



Telecommunications & Connectivity Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
February 11th, 2021 Meeting
11:00am – :00 pm Remote Meeting

Attendees:

1. David Snedeker – Chair of the Board, Northeastern Vermont Development Association
2. Michael Clasen – Deputy State Treasurer
3. Clay Purvis – Director, Connectivity Division, Dept. of Public Service
4. Michael DeHart - Telecommunications & Connectivity Staff, Dept. of Public Service
5. Evan Carlson – NEK CUD
6. Costa Pappis - AOT
7. Kenneth Jones – ACCD
8. Robert Fish

Members of public:

Steven Whitaker – Member of the Public

Item	Item Description	Action By
1.0	Called to Order 11:08am	
2.0	Meeting Minutes Approval 9/30/21	Moved: Jones Second: Carlson Approved Unanimous
3.0	3a. Annual Report Jones- unspent CRF funds status moving into 2021 DeHart- That's tied with Carlson- Status of 2020 CRF projects/ mapping # addresses connected? Or proposed connections? DeHart- Those are the awarded locations, not the current connections Carlson- Could we make that caveat more clear on the published maps?	

DeHart- I'll pass along that suggestion to Corey Chase

3b. Connectivity Initiative Status Update

3c. Emergency Broadband Action Plan

Purvis- did the Chair mean to ask about the Telecommunications Recovery Plan?

Pappis – Are there new funds available for Broadband?

Purvis- provided rundown of several upcoming and proposed broadband initiatives.

Carlson- Federal funds tied to a 100/20 speed goal, is that a problem compared to our legislation?

Purvis- I think the legislature will need to say, we're doing fiber and nothing but fiber. Consolidated, most RDOF winners except SpaceX doing fiber. We've gone from 69k lacking 25/3 to 46k in just 1 year. Do we now expand our focus to encapsulate addresses that were already funded for 25/3?

Carlson- Should the C.I. change its speed goals? If we roll out the CI with the current speed goal (25/3), we would be building 25/3 into 2022, just 2 years before the 2024 deadline for 100/100. Should we recommend changing the definition of "underserved/underserved" to mean those that lack 100/100?

Jones – MOTION TO REQUEST CARLSON TO DRAFT A PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION FOR TCAB THAT ADDRESSES THE SPEEDS REQUIRED FOR CONNECTIVITY INITIATIVE PROJECTS

SECOND- CARLSON

UNANIMOUS APPROVE

3d. 10-yr telecom plan

Purvis- CTC (same firm at the Telecom Recovery Plan) is being hired to prepare the 10-

yr plan. Should be in draft in May, and we'll be sure they speak with the TCAB in writing it.

Snedeker- Is this an update, or a complete re-write?

Purvis- A complete re-write. We're still getting their contract executed, but I can send you the proposal they sent to us.

Carlson- From the PSD perspective, what do you use the plan for? Is it for all related parties to refer to? Or is it the workplan?

Purvis- That's pretty much been the telecom plan debate for the past several years. It's a policy document that outlines state policy on many different topics. The rebuke of the 2018 plan was that it wasn't specific enough (it wasn't a "cookbook"). We've tried to go in that direction with the COVID relief plan. Some feedback on that plan was that it was too specific. Honestly, I don't know anymore. I'm hoping the upcoming plan gives meaningful direction toward the 2024 goal of universal 100/100. Part of that, I hope, is an objective assessment of what needs to be done to get the CUD's off the ground. The plan's enabling legislation has some pretty specific requirements, though.

Carlson- How is the Dept looking at the COVID-response plan, and how will that inform the 10-yr plan.

Purvis- In the legislature, there is a notion that the work products will fill two parts of the same role. The CRF plan certainly has good, fresh material (survey work, data collection) that is re-useable. The CRF plan was prohibited from contemplating long-term planning in order to ensure compliance with the funding's limitations.

Carlson- How do you envision including stakeholders in the new plan? Deployment of universal service will require a lot of partners. The emergency plan reached out to CUD's

once, but I think there needs to be more ongoing consultation for a plan with a 10-year scope.

Purvis- I'll certainly relay that desire to CTC. I think there will be opportunity to participate at multiple stages. CUD's will play a big role in this plan, but I'll re-iterate that need to them.

Jones- I want to re-iterate Evan's suggestion. I would strongly encourage CTC to deepen interaction with stakeholders.

3e. Rural Digital Opportunity Fund

Purvis- Charter, Consolidated, ECFiber, Kingdom Fiber, and SpaceX won areas in Vermont. (Presented map from PSD webpage)

Jones- The areas seem to be pretty spread out, will the folks between these fiber-served territories have new service available?

Purvis- I think most of that fiber already exists, so a lot of the money will be spent removing copper and serving last mile/doing drops. In Calais, it's possible that many residents will have two options for FTTH (Kingdom Fiber and Consolidated).

Purvis- SpaceX didn't bid in the gigabit tier, but they did win a good amount of census blocks. Plenty of Vermonters are already beta testing their service. As part of the award, these companies are required to become ETC's. Consolidated already is one, and the rest will have to become ETC's. That includes voice service- so SpaceX will have to provide voice service. In blocks where Consolidated did not win, they can petition to relinquish that responsibility and no longer act as the Carrier of Last Resort.

Snedeker- Does RDOF include pricing requirements?

Purvis- there are, but I don't recall off the top of my head.

4	<p>Public Comment:</p> <p>Stephen Whitaker- Broadband Action Plan/10-yr plan need to comply with 30VSA 202(e)(5) "open access"</p> <p>Consolidated IRP expires July 30 and will be renegotiated in PUC. We need to insist as part of their renewal that they make their fiber open access. They should also have access to State fiber in return. The most efficient way to reach universal service is to establish clear open access requirements for all parties. I know CUD's are afraid of competition, but it's the best way.</p> <p>Board needs to act quickly to ensure nothing but 100/100 is funded.</p> <p>Board needs to take action to fill vacancies.</p> <p>Board needs to have its annual public meeting</p> <p>Board should request a written analysis of RDOF awards from the PSD.</p> <p>Carlson- Open access, CUD's should have a period of time (5yrs) where they have protection prior to making their infrastructure open access. If they're taking on that debt, they should have the first right to service that debt before they have competition using infrastructure they funded with debt.</p> <p>Whitaker- if we can get the cost of debt down, we could even reduce that to 3 years.</p> <p>Carlson- Does anyone have additional thoughts on that?</p> <p>Purvis- I think it's important to determine what the specific meaning of OA is in statute, as well as to determine who negotiates the interconnection agreements.</p>	

	<p>Whitaker- COLR obligations have huge implications. Any subsidy, support, or IRP needs to be fully aware of COLR obligations if Consolidated is relieved of that requirement. The PSD should provide an analysis on that topic.</p> <p>Purvis- The notion that they would be COLR's is in the findings of the current draft legislation- that is very much the legislative intent.</p> <p>Whitaker- that may be so, but I don't think these volunteer-governed CUD's are aware of the scale and scope of that requirement. The resilience/engineering requirements that Consolidated has in place are far beyond what CUD's are prepared to do.</p> <p>Purvis- that's a very good point.</p>	
5	<p>Next Meeting: TBD</p> <p>MOTION (JONES): ASK DEPT TO ASK LEGISLATURE FOR PERMISSION TO MEET UP TO 12 TIMES PER YEAR.</p> <p>SECOND: CARLSON APPROVE</p> <p>Adjournment 3:25pm</p>	<p>Motion: Carlson Second: Pappis</p>

Minutes Subject to Approval