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ConnectME Authority Advisory Council Meeting Notes - July 17, 2007

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ConnectME Authority
Advisory Council Meeting
07.17.07

Meeting Notes

- In Attendance:

Fletcher Kittredge

Wayne Jortner

Reggie Palmer

Linda Lord for Gary Nichols

Dick Thompson, State CIO

John Markowski, Edgecomb Committee

Northrop Fowler, Edgecomb Committee

Barry Hawthorn, Edgecomb Committee

Janet Blevins, Edgecomb Committee

Susan Rockefeller, Curtis Thaxter

Ben Sanborn, TAM

Roland Lawler, Express America

Jim Batey, Rural Broadband Coalition

Amy Spelke

Phil Lindley

- Phil started the meeting with administrative updates:
 - The Press Release announcing the grants has gone out.
 - Phil and Fletcher still need to compare and complete ISP mailing lists for the fund administrator.
 - A preliminary letter has gone out from the fund administrator advising a September 1 start date for assessments. Some addresses are still outstanding.
 - There is general agreement that a “start-up” will not be penalized (i.e., ineligible) for not previously paying into the fund if it pays from the beginning of its operation.

Grant Application Process

- Phil distributed a second draft application for discussion.
- It was agreed that #8 on the Application should be changed to request a map of the proposed project area. Preferably a GIS map but even a marked up paper map would be useful for reviewers.
- Phil will make final edits and send the draft around for final approval from the Advisory Council then forward to the Authority.

Evaluation Process

- The Authority must soon decide who will review applications. The Authority will draft recommendations for the Evaluation Committee and provide it to the Authority. Conflicts of interest must be strictly avoided.
- Some thought must be given to an appeals process in the event that an applicant that is not awarded a grant seeks to challenge the decision. If there will be any remedy, the Authority will need to determine what that should be.
- The Evaluation Committee will review the pre-application letters and request full applications from promising entities. The Evaluation Committee will also review applications, score them based on the evaluation criteria and make recommendations for funding awards to the full Authority.
- The method of making the recommendation was discussed and Dick Thompson suggested that a short summary of analysis be included with final scores of each application.
- Reggie proposed that the members of the Evaluation Committee be: two non-industry members of the Authority; the OPA representative; a member of the Utilities and Energy Committee; and the Executive Director of the Authority. Advisory Council members agreed with the added suggestion of two representatives from northern and/or western Maine. Phil will send the recommendation to the Authority.

The Council had a short discussion of the "Certificate of Qualification." Phil will contact Maine Revenue Services for more detail of the requirements.

The Council agrees that applicants should be made aware of the availability of applications to incumbent providers and the public generally. The rule has provisions for protecting sensitive information.

A next meeting is not scheduled at this time. The pre-application letters are due 8/15. Authority will meet some time after that. It is expected that at that time the Authority will determine what the AC's next task(s) will be and a meeting will be scheduled.