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# ConnectME Authority Meeting Notes - October 5, 2010

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## **ConnectME Authority**

October 5, 2010 – Meeting Notes

### **I. Introductions**

Authority Members: Jean Wilson, Mitch Davis, Dick Thompson,  
Vendean Vafiades

Staff: Phil Lindley, Lisa Leahy, Kelly Arata

### **II. Planning Project – Sewall Team Presentation**

Jim Page, James Sewall Company, presented the Maine Broadband Planning Project for 2010-2014 and introduced the Sewall Team: James W. Sewall Company, Packard Judd Kay Strategic Marketing Group, Dr. Todd Gabe, and Jeff Letourneau. The workflow for the next six months will consist of identifying stakeholders, gathering stakeholder input and assessment tasks. There will be public and business surveys and forms, as well as six public forums. Liane Judd from Packard Judd Kay Strategic Marketing Group discussed the public forums that will be held in Presque Isle, Skowhegan, Machias, Bangor, Belfast, and Portland. Dr. Todd Gabe discussed the economic model and will identify barriers to deployment by service providers and barriers to use by households. There will be two waves of surveys – to get a representative sample, 15-18% return will be more than adequate for their needs. Susan Kay from Packard Judd Kay Strategic Marketing Group stated that they would ask options as to why they do not have service, ask what types are available, ask what they use it for and what if they had faster service what would they use it for.

Vendean Vafiades asked if Dr. Gabe would be comparing his numbers with national or geographic data. Dr. Gabe stated that he can compare to FCC data.

Dick Thompson asked what happens if there is a conflict with mapping and survey data. Dr. Gabe stated that they would look to see if it is consistent. Jim Page stated that the question is if there is a significant discrepancy and would have to determine if it is an anomaly or if they missed something. They would have to investigate and discern any solution.

Dick Thompson stated that there have been proposals where a provider thought no service was available but there was service available. Jim Page stated that there is more granular data available now.

Mitch Davis asked if the mapping project is from a separate grant. Phil Lindley stated that it was from an NTIA grant. Mitch Davis asked if there was any plan of action at the end. Jim Page stated that after the baseline assessment then a strategic plan would be created. They will make recommendations and the

Authority will set the priorities. The Needs Assessment Report will come out in April 2011.

Mitch Davis asked what will be the success of your work. Jim Page stated that the first level is that we are part of the Maine community who knows broadband is important. The second level is whether the providers provided adequate data. The question will be whether broadband uptake was increased.

Phil Lindley stated that the reason the Authority applied for the planning piece was because we had a number of goals that will focus on unserved areas and other funds from the federal government. This will supplement our other projects. Jim Page stated that the worse thing is that this data will be put on the shelf. Phil Lindley stated that the Legislature is also taking an interest in broadband.

Sunil Rodrigues asked what the objective is for economic development and how do we want to model it for what we want. Dr. Gabe stated that was a good question. Jim Page believes that broadband and economic development are connected but has no data to support it yet.

Mitch Davis stated that some of the ISPs in the smaller towns could provide valuable information. Susan Corbett stated that they see how businesses change how they do business. Mitch Davis would like to see separate surveys to ISPs. Jim Page stated that they are part of the outreach. Mitch Davis stated that he would like to see economic development as part of a direct survey to ISPs. Jim Page thinks that this is a good idea.

Phil Lindley stated that the State Planning Office has a State Broadband Capacity Building Project and the Department of Education has a Technical Assistance project, both funded from the supplemental NTIA grant. Lisa Leahy stated that the State Planning Office will look at the economic development process and the creative economy task force created in the future. Technical assistance will be brought in on how to do it. Mr. Lindley hopes to have both groups at an upcoming Authority meeting. Lisa Leahy stated that there is an expectation that all three groups will work together and hopes to have a summit in January. Jean Wilson asked if there would be data sharing. Lisa Leahy said yes, that collaboration was an important component of all the projects.

### **III. Mapping Project Update**

Randy Claar from James Sewall Company gave an update on the mapping project. Data delivery to NTIA on October 1 included data from 31 providers at the FCC filing level. Vendeau Vafiades asked if any part of the filing was public. Mr. Claar stated that the overall information was public but not the street level data. Commissioner Vafiades would like to see a disclaimer on the website results.

#### **IV. Fifth Grand Round Update**

Phil Lindley gave an update on the fifth grand round. There were 30 pre-application requests for a total of \$2.8 million. Jean Wilson asked the Authority's target funding amount for this round. Mr. Lindley stated the target was \$1.0 to \$1.5 million.

#### **V. Executive Director Report**

Phil Lindley discussed the Special Award Condition Amendment to the NTIA Grant Award; the RFPs for Auditor (received three back with prices and will work with the Controller's Office); the ConnectME Fund Performance Report; and Grant Tracking Software Tool.

#### **VI. Next Meetings**

Phil Lindley stated that the next meetings will be in mid-November to discuss the grant awards and in mid-December or January for possible grant challenges and to get update from the project teams.

#### **VII. Public Comment**

Ben Sanborn asked if the slides could be posted on the Authority's website.