



# Connecticut Broadband Internet Coordinating Council

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Quarterly Meeting Minutes, March 1, 2010, 9:00-11:00 a.m. — ConnDOT Research, Rocky Hill, CT

## CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS

**Lou Manzione**, *Council Chairman*, Univ. of Hartford  
**Rob Earley**, Comcast  
**John Emra**, AT&T  
**Mike Chowanec**, Cablevision [not present for early portion of meeting]  
**Anthony Santino**, Independent Businesses  
**Pat O'Brien**, *Ex-officio*, Office of Policy and Management (OPM)  
**Bob Mundy**, *Ex-officio*, Dept. of Public Utility Control (DPUC)  
**Bill Vallée**, Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC)  
**Jack McCoy**, Town of Manchester  
**Burt Cohen**, *New Member*, Murtha Cullina LLP  
**Rob Vietzke**, Internet 2, [not present for early portion of meeting]

*Also present: CBICC Administrators of the CT Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) Rick Strauss and Ann Bertini*

**Vote to Approve Dec. 2009 Minutes** – Santino moved to approve. Vallée seconded. All were in favor. Cohen abstained.

**Term Expiration Discussion** – Rick Strauss highlighted key points from a discussion that immediately followed the December meeting. The suggestion was to remove the two-term limit for Council Member service on the CBICC from the Council's enabling legislation. Vallée submitted the proposed language with Rep. Nardello, Co-Chair, Energy and Technology Committee, for her consideration. Meanwhile, there are still the expired 2009 terms. CASE will contact the appointers as well as those Council Members who are due for re-appointment (including McCoy whose term expires the end of March 2010).

**Federal Stimulus Mapping Grant** – Mundy reported that the DPUC was awarded \$1.8M federal stimulus grant (500K for planning and 1.3 for mapping). He has met with the likely mapping consultant (also working with WA, OR, and OK). The project dates have all been pushed back. DPUC has asked the consultant to do some fine tuning, particularly on the schedule which must be submitted to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in order to obtain an extension on the deadline dates. Vallée noted that no one in the state will receive any of the mapping data; it will be kept confidential. Chairman Manzione asked what the size of the grant was based on and Vallée explained that it was a negotiated amount because the DPUC originally asked for \$5M. However, no state received more than \$2M for mapping. Vallée mentioned [www.broadband.gov](http://www.broadband.gov) where all Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grants can be viewed. The largest grant went to One Economy.

**CASE Funding Discussion** – Strauss asked whether administrative funding for CASE would be available from the \$500K planning grant. Vallée deferred to OPM but it was his understanding after pursuing this question that the funds could not be used for administrative support. Strauss had appointments at the capitol upcoming and would make further inquiries. He cited that the \$100K set aside for potential projects for CASE is maintained in the 2011 budget. He also highlighted the example of the CT Energy Advisory Board (CEAB) which is allocated a budget and then contracts with the CT Economic Resource Center (CERC) for administrative support.

Chowaniec pointed out that there are two challenges: operational and policy-oriented. There was discussion of whether the CBICC should have access the \$500K for planning, relative to its mission. Vice Chairman Vietzke noted that in some ways the CBICC is more empowered because it does have planning in its legislation.

**Round 1 Stimulus Applications** – Vallée said this first round was not successful for Connecticut. McCoy cited the lack of matching funds as a deal breaker. McCoy noted that the onus for funding fell to public institutions and without the involvement of the private sector, projects were deemed not sustainable.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Round Stimulus Applications** – McCoy reported that some individual towns are going to take the CT-Muni-Net work and resurface it for themselves during the 2<sup>nd</sup> round application process. His town, Manchester, will probably participate as a connecting town but not a lead.

Vallée reported that DOIT would try again for Round 2.

**Discussion of CT Approach to Stimulus Funds** – Vietzke cited CT's lack of applications that bring together public-private partnerships to deliver a large volume of connections per dollar requested. He cited Michigan, the first state awarded, in which the application's goal was bringing fiber into the Upper Peninsula. Therefore state government was partnered with a not-for-profit which was partnered with a service provider. There were some 30 partners. He also cited North Carolina

Emra noted that CT's reality is very different than that of these other states. He said that AT&T had said no to Michigan's Upper Peninsula because of the requirements attached to the federal dollars.

Vietzke countered that other states found ways for the private sector to engage in requesting these grants. In PA, for example, a private fiber company is being funded to build fiber links, and they are going to sell the fiber to others. Vietzke is doing an application for his company, Internet 2, which is a not-for-profit.

A brief discussion followed considering whether politics had any bearing on CT's lack of success. There was general agreement that this was not the case because the process is meticulous, open, and it appears the people handling the stimulus funds are shielded from political pressures.

**Adoption vs. Deployment** – Emra noted that some segments of the general public are not seeing the value of broadband and, thus, are not adopting it. Chairman Manzione cited the fact that adoption is occurring via wireless devices and demand for bandwidth there continues to grow.

Vietzke: The FCC is going to say that there has been a market failure. The market has not synced in terms of demand and cost.

McCoy: Collaborating across communities will demonstrate that both ends of the spectrum are part of the solution. You need the high data rates for towns. Emra is not agreeing because AT&T sells these products, but towns/customers do not want to pay for it. McCoy agrees AT&T has a product. Manchester buys the OneComm link competitive internet connection but he cannot share that with the smaller towns. Emra made the further point that *towns need to start thinking differently*. The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) buys services and shares services. The towns need to jointly issue an RFP for products and services. McCoy reported that he is working with the Capitol Regional Council of Government (CROG), CT Conference on Municipalities (CCM) and these organizations are not as advanced as CREC. They do not have the staffing to do what the CT-Muni-Net group did – though there may be volunteer interest.

**CBICC Role** – Council members proceeded to discuss the CBICC's role as facilitator in terms of helping the general public understand the value of broadband.

- Chowaniec: The technology element is underlying the reluctance that members of the public have.
- McCoy: There is a missing piece of organizational talent with CCM and CROG. Discussion about focus on municipalities vs. the quiet corners of the state.

- Manzione: The CBICC might be able to recommend incentives for people to buy the infrastructure.
- Vallée: sustainability under federal rules means that infrastructure exists but the public is not using it. In CT there is not a lot of infrastructure need.
- Chowaniec: Then it potentially becomes a municipal adoption exercise.
- McCoy: If there continues to be a municipal subcommittee on the CBICC, McCoy will pull together the CROGs, CRECs, CCMs to see if there is interest. Strauss asked about the Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) and McCoy said there are vast differences in those groups.

**CBICC Legislative Report** – Per Earley, it needs to be fine tuned to be more relevant to what is happening today. We do not have broadband legislation this session and the ARRA process is further along. There was general agreement that the report needed to be updated and made more coherent, summarized more succinctly; including a description of the mapping project. The private sector could be reported on in terms of positive developments there.

McCoy re-emphasized collaboration on publicly funded networks (CEN). Outcomes of the CT-Muni-Net process show that at least nine cities think: spending money on a public safety network that only public safety can use is not a good model. Shared services enabled through telecoms. Those are the four areas [*standards; municipal demand; collaboration on publicly funded networks and shared services*] that came out of the CT-Muni-Net process.

- Vallée – What would the state do?
- McCoy: If we're going to connect cities ... it will be at highest available speeds. Cities are spending money on this connectivity and services but more funds are needed. The only way to tackle it is to collaborate. The money has to go further so introduce new, better leveraged technology.
- Cohen observed that the report seems like an interim report; it covers the council's activities and agrees with the idea of getting it filed and moving forward.

**Prescriptive edits:** Update progress and add that in after conclusion. Consider bullets to add in without redoing it. There was discussion about what the municipal report says. Vietzke does not think the subcommittee report should be endorsed by the CBICC. Vallee does not think that it should necessarily be in there.

**Looking Ahead** – Vietzke noted that he thinks the Council should have a plan with recommendations by January.

Chowaniec asked if the federal funds to be received for planning have any relation to the Council and is there a role for the Council there. If there is a document that talks about planning and there's money for planning what is the connection there?

Strauss reminded the group that the CASE study that recommended the creation of the CBICC was intended to ensure that the state was aware of advances in communications technology so that the state did not miss out on opportunities in terms of economic competitiveness. He recommended the CBICC hold an informational meeting/presentation for the E&T committee. Chairman Manzione agreed with this approach – with emphasis on CT remaining competitive with places like Finland and Switzerland with regard to broadband.

Vietzke highlighted examples that demonstrate that CT is doing well, with assets such as ESPN's massive internet presence, as well as a NASDAQ data center.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

John DeRam, Farmington.

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- DeRam stressed that the CBICC could be a repository of information and urged the Council to provide links on the CBICC site to the best available reports and information that the public ought to read/know about. Examples he cited were the UCONN Carstensen report and DPUC dockets.
  - On his farm in Ellington, they can get high speed DSL but where his mother lives there are 100 feet to cover, from fiber to the house to get access. DeRam noted that other states are doing co-operative utilities but that Connecticut is not necessarily friendly toward co-operatives. He suggested that the statutes strengthened so that co-ops can happen because that is where the consumer drives the technology.

- DeRam also raised the issue of USDA funds for Rural Utilities Service (RUS) projects. However, Vallée pointed out that this is not available for broadband. DeRam advised the Council to look at models like the MDC and CRRA. He also cited [www.InnovateHolyoke.com](http://www.InnovateHolyoke.com). Innovate Holyoke is working with CISCO and has a 120-day feasibility study ongoing. .
- How will CT going compete with N.C. to attract the business that is going to house this data?

Adjourn.