

## GRAFTON COUNTY BROADBAND COMMITTEE MEETING

3855 Dartmouth College Highway

North Haverhill, NH 03774

August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nik Coates, Brigitte Codling, Andrew Dorsett, Carina Park, Samantha Norcross

OTHERS PRESENT: Martha Tecca & John Adams - Orford Broadband Committee, Tim Egan

N. Coates called the meeting to order at 10:17am

N. Coates asked if anyone had any corrections to the minutes from the August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**MOTION:** C. Dorsett moved to approve the minutes from August 10<sup>th</sup>. B. Codling seconded the motion. N. Coates called the roll. C. Park “yes”, B. Codling “yes”, A. Dorsett “yes”, N. Coates “yes”. With the vote being four (4) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### **Update on Completion of Items from Initial Scope**

1. N. Coates stated that he had asked Katelyn Robinson to provide an update on the potential grants they are working on. He stated that he forwarded her response and spreadsheet to the Committee last night. The grants that are currently in the works are from the Tillotson Fund, NTIA and ARPA from the County. She has completed the CDBG planning grant draft and she has asked the committee to look at it and provide comments.

USDA Reconnect Grant – N. Coates stated that they have not yet determined yet how much will be available through this grant. K. Robinson will be monitoring the status of the grant and they will be flagging this as a potential opportunity.

K. Robinson has identified potential funds from the NH Farm Bureau. T. Egan is talking to the DuPont Group about possible telehealth dollars. There is interest from Shaw’s and Lowes for support as well. A. Dorsett stated that he has a list of banks in Grafton County that have Community Reinvestment Act dollars that they could contact as well and that money can be used as a federal match.

N. Coates stated that K Robinson noted other large funding requests such as Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Northern Borders Regional Commission. EDA can be submitted at any time, but K. Robinson had suggested waiting until they hear from about the NTIA grant.

Support Letters to Retrieve– A. Dorsett stated that some of the support letters mention specifically the NTIA grant. He suggested making a name for the county as a blanket letter of support for all grants the committee would apply for. The Committee agreed with the idea and after discussing, it named the Connect Grafton County Now. The Committee discussed letters of supports from businesses, school districts, government officials, and towns. It was noted that

they are missing letters of supports from the following towns: Franconia, Dorchester, Monroe, Bath, Benton, Lebanon, Lyme, Bridgewater, and Grafton. The Committee members each took towns that they will contact again about getting letters of support.

### **Plan B if NTIA Doesn't Come Through**

N. Coates stated that he wanted to make sure the committee was on the same page. When the committee met with the Commissioners, the funding goal of the project is to do everything we can to not touch County taxpayer dollars. They have been working their way through the ARPA dollars with a private funding component. This opportunity with NTIA then came up and they went for it. He stated that the reality is that these grants are very competitive. It is important to be realistic with the voters, residents, and Commissioners. If this opportunity does not come through, they need to have a plan B. He asked the committee if everyone agreed that if this NTIA grant does not go through, then they would go to the Commissioners for a larger portion of ARPA funds. They would also need more grant opportunities and private funding, as ARPA will not cover it. The Committee agreed.

### **2021 ARPA Request**

N. Coates stated that they are working on the preliminary ARPA request to present to the Commissioners. A. Dorsett stated that Finance Director Libby had a suggestion regarding that request. He explained that they could be broad in the description for the amount. Rather than freeze them, as they are dependent on the Executive Committee schedule, she suggested thinking about requesting an up to amount. N. Coates agreed and stated that they could request up to \$250,000, which includes grant match, legal services and engineering.

### **September 14<sup>th</sup> Commissioner Meeting Planning**

N. Coates stated that they would be meeting with Commissioners to allow them to meet with EX2 Technology, get them comfortable with this company and ask any questions they may have. One of the goals of that conversation will be to work towards getting a master services agreement in place.

### **Community Meetings Planning and Other Outreach**

1. N. Coates asked C. Park if she would draft a September newsletter letter at the end of the month and recap the community meetings. M. Tecca suggested listing the letters of support they have received as well. N. Coates noted that they have 10-15 registered for the Campton session, 15 from Haverhill and only two (2) in Lebanon. A. Dorsett stated that he would follow up with Lebanon.

2. More Workshops – N. Coates asked the committee on their thoughts of holding future workshops if these go well. The Committee agreed to discuss this after the first set of meetings and see if they have an answer from NTIA. C. Park asked how they would handle the Zoom call at the Campton session, as far as monitoring. After some discussion, she stated that she would

ask her administrative assistant, as they felt that someone outside of the committee needed to be in charge of monitoring the Zoom call. The committee then discussed the logistics of the listening sessions.

**N. Coates requested a nonpublic session.**

**MOTION:** \* 12:00 PM C. Park moved to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A: 3, II (c) for the purposes of matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant. A. Dorsett seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. N. Coates called the roll. C. Park “yes”, B. Codling “yes”, A. Dorsett “yes”, N. Coates “yes”.

\* 12:31 PM N. Coates declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** A. Dorsett moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session. C. Park seconded the motion. N. Coates called the roll. C. Park “yes”, B. Codling “yes”, A. Dorsett “yes”, N. Coates “yes”. With the vote being four (4) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

12:35PM with no further business the meeting adjourned.