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ConnectME Authority Meeting Notes - January 9, 2013

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ConnectME Authority

January 9, 2013 – Meeting Notes

1. Introduction of ConnectME Authority Members and Staff

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

Staff: Phil Lindley; Lisa Leahy; and David Maxwell

Notes of the October 4, 2012 Authority meeting were reviewed and accepted.

2. ConnectME Authority Advisory Council

The board was briefed on the Advisory Council meeting held on December 20, 2012.

In reviewing the Authority Strategic Plan, the Council chose to focus on three of the six focus areas presented in the plan; Healthcare, Education, and Government Services. The overall goal for the Council is to advise the Authority of which tactics and action items should be pursued when considering staff resources and other stakeholder efforts statewide in the three focus areas. Summaries of the discussion for each area, with the Council's recommendations are contained in the Council notes (attached).

3. ConnectME Grant Award Program

Board members were given a synopsis of previous discussions relative to proposed revisions to the scoring guide, including thoughts provided by the Advisory council members. Proposed changes were highlighted and discussed. Desire for a balance between objectivity and subjectivity in the Scope category was noted.

Action: Authority members endorsed the revised Scoring Guide.

With the Scoring Guide finalized and endorsed, and after a review of the health of the ConnectME Fund in relation to funds available for a new grant round, the Board endorsed the intent to "open up" the application process for the eighth round. Estimated funds available are approximately \$1 million.

4. Projects Update

Planning Project: This project, like those included in the larger NTIA grant, is at the halfway point through the four-year grant period. An overview of accomplishments was provided, including completion of both the needs assessment and the strategic plan. Representatives from the James W. Sewall Company, a contractor for the project, provided a POWERPOINT presentation (attached).

Mapping Project: some of the products of the mapping project were detailed, including census block data and its reflection in coverage areas maps.

Capacity Building Project: a brief review was provided, as were the plans for the remainder of the grant period; most notably, public forums to be held around the state and the recommendations/report from the Broadband Capacity Building Task Force.

6. Executive Director Report

a. Proposed Annual Budget:

In keeping with the recommendation from the most recent financial audit performed by MacPage, a draft budget for fiscal year 2012 – 2013 was prepared and presented to the Board for consideration based on two quarters actual and two quarters estimates. After explanation of the new format and discussion of content, the Board voted to approve the budget as presented.

Action: the Board approved the FY 12-13 budget as proposed.

- Draft Annual Report:
The draft annual report to the legislative Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy was discussed. Board members had provided comments previously and endorsed finalization and submittal of the report to the Committee.
- b. Financial Statements:
The ConnectME Fund Performance Report
Broadband Sustainability Fund Report

7. Public Comment Period

A member of the public commented that material relative to the meeting was not available in advance of the meeting. Authority staff noted that much of the material was finalized just prior to the meeting and that effort in the future will be made to provide more timely notice of meetings and discussion topics.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00PM.