

ConnectME Authority

June 22, 2009 – Meeting Notes

1. Introduction

Authority Members: Jean Wilson, Mitch Davis, Dick Thompson, Vendean Vafiades (for Sharon Reishus)

Staff: Phil Lindley, Amy Spelke, Kelly Arata

2. Fairpoint Communications - Presentation

Ralph Thompson from Fairpoint Communications provided information on broadband and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The company's goal is 95% broadband availability. Fairpoint would like to accelerate deployment from 2013 to 2011 and to expand availability to more customers and communities to achieve a greater than 95% availability rate.

Michael Brown from Fairpoint Communications provided an overview of network plans that includes their solution to expand broadband in three states (ME, NH and VT) by working with Cisco Advanced Services Team in designing the network. By 2012, Fairpoint would like to reach 95% availability.

Karen Romano from Fairpoint Communications discussed meeting customer needs. With on-ramp pricing, it would be the same price everywhere on the network.

A PowerPoint presentation entitled "Leading Maine into a New Economy" was provided (attached).



Fairpoint
Powerpoint0001.pdf

Mitch Davis asked if Fairpoint would be doing VOIP communications and video over the network. Mr. Thompson stated that Fairpoint already completed a successful trial. Jean Wilson wanted to know how much ARRA funds were Fairpoint looking for. Mr. Thompson stated that Fairpoint was looking for \$50 million.

3. Preliminary Review of Mapping Project Proposals

Phil Lindley reviewed the 12 mapping project proposals that the ConnectME Authority received that ranged in price from \$90,000 to \$2.8 million.

<u>Provider/Vendor</u>	<u>Bid</u>
Cost Quest (Link America)	\$ 450,000
Connected Nation	\$ 150,000
C. Squared Systems	\$ 170,000
Calibre Engineering	\$2,125,000
Davey Resource	\$2,824,828
CBG Communications	\$ 499,950
James Sewall	\$ 450,000
LCC International	\$1,408,000
Northern Pride	\$1,277,000
Penobscot Bay	\$2,315,513
SGC Engineering	\$ 845,000
Broadband Census	\$ 90,000

Mr. Lindley did not have a recommendation for the Authority. However, the top three vendors were: James Sewall, CBG Communications, and Connected Nation. He did ask that the Authority request presentations and have interviews with the three top bidders. The Vendor points were ranked 50% on price and 50% on all other.

Mitch Davis would like to know on-going costs on any of the projects. Mr. Lindley can follow-up on this question.

Jean Wilson would like to know process and timing of funding. Mr. Lindley answered that the grant process is expected to open around the end of June or the first of July for NTIA mapping grants, for \$350,000,000.

Mitch Davis asked about getting approval from the advisory council established under LD 1012. Dick Thompson stated that the Authority has the authority to do mapping. Mr. Lindley stated that the Authority is required to do some level of mapping and that mapping will make the application process easier.

Vendean Vafiades wondered if we were waiting for ARRA funds. Phil Lindley stated that we were not. The Authority will have to interview the top three bidders. He suggests possibly setting up the mapping project in phases with the later phase contingent on NTIA grant money available. Vendean Vafiades believes that mapping is important to move forward and believes that it should not be contingent on getting NTIA funds. Mr. Lindley stated that the Authority could start with our funding and will investigate if this expenditure could be considered matching funds. Mitch Davies has not committed yet to funding for mapping. Phil thinks the Authority has funds to start the mapping project but will know more after the Authority brings in the three providers.

Jean Wilson asked why there is such a large difference in bid prices. Amy Spelke stated that the Authority will likely get a better product from the more

expensive vendors, but we will have to decide what we want for a mapping project end product.

Mitch wondered if there was a problem with companies not providing information on expansion and other areas.

4. Broadband Strategy Council

Rep. Cynthia Dill gave a history and an overview of the Broadband Strategy Council contained in R. 2009, c. 108 (LD 1012). Membership and duties contained therein. Leadership has 30 days to appoint members, then first meeting within 15 days. The Council will give recommendations to the Authority regarding in regards to taking advantage of broadband opportunities for public institutions under the ARRA.

Dick Thompson is worried about leadership meeting the 30-day deadline. Rep. Dill stated that she was also worried.

5. Executive Director's Report

Third Grant Round Status

In regards to PL 2009, c. 63 (LD 850), Phil Lindley stated that he has amended the application to include the new provisions regarding prioritizing and scoring grant applications.

Phil Lindley stated that the Authority has received 14 pre-application letters to its third grant round request along with responses from incumbents. He will forward those responses to applicable applicants. July 15th is the deadline.

Mitch Davis stated that the Authority needs a definition of overlap. Phil Lindley stated that he hopes the application process will flesh those problems out and believes we continue to have concerns with wireless projects. Mitch Davis recommended giving this assignment to the Advisory Council. Fletcher Kittredge stated that the Advisory Council would be happy to take on this issue. It is hard to have discussions without coverage data.

Maine School & Library Network 3.

Phil Lindley stated that the MSLN3 group was meeting this afternoon. A draft MOU has been completed, that describes the potential new entity, "Network Maine."

Additional Staff – Draft Job Description

Phil Lindley will work more closely with Dick Thompson to submit the job description for a Senior Technical Analyst to Human Resources. The head count comes out of OIT, and then paid by the ConnectME Authority. Mr. Thompson recommended that he and Phil set this up at Human Resources and ask for cost.

Jean Wilson wondered what would or would not happen if you don't have this position. Phil Lindley stated that it would be good to have someone to help with the many upcoming projects such as the mapping and inventory project; completing the NTIA mapping grant application; completing the third grant round and working with the grantees; managing the fourth grant round; working with and staffing the Broadband Strategy Council; and providing assistance with companies applying for BIP and BTOP funds. Vendean Vafiades recommended showing what other states have implemented, such as duties and types of positions.

Financial Report

Phil Lindley stated that there is \$1 million for third grant rounds and \$1 million for the next round and/or matching NTIA grants.

Jean Wilson wondered if we are running in a deficit. Phil stated that the assessments are paid quarterly, the month after the quarter ends. Monthly expenses during the intervening period will always show a "deficit," but that the fund carries a sufficient balance for operations.

6. Public Comment Period

Mike Reed, TDS

Mike Gray believes that he gave ample data and thinks it was confidential and should not have been distributed. However, this was his error and not the Authority's error. He does think that the Authority needs the data.

Beth Osler, Unitel

Beth Osler also believes that they provided the necessarily information.