

## GRAFTON COUNTY BROADBAND COMMITTEE MEETING

Bristol Town Offices

5 School Street

Bristol, NH

July 15, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nik Coates, Ed Morris, Carina Park

OTHERS PRESENT: Julie Libby, Samantha Norcross, Emily Buttorff, Misty Stine, Kyle Hildebrand, Katelyn Robinson

N. Coates called the meeting to order at 8:43 AM

N. Coates stated that the committee has received two (2) requests for letters of support for the State Broadband \$50 million grant program. He stated that he would like to have an open discussion as to what they want to do as a committee

E. Morris stated that NHEC asked if the committee would be willing to write a letter of support for this \$50 million grant since most of their project will be in Grafton County. During that meeting, they stated that the committee would be willing to write a letter but want more than one (1) meeting with NHEC to ensure they are working together. E. Morris stated that he is a part of another meeting with them this afternoon. The Broadband Committee also had a request from Hub 66 and had a meeting with them to discuss of a long-term project. They wanted to collaborate with Grafton County and look at the middle mile project to possible hook into the last mile later. Hub 66 put together a good proposal on how this partnership could work. He stated that the Broadband Committee meeting this morning is to see if they want to support one of these or neither.

J. Libby stated that there generally are not any rules to letters of support but she would run it by the Commissioners on Tuesday so they are aware of the committee's plans. C. Park stated that she is willing to draft the letter of support with details. K. Robinson stated that she thinks that it is not required that you have a municipal partner; they want to see that they are coordinating with a municipality so she thinks a letter of support would work. Under the organizational experience it is talking about more of the technical capacity, you do not need to be a municipality. She thinks the county can act as the municipality but the ISP could go to the towns as well. It is up to the county as to whether they want to support this. E. Morris stated that he thinks they should write a generic letter for NHEC and a separate letter to HUB 66. Hub 66 has approached them Committee and wants to work with them. They want to do a last mile off our middle mile; NHEC does not want to work with then. J. Libby stated that from her perspective, the approach that E. Morris outlined makes sense. At this point, the Commissioners do not know about the Hub 66 discussions. Any way they look at it, if they are collaborating with Hub 66 on this \$50 million grant there will be push back from NHEC because they want it all to themselves.

E. Morris stated that it is going to take ISPs to put this together. The weakest point to their NTIA application is the match. K. Robinson stated that the application for NTIA said that they like that the county's project open access but recognizes that having an ISP partner increases that

experience. She stated that they could go in without an ISP but having that partner will benefit the application and score better.

N. Coates asked for a summary on the discussion with NTIA. C. Park stated that NTIA said they checked all the boxes on the application. They made it through each round of reviews; they just ran out of money. They only had so much money and they awarded 14 awards out of 240 applications. She noted that NTIA did not give them a point of weakness. The strengths were it was shovel ready project and they have an experienced partner. The weaknesses were the high cost per mile but recognized this was a rule area and felt the proposal justified the high per mile cost. There were no other glaring issues other than the lack of funding. C. Park stated that NHEC was informed that the issues they see with the Broadband Committee's project, NTIA does not. N. Coates stated that he thinks the Commissioners need to hear from them that they are doing well.

N. Coates asked if the committee could get on the Commissioners' agenda for Tuesday. They would brief the Commissioners on being approached by NHEC and Hub 66 for letters of support and explain to them that the committee wants to support both project as it benefits the county and ask if the Commissioners are ok with that. They would also brief them on their conversation with NTIA.

**MOTION:** N. Coates moved to write a letter of support with authority of the Commissioners for Hub 66's application to the broadband state program. C. Park seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**MOTION:** N. Coates moved to write a general letter of acknowledgement in support of NHEC contingent upon the meeting with them this afternoon if they are willing to advance their goals as a committee.

Discussion – E. Morris noted that the reason they are doing this is because of the presentation the NHEC made to the Commissioner's stating that the Broadband Committee's project was not needed.

C. Park seconded the motion and all were in favor.

E. Morris stated that if they collaborate and go in for the NTIA grant it would be cheaper for everyone.

M. Stine from Ex2 stated that they have an RFP template that the committee can use. E. Morris suggested that they need to get an RFP out sooner rather than later. N. Coates stated that by the end of next week he would like to have it ready. They can find what they have for documentation from Ex2, send it to the committee and then start to work on the RFP for an early August release, having it due beginning of September.

The next committee meeting is July 28<sup>th</sup> 8:30 in Campton.

C. Park stated that she has contacted all the towns except for three (3) to let them know what Ex2 would be visiting next week to look at town halls and their server rooms. She reported that they

have distributed the high-level designs and they are scheduling technical forums with the towns for if they have any technical questions about the designs.

**MOTION:** E. Morris moved to accept the resignation of Brigitte Codling. C. Park seconded the motion.

Discussion: N. Coates stated that he appreciates B. Codling's time and effort on the committee. At a non-public next meeting the committee will discuss whom they would like to fill the empty committee seat with.

The committee voted on the motion and all were in favor.

Misty Stine and Emily Buttorff from Ex2 gave an update on the HDLs.

C. Park stated that she could to record one of the meetings with the towns so they can have something to send to communities that they were not able to get to. She has contacted all of her towns, N. Coates towns as well as B. Codlings towns but stated that she does not want to hold all of those forums and asked if it could be a joint effort. C. Park noted that she thinks in regards to the technical side of the high level design, the towns will ask questions about equipment, cost breakdown and what they can do with these designs. The purpose of these sessions is to communicate how these designs can be used in their community and how they read them. K. Hildebrand stated that they would have people there that can answer all of these questions.

9:46 AM with no further business the meeting adjourned