in as chair temporarily.

Finance Update

- **Discussion Summary:** Kristen gave the Q2 Treasurer's report. This includes our first quarter with Customer Revenue, \$2M was expended on Capital Investments. NEK Broadband has signed up for a sweep account, so that all of the grant funds will be FDIC insured. The liability associated with restricted grants is similar to financial debt in the sense that the funds must be returned if they are not utilized in the timeframe and manner agreed to in the grant contract. We account for our restricted grants as liabilities for that reason. Grant money is earned as income when the money is spent as the contract allows. Staffing has increased as the business has grown. We have increased current assets to match the work that is currently being done in the CUD, and the current builds and services that we are offering.
- We would like to keep the Debt/Asset Ratio under 1. We are at .54.
- Special thanks was given to Kristen for her work as Treasurer..

Communications Update

- **Discussion Summary:** NEK Broadband participated in a press conference in coordination with Gov. Scott and the VCBB. The website has been released by Stride with a "soft launch." Nedah is continuing to troubleshoot the website and working out the kinks. The Governing Board will provide feedback on the website to Nedah. Stride has completed designs for marketing (door hangers, signs, etc)
- Christa gave the Customer Overview for May-July 2022. Proposed: figures on the addressable market, metrics, and "the funnel." We will be using CrowdFiber and Salesforce to have clarity on the continuing metrics. We currently have 342 passings. Christa will add the passings to the Customer Overview chart for the next meeting. We expect numbers to improve with USDA (Waterford-Concord Part 2) and community outreach. We are tracking those who decline to take service and will also take those figures into consideration.
- Proposed: Educational messages about what high speed internet may do for the communities. Community focal points (libraries).

Affordability - Scope of Issue, ACP

- **Discussion Summary:** Anyone who declines because of expense is reached out to regarding ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program- <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>). Jonathan has been working with Equal Access to Broadband and is working on an API (Application Program Interface), as a way of interfacing with the federal government website to make it easier for customers to access the resources they need in reference to Broadband. The

Affordability group meets twice per month. Out of 39K premises there are only 27k households and 27% of those make 200% of poverty or under. Our first priority is to create a fiscally responsible enterprise, but another value of NEK Broadband is to find creative solutions to the affordability problem within our region. We can bring the price down through grants, philanthropic organizations, etc, rather than debt.

Workforce Development - Eustis, VCBB, VTC, FBA

- **Discussion Summary:** We are currently working with VCBB, Vermont Technical College, and the Fiber Broadband Association. We signed a Contract with Eustis back in November, with an amendment this month to get 95% employment from the Northeast Kingdom with enough crews for up to 60mi per month. We look forward to supporting 40-60 consistent jobs in the future, aligning with our mission and vision to disperse funds back into local jobs in our community. Eustis is also going to be supplying 2 experienced trainers to train those in the workforce.
- We are awaiting approval from CTC (an independent engineering firm for VCBB) on our detailed design in accordance with our grant guidelines. After which, we will be prepared for construction. We will be continuing make-ready, putting up strand, and working on what we can in the meantime. We are awaiting firm dates on some parts for the equipment cabinets, and are working towards getting those parts in October, but current written confirmations are as far out as February.
- Are we going to go beyond the contracted 280mi scope of work with Eustis? The amendment promotes a long-term relationship between Eustis and NEK Broadband for workforce development and construction, following the guidelines of the approved Construction Grant. The amendment gives flexibility for additional work at the current pricing, with price modifiers based on incurred cost.

Grant Updates Including Town ARPA Funding Opportunity & Deadlines

- **Discussion Summary:** We are currently building the backbone from Concord up to Brighton to Guildhall. We have been approved for a \$5mil increase from the \$16mil we have received for the project. The VCBB is working on a statewide Middle Mile grant that NEK Broadband is participating in - we put in a request that in addition to reaching to our OLTs that they extend the middle mile proposal in our area to libraries and educational institutions.
- Christa gave an overview of the ReConnect Grant area for new members. We will hear back on our acceptance before September 4. Round 4 will include a new rule where we would not need to find a non-federal match for the grant funds.
- Christa gave an update on the Town ARPA Program. Approved towns are Peacham, Groton, Ryegate, Walden, Hardwick, and Derby. The Town ARPA program provides an opportunity to

the towns to possibly accelerate their build, based on where the backbone or OLT cabinet are being built in the town. The deadline to request a proposal is August 18th, and the deadline for the town approval vote is September 15th.

Breakout Groups: October Summit

- **Discussion Summary:** Many of the groups were unable to get to the last question and the majority of groups requested a poll for specific topics.

Group 1: Bill Piper: 3 presentations that everyone attends, no idea what hot items will be in October. People feeling overwhelmed, not incredibly interested in nitty gritty. Enthusiastic on informal social gathering. Would be able to communicate one-on-one. Send out a survey for last part.

Group 2: Evan Carlson: Want orientation for new board members, hearing multiple voices, not the norm. "Evergreen content" to record and share content from the different sessions to share or watch later. Midday, Lunch would be great, socialize, one-on-one convo.

Group 3: Morgan Wade: also want social, delineation of time for those who live far off (lunch), some liked the varied tracks with different levels of understanding, team building.

Group 5: Danielle Sukkaew: Budget early on, lunch can be social, have different tracks. 4 hours may be adequate.

Group 6: Kristen Fountain: 2 tracks is a good idea, people may switch between based on subject matter. Social is very important, having hour before and after for optional socializing would provide a time for those who want to, using brain ends by 3, survey is best way to get interest

Group 7: Nedah Warstler: important for people to choose their own tracks. Materials specific to engaging and educating the towns, full day, What is different now vs past broadband efforts by the state, lunch to mingle with vendors/staff

Adjourn

Motioned: Mary Metcalf Seconded: Malcolm Doak	For	Against	Abstain
Motion: to adjourn.	33	0	0

*Respectfully Submitted,
Nedah Warstler, NEK Broadband, Clerk*

Action Items:

- The Governing Board will provide feedback on the website to Nedah.
- Christa will add the passings to the Customer Overview chart for the next meeting.

Town	Delegate	P	V	Alternate	P	V	Alternate	P	V
Albany	Rob Dewees	v	v						
Barnet	Kathleen Monroe			Jerri Kohl					
Barton	Christopher Altimus			Amy Crouch					
Bloomfield	Nate Nugent								
Brighton	Michael Strait	v	v	Jonah Petre					
Brownington	Amber Hastings			William Davis					
Brunswick	David Caron			Theresa Caron	v	v			
Burke	Todd Vendituoli			Jennifer Barone					
Canaan	Ann Morgan Wade	v	v	Alfred Buckley			Frank Sawicki, Jr		
Charleston	John Kellogg	v	v	Peter Moskovites					
Concord	Dale Urie	v	v	Bill Humphrey					
Coventry	David Barlow	v	v	Phil Marquette					
Craftsbury	Rudy Chase	v	v	Katherine Sims			Brian Machesney		
Danville	Jonathan Baker	v	v						
Derby	Karen Chitambar			Bob Kelley			Grant Spates		
East Haven				Kerri Fillion					
Glover	Noah Armstrong								
Granby	Sonia Peters			Sheryl Brown	v	v			
Greensboro	John Stone			Mary Metcalf	v	v			
Groton	Mike Gaiss	v	v	Willis Page					
Guildhall	John Orłowski	v	v	George Blakeslee					
Hardwick	Paul Fixx	v	v	Doug McClure					
Holland	Ed Brady	v	v	Andrew Bouchard					
Irasburg	Michael Turner								
Jay	Lynnette Deaette	v	v	Le-Ann Tetrault			Tara Morse		
Kirby	Dana Caspersen	v	v	Malcom Doak	x	x			
Lemington	William Gilbert	v	v	Beth Ellingwood			David White		
Lowell	Marjorie Kramer	v	v	Faye Starr					
Lyndon	Shawn Tester	v	v	Marty Feltus					
Lunenburg	Harry Williams			James Peyton					
Maidstone	James Mewkill								
Morgan	Eric Pope			Larry Labor					
Newark	Ben Tilford	x	x	Mark Whitworth	v	v			
Newport City	Woodman Page			Chris Vachon			Paul Monette		
Newport Town	Wendy Matthews	v	v	Cameron Thompson			David Ghelli		
Norton	Christina Duffy			Kenn Stransky	v	v			
Peacham	Jock Gill			Harry Vann					
Ryegate	Shawn Burroughs			Nelson Elder					
Sheffield	Claire Polfus	v	v	Annie Mclean					
St. Johnsbury	Nicolas Anzalone	v	v	Scott Campbell					
Stannard	Steve Pickard			Johanna Polsenberg					
Sutton	Evan Carlson	v	v	David Tucker			Robert Simms		
Troy	Robert Langlands			Gary Taylor			Mark Sanville		
UTGs	Barb Nolan	v	v	Gina Vigneault					
Victory									
Walden	Caro Thompson	v	v						
Waterford	Bill Piper	v	v	Fred Saar					
Westfield	Carrie Glessner			Laura Emery	v	v			
Westmore	Erik Townsend	v	v	Linda Michniewicz			Ray Lanier	x	x
Wheelock	David Stahler Jr.			Eileen Boland	v	v			
Wolcott	Michael Davidson			Bruce Wheeler	v	v			

Date: August 2022

	P	V		
Delegates P/V	26	25	Member Towns	49
Alternates P/V	10	8	Towns Represente	33
Votes total	33		Quorum	Yes
Votes to pass	17			

Members of the Public

Staff in Attendance:

Christa Shute (Director)
Jami Jones (Assistant)
Nedah Warstler (CRM)
Kristen Fountain (Treasurer)
Danielle Sukkaew (Bookkeeper)