

NBNCBC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 10, 2021

1:00 PM- 3:00 PM

REMOTE ACCESS MEETING

Organizational Attendees: County Supervisors-Dennis Rodoni - Marin; Ted Williams - Mendocino; Diane Dillon - Napa; Lynda Hopkins - Sonoma. Tom West, NBNCBC Manager.
NBNCBC County Management: Liza Massey, Marin; Jeff Tyrrell, Mendocino; Anthony Halstead, Jon Gjestvang, Napa; and, Calvin Sandeen, Joy Sterling, and Mike Nicholls, Sonoma. Lorenzo Cordova, Katie Parrish, Ethan Brown, Sheba Person, Rebekah Heinze, Sam Ross.
Guests: Bruce Vogen

I. Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm, with the recognition of a quorum of County Supervisors. Roll call was conducted and introductions were made, as reflected above.

II. Selection of the Chair

NBNCBC Manager Tom West recognized the current vacancy of Oversight Committee Chair, opened the item for discussion, and acknowledged the willingness of **Supervisor Diane Dillon** to serve. **Supervisor Lynda Hopkins** moved that **Supervisor Dillon** be selected as Chair; **Supervisor Rodoni** seconded. The motion passed 3-0, without a vote recorded from **Supervisor Williams**.

III. Proposed Legislation

Chair Dillon introduced **Joy Sterling** for the next item. **Joy Sterling** spoke to [Exhibit #3.2](#), a draft letter/memo from the Consortium, which asks the legislative authors of [SB 4](#) and [AB 14](#) to include certain elements in their evolving bills. 1. Make sure that CASF funding gets extended; 2. Raise the definition of unserved; 3. Clarify in the bills how much money will be secured by the proposed service fee; and, 4. Include in the bills a “road map” showing where the state needs to deploy fiber. In addition to supporting [SB 4](#) and [AB 14](#), the draft letter/memo expresses support for Assemblymember Jim Wood’s measure ([AB 41](#)) requiring Cal Trans to co-operate with the state’s “Dig Once” policy. **Chair Dillon** suggested that, having discussed the legislation, one of her colleagues could make a motion regarding sending a letter to its authors.

Supervisor Rodoni moved, and **Supervisor Williams** seconded, that drafted letter be and circulated among the four government partners for approval. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Dillon will prepare and send the letter.

IV. **Synopsis of Year 2 Work Plans**

Marin County - Liza Massey reported: “Marin didn't get a lot of traction in year one mostly because of COVID. We didn't have funding, and we started a project to develop a digital infrastructure strategic plan.... We hired Magellan advisors who formed in several of the other counties to do the physical asset inventory. They are about 75% complete. And once we have the outreach and the asset inventory, we're going to do is identify gaps and put together our strategies and our priorities and recommendations. The timeline. We are working to draft the plan, so we are tracking a lot of activity.”

Mendocino County - Jeff Tyrrell reported: “The Mendocino County, annual work plan, in 2020, we compiled three implementation project plans, one of which was a grant application through Hunter Communications, and while we didn't receive funding in the first round, we're still hopeful that that plan remains viable. And in 2021 will continue the outreach to the community and the Board of Supervisors and our elected representatives... We're also contemplating submitting project plan number two at the next opportunity. In addition to exploring a smaller project plan for the community of Comptche.... We also hope to bolster our outreach to the Native American communities, and we're working to support our schools to identify the number of unserved households for low income families, by district.”

Napa County - Anthony Halstead and Jon Gjestvang reported: “Last year we've been working on a larger study: a network infrastructure assessment, Magellan helped us with that. And that was presented to the Board of Supervisors earlier this year, in the fall. And what they did is highlight areas that needed improvement and areas where some issues were present. And they also created for Napa priority categories, nine of them, ranging from very large scale projects, one of which is estimated to be around \$100 million, all the way down to sort of easier, more attainable things and short term, like, addressing fees for emergency coverage and continued focus on 98% of coverage. But we've also expanded our goal to include redundancy which we found over and over is a big issue in Napa County. Basically, when the wind blows, people lose internet access, and obviously, we've suffered greatly from fires which resulted in power outages, as well as loss of towers.” **Jon Gjestvang** added: “We're going to be looking at the Magellan maps and action plan and the recommendations that we got last year. Basically, we want to get into action.... fund things with minimal associated costs... So, we started a process of ranking and rating options.”

Sonoma County - Calvin Sandeen reported: “For Sonoma County, we contracted with Magellan advisors. The Economic Development Board reached out to various communities and industries to conduct a needs assessment. And with all the data, we've collected a list of core policy driven recommendations pointing towards our strengths. Our assets, and specifically conduits fiber assets; pointing us towards creating county networks, potentially with private sector company's help, to expand broadband. We're working on that path with our county, and circulating the concept, trying to get feedback from other departments. What it's leading towards is creating a business plan as comprehensive as possible; a sustainable model. And now we're working with Mendocino County on data mapping; our broadband mapping and data collection is quickly evolving.”

V.

NBNCBC - Mission, Roles and Structure

Calvin Sandeen started by saying that “This agenda topic looks at how NBNCBC currently operates, its current mission, what role it has in our counties, as well as the operating structure.”

Chair Dillon added that “In Napa County we really depend on **Nelson** and **Anthony** and **Jon** in this effort, and I don't doubt that my colleagues, probably do too. 80% of the legislature is from very, very urban counties. I don't think they get that this is the issue that it is for our four counties. That's one of our biggest hurdles, and I don't know if there's greater strength in partnering more with other sub regions.”

Supervisor Rodoni “Think(s) that sometimes this group seems to focus more on technical things at this level, and from my perspective, I'd like the board to focus more on policy issues. And then our management team to focus more on technical issues.” And “We can be more productive and more efficient if we sort of split the two groups, sort of technical advisory group, and the management team for policy. That is a suggestion for going forward, and not a criticism of what we've been doing.”

Supervisor Hopkins added: “Now more than ever we have an opportunity for intelligent advocacy and I think that we're well positioned to really make a difference in the state-wide, playing field right now... I think that we have an opportunity to demand the funds needed to meet the minimum broadband speeds discussed earlier. So, I would love to see us also roll up our sleeves and lean in a little bit on the policies and try to ensure that our needs are met as these bills move forward at the state level and that the packages are developed at the federal level as well.”

Tom West added: “The organization called the consortium that we currently have, it's pretty organic. And I thought the suggestion from **Nelson Cortez** was that it's time that we that we have this structure and a little bit more formal, forms of bylaws, and stuff like that give this consortium the kind of framework that these bodies typically have.”

Anthony Halstead suggested: “Quarterly meetings (of technical advisory group) where we sort of forecasts things, and annual (management team) meeting with supervisors, give us an overall direction... recognizing the value of flexibility and not to make things so onerous that you can you can act independently.”

Regarding the undefined Potential Structure and Role (aka Exhibit 6,) **Calvin Sandeen** said he will “Coordinate more and increase the frequency of working together. But as far as the other potential options, namely restructuring or different paths, we will do more research on that and then reach back to our supervisors.”

Chair Dillon concluded: “I think this group needs to meet, three times a year, if not four, because I'm concerned things are happening fast.... **Calvin**, you and **Nelson**... and **Anthony** and/or **Jon** can help you out, to bring back a meeting schedule, I would say in three months, and decide that we want to move to three times a year, or just twice a year.”

VI.

California Broadband For All Action Plan

Tom West highlighted the three goals and 24 actions, and reiterated what “**Joy** said earlier that there's not a whole lot of major actions that are called for: most of us see it as baby steps, but it does represent the first time in a decade that the state has had quote unquote a “Plan.” And I would reemphasize what **Joy** said earlier, the notion of having a roadmap of where we need fiber and things of this nature is a very important visual for us to see.”

Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF)

Calvin Sandeen, for Sonoma: The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund is a Nationally competitive program where internet providers essentially bid on census blocks to serve one census block with broadband. And so, it's a process whereby we're providing the best services for the lowest amount. And, and in our region, some of the biggest winners of that program are three or four primary providers: Etheric networks, LTE broadband, and Starlink, as well as a few others, but we have just started engaging with those providers to understand what their plans are in our communities.

Tom West, for Mendocino County: “We have met with two of them: Frontier Communications and Etheric. I think you're all familiar with Frontier. Frontier has a presence in Mendocino County, a limited

presence in Mendocino County, a limited presence in Sonoma County. It does not appear to have any presence in Marin, nor Napa. We will have follow up with Frontier Communications, to learn about their plans in Mendocino County. The other outfit, Etheric that they bid on census Block Groups in all four of our counties. There are small outfit, they have 2,000 residential customers and 800 business customers in the San Mateo, San Francisco Bay Area. They bid at least one census Block Groups in 25 counties throughout California. And so, they're one of the big takers. California was hoping to get \$2.2 billion out of 20 million, and they got about 660 million. We have not met with Starlink, but I know that supervisor Williams, Jeff, and Calvin have had conversations with them over several months. The company has indicated that they are opening cells in both Mendocino and Sonoma Counties... Another is out of Atlanta Georgia, and works with tribal communities, including one tribe in Mendocino County. One additional RDOF other is a small outfit out of Minnesota." Adding: "On the whole, the RDOF program has been somewhat disruptive to our game plan, because we have CASF grant for \$158 million that was deferred and held back until they can determine whether RDOF can solve the problem. And whereas, we're saying it's going to cost maybe \$40,000 to hook up a house, one of the providers says they can do it for \$300. So we have that kind of disparity. That's the circumstance in Mendocino County."

Jon Gjestvang for Napa County: "It's the same companies that the others have mentioned: Etheric, we are not familiar with, they've had a large board, especially in the northern and Northeast portion of the county but also in the Yountville area. Ltd. Is in the southern part of our county, and then SpaceX into very small areas, very isolated areas. What we have planned instead of beginning our outreach to them is to wait for our new consultants."

Liza Massey, for Marin County: "Again we had three of the same awardees, and they're all really concentrated in West Marin, where we are considered more rural and have un and underserved areas. Our plans are like Napa's, since we have a process in place to do our strategic plan and we've hired Magellan. We're working to incorporate RDOF data into the overall asset inventory"

NBNCBC Regional Middle-Mile Infrastructure

Tom West reported: "The consortium has a goal of having a regional middle mile, infrastructure, from day one. And what you see in the picture ([Exhibit 8](#)) is sort of a conceptual design of what that one will look like. You will notice that it starts up in Humboldt County comes down to Leggett down on Hwy 1 all the way to San Rafael, it goes back up to 101, smart. Including some built in the Mendocino area where it's part of our project. It goes across Napa, all the way to Sacramento and from Napa back to Geyserville.

So, there's a redundancy and diversity, and I included this here as sort of a response to joy Sterling's notion of we need the roadmap. Well, this would represent a part of the roadmap of the state, as it meets the needs of these four specific counties, and in order to get the redundancy and diversity we have two routes all the way up to Highway 5, and up to the 36th, and going across the far northern route to 299. However, the CPUC has notified that the Inyo project has been discontinued, because they it's too costly, and they're having too much trouble with Caltrans. Again, the purpose here is just to show that this is an area where we do need to have some collaboration among counties to make sure that we get the redundancy, and the middle mile capability."

VII.

Public Comments

Without public comment, Chair Dillon invited final questions and clarifications.

Calvin Sandeen clarified **Tom West's** comments on what IRU's stands for: "Indefeasible right to use", it's like a long-term lease of about 20 years. Generally, the idea is to lease existing assets or long term existing infrastructure.

Supervisor Williams asked a question about dark fiber that was part of a defunct company from Sonoma through Mendocino and then maybe to Napa, and who has the rights today.

Jeff Tyrrell mentioned the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, which allocated \$3.2 billion to subsidize broadband for low income households, in the amount of \$50. Also, as a procedural matter, he indicated that draft minutes would be supplied to the Chair and Consortium Manager, for review and circulation.

VIII.

Adjournment of Meeting

Chair Dillon concluded: “Unless there's any other business or information to be shared. I will adjourn this meeting and we don't know when we meet next; yet to be determined. But I hope within three months. Thanks to everyone, appreciate your time, appreciate your hard work. Really appreciate it. Bye!”

*****GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER N-25-20*****

*****GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER N-29-20*****

****RE CORONAVIRUS COVID-19****

DUE TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS N-25-20 AND N-29-20 WHICH SUSPENDS CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF THE BROWN ACT, AND LOCAL ORDERS TO SHELTER IN PLACE TO MINIMIZE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19, MEMBERS OF THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE HAVE PARTICIPATED BY TELECONFERENCE INTO THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING FOR FEBRUARY 10th, 2021.

Public written comments that were received prior to the meeting will be read into the record; as applicable to specific agenda items, and limit three hundred (300) words or less. Comments to Admin@mendocinobroadband.org.

Submitted by Jeff Tyrrell, NBNCBC recording secretary (2021)