

GRANT COUNTY DIGITAL NETWORK COALITION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

January 15, 2019

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Becker, Grant County (Co-chair)
Brandon Smith, John Day
Denise Porter, At-large

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Josh Walker, Seneca (Chair)
Nathan McFarland, At-large

STAFF PRESENT

Nicholas Green, Executive Director

GUESTS PRESENT

Garrin Bott, Oregon Telephone Corporation
Marcus Bott, Oregon Telephone Corporation
Kenley Boss
Gordon Larson
Julie Larson
Don Porter

Agenda Item No. 1—Open and Note Attendance

Co-chair Becker opened the meeting of the Grant County Digital board of directors at 6:00 P.M. He noted all board members were present.

Agenda Item No. 2—Approval of Minutes

Mr. Becker entertained a motion for the minutes of November 20, 2018. **Brandon Smith moved to approve the minutes of November 20, 2018. Denise Porter seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Becker entertained a motion for the minutes of December 18, 2018 and asked if there were corrections. Denise Porter pointed out that Nathan McFarland was listed as present but was not. She also noted Agenda Item 6 on page 2, talking about Mr. Mitchell, should have read “projects and policies, in which he has been involved.” On page 3, halfway down, should have read “states in terms of access and service quality.” **Brandon Smith moved to approve the minutes of December 18, 2018 as amended. Denise Porter seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Agenda Item No. 3—Appearance of Interested Citizens

Co-chair Becker welcomed members of the audience.

Agenda Item No. 4—Review of Town Hall and Next Steps

Board members discussed their perceptions of the December town hall. Green noted we may have made history broadcasting the first public meeting live on Facebook from John Day. Becker stated he wished Mr. Mitchell had more time to meet with members of the public, but his schedule did not accommodate this. Mr. Smith echoed that statement and said he really appreciated his attendance, but it would have been helpful to have him involved in the work session. He hoped there would be future opportunities of that nature with him. Green noted he has had several discussions with Mr. Mitchell following the meeting. One takeaway he had from the meeting is that we need to find our own solution and our own solution may not fit the federal grant criteria, and it is important that we continue to show near-term progress between applications. We should not be surprised if the ReConnect program is also oversubscribed and highly competitive like Community Connect was. Smith noted having that caliber of people in our community and on our call for the town hall was unique and the support from Walden and his staff shows the community we are making progress, that we are talking with the right people, and we are charting our path forward. He also said he hoped the local businesses see we are trying to work toward connectivity to address their needs. The board discussed ViaSat's demo and the benefit of having alternatives for more remote areas. Members of the audience commented on their perceptions, including the desire to see greater participation and the quality of the panel. Smith noted the Grant County Democrats have asked him to present to their board. Green said one key takeaway was to get the audio dialed-in so it is easier to hear the participants. Board members also discussed the perception of some individuals in the county who already have broadband who don't understand why this is an imperative and the disconnect between the needs of those individuals and those whose business and personal life do not require significant internet usage, and others who are disconnected or who depend on access and do not have it.

Agenda Item No. 5— USDA Reconnect Program Rules & Milestones

Green reviewed the scoring criteria and eligible service areas for the USDA ReConnect program with the board. Board members discussed each criterion in turn. They discussed areas where we expect to pick up all the available points and areas where we will struggle due to low population density, lack of facilities and restricted service areas, for example. ReConnect is a new program and we expect a significant number of applications for funding. Board provided guidance related to the grant application. Garrin Bott from Ortelco also discussed their plans for applying under ReConnect to service areas in the west and northwest of Grant County that would extend their existing network. He noted they have engineered plans for Long Creek and Monument and evaluated the Community Connect Grant a few years ago for those areas but did not apply. The board noted their goal is to team and facilitate expansion, not compete, so we will coordinate with Ortelco as a teammate to ensure our applications under ReConnect are complimentary and not competing. Board advised Green to work through the details and come back with a proposal after he's met with the teammates.

Agenda Item No. 6—Update on Broadband Lateral Procurements

Green said he extended the RFP to the 31st of January to give vendors more time to submit due to the holidays. He said they have one bid so far and are expecting more. The bid received is competitive and awardable. Smith noted this strengthens our application because we will own and operate fiber prior to applying. Green confirmed and said it is also critical for the 911 transition to the fire hall to enable access to law enforcement servers managed by ESD. **Green proposed the board meet on February 5 to review and approve the bids and issue a notice to proceed to not delay the award. Board concurred.**

Agenda Item No. 7—Commstructure Master Professional Services Agreement

Green discussed the scope of the master PSA with Commstructure. This is an agreement that would be authorized between the board and the engineers, which would streamline access to services and consolidate Commstructure’s billing under the board. This is a standard services agreement and a work order contract, one work order would be for on-call work such as the ESD lateral; one is for the proposed backbone route to Burns; and another is for grant writing support for the applications. He said the board could continue to operate under John Day’s agreement but this would be more efficient.

Brandon Smith moved to set up a master professional services agreement with Commstructure. Denise Porter seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 8—Other Business and Upcoming Meetings

Dan Becker asked for an update on the website and the branding approach. Green said we expect the website to be operational in February and we are waiting for a cost estimate from the consultants but the City did include scope for branding, content management and marketing for Grant County Digital in the scope of their award for economic development services. He pointed out that no funding has been expended or committed for this task and will not be until we have a specific cost estimate and agreed upon scope for these services, which will be forthcoming in February. Becker asked that this be added to the agenda for the February 19 meeting.

Adjourn

There being no further business before the board, Brandon Smith moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 P.M. Denise Porter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Nicholas Green

ACCEPTED BY THE BOARD ON FEBRUARY 19, 2019.


By: Josh Walker, Chair