

4-8-2013

# ConnectME Authority Meeting Notes & Video - April 8, 2013

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## **ConnectME Authority**

April 8, 2013 – Meeting Notes

### 1. Introduction of ConnectME Authority Board Members and Staff

Authority Members: Jean Wilson, Chair; Dick Thompson; Ralph Johnson; Tom Welch; and Greg McNeal

Staff: Phil Lindley; Lisa Leahy; and David Maxwell

Minutes of the January 9, 2013 Board meeting were reviewed and accepted.

### 2. Report to the Legislature on Financial Policies and Procedures

Board members were briefed on the report and recommendations provided by the firm of Macdonald Page which conducts an annual management audit of the Authority funds. The Board unanimously approved the report and approved adoption of three recommendations for new policies related to: selection of vendors; contributions; and travel, meals, and entertainment expenses.

### 3. Eighth Round of Grant Applications

Board members were informed that fifty-six (56) pre-application letters totaling \$3.5M in funding requests have been received. Full applications are due April 15<sup>th</sup> which will be evaluated against the newly adopted scoring criteria. Decisions on the applications will be made by mid-May.

### 4. Sixth and Seventh Grant Round Extension Requests

Two requests for extension, both from Pioneer Broadband, were discussed and approved by the Board (Tom Welch abstained). The first was for eight Round Six grants and the second for two Round Seven grants. Don Flewelling of Pioneer Broadband addressed the need for each request. The eight Round Six grant projects are delayed due to complications with the incumbent telephone company. The two Round Seven grant projects needed extensions due for administrative corrections.

### 5. Broadband Sustainability Fund

Board members were briefed on activity relative to the fee associated with the Broadband Sustainability Fund. Most providers pay the fee with one not paying. The Office of the Attorney General recommends an examination of the fee by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Board members voted to support seeking a PUC ruling or investigation. Board member Welch abstained from the vote.

6. Broadband Summit

The Board was reminded that the third Broadband Summit will be held on April 30, 2013 at the Augusta Civic Center.

7. Executive Director Report

Board members were informed of LD 876 regarding a working group to explore "dig once" policies. A public hearing and a work session have occurred and the legislative standing committee has voted "ought to pass as amended." In the resolve the Authority is asked to convene the working group.

8. Public Comment Period

A member of the public commented on a utilities report conducted by Tilson Technologies. He questioned the recommendations of the report. Staff responded that the report will be the basis for discussion of a working group and, further, the working group will not be bound or otherwise constrained to limit its efforts and recommendations to match those included in the Tilson report.

A member of the public asked if municipalities can apply for grant funds. He was told this is possible.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25PM.