

Telecommunications & Connectivity Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

November 30th, 2015 Meeting -----10:30 am in GIGA Conference Room at DPS

Attendees:

- 1) Charlotte Ancel - Green Mountain Power (Chair of the Board)
 - 2) Kerrick Johnson - VELCO
 - 3) David Snedeker - Northeastern Vermont Development Association
 - 4) Kiersten Bourgeois - Agency of Commerce & Community Development designee
 - 5) Robert T. White - Agency of Transportation designee
 - 6) Chris Recchia- Commissioner, Dept. of Public Service
 - 7) James Porter- Director of Telecommunications & Connectivity, Dept. of Public Service
 - 8) Corey Chase, Clay Purvis, Sunni Eriksen- Telecommunications & Connectivity Staff, DPS
 - 9) Call In: Stephen Wisloski - State Treasurer designee
 - 10) Member of Public: Steven Whitaker
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Minutes Subject to Approval

Chair Charlotte Ancel convened the meeting at 10:35 am

The Board reviewed the Statutory Charge as determined in Vermont H. 117.

DPS Commissioner Chris Recchia provided a summarization of the newly issued Connectivity Report. The group discussed the receipt of PAP penalties, and the upcoming 2016 grant application process. Board member David Snedeker stated that the NVDA may have some USDA money available for projects in the Northeast Kingdom. Member Kerrick Johnson also noted that there may be federal money available for expenditure for projects near the Canadian Border.

The Board heard from DPS Commissioner Recchia regarding the trending decrease in contributions to the Universal Service Fund, the funding mechanism for the Connectivity Initiative. The Board noted that the use of landline technology has decreased, and USF payments on cell usage have declined as well. There was discussion about the potential increase in USF rate.

The Telecommunications & Connectivity Advisory Board motioned to create a webpage on the Department of Public Service website.

Commissioner Recchia shared with the Board the trouble that was experienced with the transition between fiscal agents for the USF, which delayed the completion of the Connectivity Report.

Jim Porter, Director of the Telecommunications & Connectivity Division of the Department of Public Service gave an overview of transitions from VTA to DPS Connectivity Division. Mr. Porter offered insight into Vermont Broadband speeds and eligibility, by county.

Clay Purvis, Connectivity Development Manager for the DPS provided an overview of ongoing fiber projects, gave updates on the status of each project and the forecasted dates for the projects to be online. There were questions from Board members about the cost of the fiber project construction.

The Board discussed the CoverageCo small cell project, and reflected on the difficulty with changing technology and the decrease of fixed cell usage in Vermont. Overview of CoverageCo project and the designated target corridors.

Connectivity Staff reviewed outreach efforts that have been conducted throughout the state.

The Board discussed how to best utilize its time together and it was agreed that the Board would work to advise the Connectivity Division and the Commissioner re: suggestion/feedback on funding. The Board and Division will work together to best utilize resources.

Public Comment was heard from Steven Whitaker

The Board indicated that it will next meet in early-to-mid February 2016.

The meeting was adjourned.