



## Telecommunications & Connectivity Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

August 18th , 2020 Meeting

11:00 am – 12:00 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. Katherine Sims – NEK Collaborative
6. June Tierney – Commissioner of Department of Public Service
7. Evan Carlson – NEK CUD
8. Ken Jones - ACCD

### Members of public:

Gordon Matthews  
 Kevin Reagan  
 Stephen Whitaker  
 Steve Hubbard

Item	Item Description	Action By
1.0	Call to Order at 10:03am	Chair Snedeker
2.0	Meeting Minutes 7.16.20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corrections: none</li> <li>• Motion to Approve</li> </ul>	Moved: Carlson Second: Sims Approved Unanimous
3.0	New Business: <b>A: Funding Recommendation for COVID Response Connectivity Initiative and GVCNI</b> Presented funding proposal, and plans to move ahead with that. All unselected projects will be considered for Round 2 funding.  CUD’s have received notice and, to our knowledge, we have not selected any	Clay Purvis

projects for funding that were the subject of CUD objections.

**Carlson:**

Interested to know why Comcast was selected over some of the FTTH proposals.

**Purvis:** The Tilson project in particular was very expensive, and we were tasked with a puzzle problem to fill a \$4M award. We understand that state goals promote FTTH, so we tried to do that as much as possible. We also selected a lot of wireless projects, and that's a result of our attempt to provide broadband to as many homes as possible. Given the immediacy of need, projects like NEW Alliance and VTel are going to be able to provide a significant return on investment in terms of homes served with 25/3 on a short timeline.

**Snedeker:**

Do these projects need to be implemented by Dec. 31?

**Purvis:**

Yes. If we had a longer timeline, you'd probably see a lot more FTTH projects. Every state that is committing CRF funds to broadband is running into this same obstacle.

**Jones:**

Is there a mechanism for projects that won't get finished by the deadline? What happens there?

**Purvis:**

Good question. We're going to handle that through the contracting process. When we make expenditures, they'll need to fit CRF guidelines. There is a slight caveat in Treasury guidance that allows a vendor to deliver after Dec 30 under circumstances that are "outside the vendor's control."

Not delays experienced in the usual course of business. Must be a direct link between the pandemic and a delay in materials such as fiber.

**Snedeker:**

Are Round 2 and 3 on the same deadline?

**Purvis:**

Yes.

**Carlson:**

Is there a sense that the RFP rounds will change dates?

**Purvis:**

We may have to push award notices to allow CUD's time to comment and object.

**Carlson:**

Did Round 1 see the bulk of proposals, or do you get a sense that there is still a lot more to come?

**DeHart:**

Round 2 responses were comparable in terms of scope and scale to Round 1.

**Snedeker:**

When will projects be made available for public to see?

**Purvis:**

We will make our award announcement tomorrow, but I'll defer to June.

**Tierney:**

Yes, tomorrow is the plan.

**Line Extension Program**

**Carlson:** Is there a sense of how much of that has been spent and awarded?

**Purvis:** We have about 80 applications processed so far, and there is capacity

for over hundreds more at the full expense rate. I'm hopeful that we'll use up the full \$2M. Make-ready issues could very well complicate things.

**Carlson:**

Is there a way for us to know when the money is all spent? Is there a way for us to know when projects can be completed within the timeline?

**Purvis:**

On the former, we're fine on the budget. On the latter, it really depends on a case-by-case basis. Some estimates may take longer and some make-ready may take longer than others.

**Jones:**

Is it possible that you could put a deadline on applications so unspent funds could be lumped into the CI and GVCNI. For example, September 1?

**Purvis:**

The law would allow for that, but I want to give people longer than that. IF we did that, we'd probably go with a later deadline- closer to September 15 or 20.

**COVID – Response Telecom Plan**

**Carlson:**

Will the board have a chance to weigh in on that plan and the contractor selection process?

**Purvis:**

We've received two proposals from national consultants and one from a local entity. We met with partner agencies and took recommendations from them on which proposal they thought was best. We can consider that question and get back to the board on whether we can take input from you on the selection of the consultant. We're

	<p>chiefly concerned with ensuring that the project adheres to CRF guidelines.</p> <p><b>Carlson:</b> Interested to know how this will segue into a 10-year plan and incorporate all the necessary goals. Also want to know how CUD's and RPC's can integrate themselves as a resource to shape the plan.</p> <p><b>Purvis:</b> The review panel had varied feelings, but we heard input to that effect.</p> <p><b>Tierney:</b> I want to stress the difference between being consulted in the consultant selection and being consulted to inform the planning process and shape the document.</p> <p><b>Carlson: recommendation to approve funding recommendation.</b> <b>Sims: Seconded</b> <b>Approved Jones, Snedeker, Carlson, Sims</b> <b>Abstain: Clasen</b></p>	
4	<p>Public Comment: <b>Whitaker:</b> I have not seen the award recommendations, so the public cannot comment on whether they adhere to 202c and 202d. Cable will soon be outmoded.</p>	
5	Adjournment 11:36am	Motion: Clasen Second: Sims

\*\*\*Minutes Subject to Approval\*\*\*