



MINUTES
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
Thursday, September 15, 2022 – 10:00 AM
Zoom Videoconference
Watertown, New York

The Development Authority of the North Country Telecommunications Committee met in regular session via Zoom Videoconference, Watertown, New York on Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 10:00 am.

Members Present

Brian McGrath – Committee Chair
Mary Doheny
Thomas Hefferon

Staff Present

Carl E. Farone, Jr., Executive Director
Carrie Tuttle, Chief Operating Officer
David Wolf, Telecommunications Division Director
Angela Marra, Executive Assistant

Committee Members – Absent

Mark Hall
Eric Virkler

Other Board Members Present

Margaret Murray – Board Chair

Guests Present

1. Committee Chair McGrath called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.
2. Roll Call was taken and a quorum of the committee was established.
3. Potential Telecommunication’s Grant Application –

B. McGrath stated the purpose of today’s meeting was to discuss a potential telecommunications grant application and turned the meeting over to C. Farone.

C. Farone reviewed a PowerPoint presentation outlining the document that was sent with the read ahead packet for this meeting. Topics of the PowerPoint included; the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NITA) Middle Mile Grant Project, the proposed public-private partnership for this project between the Authority, National Grid, and the ISP’s, the project benefits, unserved customers by county that this project would positively effect, Authority financial projections, the review of the project map, the roles of the Authority, National Grid, and the ISP’s, and the next steps to begin this project.

B. McGrath stated that this project is very exciting and appears to be a great proposal.

B. McGrath followed up by asking how this project would affect staffing and payroll costs, and would there be more people hired for a short-term project or a long-term expansion. C. Tuttle responded that no additional staff would be needed to complete this project. M. Capone would handle grant administration and we would use external consultants for the design build portion.

B. McGrath asked if there was consideration to increase the Telecommunication division size because there would be a larger network to maintain. C. Tuttle responded that the further we get away from our service area, the harder it becomes to service the area not close to our staff. She continued by stating this is where the agreements with the private internet service providers come in because we do not want to have the responsibility of maintaining the fiber in those areas. Areas we are building, where we already have fiber in place with IRUs means that we are adding in areas where we already have service and do not need additional staff.

B. McGrath asked if the technology would be any different from what we currently have, just expanded to other spots. D. Wolf responded that this would not change the technology. We will still be a transport only company. The grant reads that this will be a dark fiber Ethernet wavelength service for middle mile only, and that we will use other fiber for the last mile work. There will be no new services, however some of them will have new interconnect points which is allowed because we are not putting electronics for last mile services in the grant.

B. McGrath asked if this project is covering 10% of the remaining underserved population in Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence Counties, does this mean the remaining 90% is in the last mile territory and would not be covered by this. D. Wolf replied yes, that this due to the 90% being outside the area to be covered by middle mile and it would be difficult to justify some of these routes. D. Wolf further stated that coming out behind this middle mile grant is a \$42 billion last mile grant to be issued in January or February and that should pick up many of the remaining 90%.

C. Tuttle asked D. Wolf to speak about the many community anchor institutions and other customers who are close, but are not being counted in the presented totals that this project could facilitate service to them down the road. D. Wolf stated there are 287 institutions within a mile of our network; such as schools, healthcare, childcare, mental health, airports, and municipal buildings that are close to the network that may have services today. C. Tuttle continued by saying this project could encourage some internet service providers to build last mile service down roads they are not directly passing and gain additional customers. This project offers concrete benefits right now, and has the potential to decrease the number of unserved in the future through additional last mile builds that happen by Federal grant funding or by demand and need.

B. McGrath stated that this committee was formed to review all options for the Telecommunications Division going into the future as technology changes. He then asked if there was anything that could encumber the initial mission of the committee within the proposal, or cause what the future and roll of this division for the Authority to be reconsidered. C. Farone responded that this had been discussed internally and the answer is no. D. Wolf specified that some federal grants hold rules about transfer of ownership, but these rules are not specified within this grant.

B. McGrath stated that this is an exciting project which he is very much in favor of. He further stated that this is exactly the kind of thing where the Authority really adds to the community. M. Doheny and T. Hefferon both expressed their full agreeance with this project as well. T. Hefferon further stated that this tremendous project enriches our telecommunication system, and he believes it will lead to more tremendous projects.

4. Resolution No. 2022-09-XX, authorizing the Executive Director or designee to submit an application in the amount of \$24,450,000 to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Middle Mile Grant Program. If awarded, the Executive Director is then authorized to execute all documents necessary to accept and implement the Middle Mile Grant Program project, to include establishing a NTIA Middle Mile Capital Project in the amount of \$24,450,000. The Executive Director is further authorized to enter in to a Memorandum of Understanding with National Grid detailing the roles and responsibilities of each party, and further authorizes the Executive Director to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with private Internet Service Providers detailing the roles and responsibilities of each party should the grant be awarded.

Upon a motion by T. Hefferon and seconded by M. Doheny, Authorizing Application to be Submitted, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Middle Mile Grant Program, and was unanimously approved by the Telecommunications Committee.

This motion will be reported at the Board meeting on September 22, 2022.

C. Farone thanked C. Tuttle and D. Wolf for the work put into this proposal, and expressed his appreciation to the committee for their consideration.

5. Upon a motion by T. Hefferon and seconded by M. Doheny, the committee moved to adjourn at 10:48 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian McGrath
Telecommunications Committee Chair