



**Meeting Minutes**  
Legislative Office Building,  
300 Capitol Ave, Hearing Room 1C, Hartford, CT  
**2014 December 8**

**Members in Attendance:**

Nick Caruso – CT Association of Boards of Education  
Tom Dillon – Minority Leader of the House  
John Elsesser – CT Council of Small Towns  
Kathy Giotsas – CT Library Association  
Rich Mavrogeanes – President Pro Tem of the Senate  
Jim Mindek, State Department of Education  
Michael Mundrane - UCONN  
Lisa Pellegrini – Minority Leader of the Senate  
Mark Raymond – DAS Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology  
Scott Shanley – CT Conference of Municipalities  
Bart Stanco – Office of the Governor  
John Vittner – Office of Policy and Management  
Ken Wiggan – State Library  
Scott Zak – Board of Regents

**Guest Speakers and Others in Attendance:**

Scott Taylor, UCONN Delegate  
CONNECTICUT EDUCATION NETWORK (CEN)  
  
Kristi Sadowski, Co-Director and Head of Teen Services  
Amy Dexter, Co-Director  
Meagan Schiebel, Head of Children Services  
BOOTH AND DIMOCK MEMORIAL LIBRARY, COVENTRY

Elin Katz, Gig City, Consumer Counsel,  
STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF THE CONSUMER COUNSEL

**Members Absent:**

Russell Feinmark – Speaker of the House  
Judy Greiman CT Conf. of Independent Colleges  
Jeff Kitching – Office of the Governor  
Catherine Smith – Department of Economic and Community Development  
Bill Vallee – Consumer Counsel  
Jim Watson – Department of Economic and Community Development



*On Monday, December 8, 2014 at 2:30 p.m., a meeting of the Connecticut Commission for Education Technology was held at the Legislative Office Building, Room 1C. The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, DAS-BEST CIO Mark Raymond at 2:40 p.m. The following agenda items were discussed:*

- **Welcome**
  - Thank you for coming today and for your continued service to the state. We have a great agenda ahead that explores a common theme of use of technology outside the traditional education settings.
- **Approval of Meeting Minutes, September 8, 2014**
  - The next item on the agenda is a review and approval of the meeting minutes from the September 8, 2014 meeting. The draft minutes were distributed on November 25<sup>th</sup> for comment. No comments were received.
    - A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by John Vittner, seconded by Nick Caruso.
    - No discussion.
    - All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions. Motion carried.
- **Report of Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology Chair Mark Raymond**
  - Our efforts on the Commission continue to be slowed by the absence of an Executive Director. Mark will provide an update on the activities there later in the agenda. While we cannot move at the speed that this subject requires, there are a large number of activities being undertaken in this space. We will hear from two of those exciting areas also later in the agenda. Mark believes we are missing our ability to coordinate lessons learned and share the successes being achieved in the education community.
- **Connecticut Education Network (CEN) Status Report**
  - Scott Taylor, Director of the Connecticut Education Network provided a report (Please see attached).



- Questions and Discussion regarding CEN Report:

- Scott Shanley:

- 1) Time line for bid process
- 2) Would like to confirm that the rate structure review includes opportunities for exploration of alternative ways to structure.

Scott Taylor confirmed that this issue is being clarified. After a brief discussion, Scott Shanley suggested that we go back to the towns for monetary contributions if necessary.

- Mark Raymond thanked Scott Taylor and the entire CEN team for their efforts throughout the year in upgrading our technology to stay two steps ahead of our ever-growing demands. There is a tremendous amount of work being done.

- **Executive Director Position**

- As you may be aware, the Office of Policy and Management called for a hiring freeze and a budget reduction in the face of the current fiscal year deficit. All positions that were in the hiring process were put on hold, including the CET Executive Director position. All positions must be re-justified and resubmitted for consideration. Mark is in the process of doing that now. There is no guarantee that it will be approved to fill. Mark will continue to advocate for the importance of this position to better deliver on the commitment to technology.

- Ken Wiggin offered to produce a letter of support to assist in this validation. Mark believes that the Commission weighing in on this issue would be helpful. Even more helpful would be letters submitted from affected communities. Scott Shanley stated that he would be willing to draft a letter of support from the Town of Manchester.

- A motion for Mark Raymond, on behalf of the Commission, to draft a letter in support of filling the Executive Director position, was made by Ken Wiggin, seconded by John Elsesser.
- No discussion.
- All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions. Motion carried.



- **Discussion with Kristi Sadowski, Co-Director and Head of Teen Services at Booth and Dimock Memorial Library, in Coventry was introduced along with Amy Dexter, Co-Director, Meagan Schiebel, Head of Children Services.**

The following presentation was shared:

- In addition to community programs, their library has a focus on creating programs that improve both literacy and digital literacy for youth and seniors.
- Amy Dexter shared that libraries have become technology hubs. Last year, their six computers logged 20,000 30-minute sessions. Technology in libraries is bridging the generational and economic divide. Individuals utilize the library to seek employment, access tax services, etc. The cost of establishing internet access causes many patrons to rely on the libraries. Seniors often use the library to learn how to use technology. Their library now has one employee dedicated to training.
- Meagan Schiebel, Head of Children's Activities, shared details of their facilities that include eleven public access computers. They work with parents to teach them positive skills and habits for their children in the world of technology. Coventry has two pre-schools; 43% of kindergarteners did not have technology experience upon entering school. This put them at an immediate disadvantage compared to their peers.

Their library's computer capabilities include touch screens for 2-8 year olds to teach common core standards. Parents know these computers are a safe and educational pathway for these children.

- Public access computers are used for school assignments. Internet and word processing are often required for group programs. Teens often have access issues. I-pads are issued to students in the schools, but many do not have Wi-Fi access at home. At their library, gaming, learning, and technology are encouraged. Kristi detailed a digital Lego program that fosters interpersonal communication and teamwork. Computer terminals are networked and often used for group gaming and school projects.
- The library has also invested in a 3-D printer which is likely the only time people can be exposed to this type of technology.



- Teen entrepreneurs have developed robot workshops that teach 3-D printing, coding, etc. Future projects for creating simple circuits on a pinball machine are being organized.
- Despite the energy and excitement, most individuals still require basic skills training. To continue to meet demands, library staff need to be skilled enough to teach others.
- Mark thanked them for their presentation and opened the floor to questions.
  - John Elsesser referred to the Coventry Library's success and the partnerships they have been able to create. The libraries are part of the CEN network through the towns.
  - James Mindek asked what tools would be required to enhance their efforts and duplicate them elsewhere.

Kristi shared concerns regarding leased fiber. They require an IT person on staff. Her advice to replicate their success is to not be afraid to try new ventures.
  - Michael Mundrane asked if they had considered moving capabilities to externally based clouds, etc. to meet their needs.

Kristi stated that they have. Their circulation service is housed in Nevada. She does not have the technical expertise to provide a complete response to this inquiry.
  - Ken Wiggin emphasized that 90 libraries are using DSL to provide all of these services. Funding requests have not yet been met. As we continue to work with DMV and other agencies to enhance capabilities. As we drive more people to libraries, we need to understand the need for high speed connections to accommodate the increasing demand.
  - Kathy Giotsas stated that West Haven has 70% connectivity. The remaining 30% run on DSL. There is normally a waiting line to use the computers in their library. Internet usage is skyrocketing in her town. The CEN line is a lifeline to them. It is a means for schools, towns, and state government to all communicate.

Kristi shared that it is important to have library staff skilled to teach these individuals and bridge the digital divide when they come in to use library facilities.



- o Scott Shanley reiterated our teachers need to be taught how to teach these skills.

Having no further comments or questions from the Commission, the Booth and Dimock Memorial Library staff concluded their presentation.

- **Gig City Discussion with Elin Katz, Consumer Counsel, State of CT Office of the Consumer Counsel.** Bill Vallee is her representative on this Commission.

Municipal RFQ for Broadband Infrastructure: The Basics Power Point Presentation was shared. ([Please see attached press release and power point presentation](#)) Program concluded.

Mark invited the Commission to ask questions of Elin Katz:

- o Scott Shanley referenced a slide that he has seen in the past that compares AT&T fee structures in North Carolina and Connecticut.

Elin Katz explained that google offered an introductory competition at a dramatically reduced rate; however, when rates are sought now, they are very expensive. We are not competitive financially.

- o Ken Wiggin inquired as to how the vision aligns with and the Nutmeg Network.

Elin shared that the market needs to be established to support the demand. The businesses are demanding this service now, but fiber to the home cannot be validated at this time. Technology access is the key to economic development and opportunity. This increases both economic and educational opportunities.

- o Scott Taylor shared that we should advocate for private companies who want to provide this service. As we bring greater CEN access to schools and towns, we need to achieve our goals in conjunction with the town. Interconnection of networks locally will open the ability to provide additional services and build services from businesses to schools and libraries.

- o Michael Mundrane referred to the issues of speed and access and the financial sources and impact. Connecticut must move forward from a social justice perspective by providing quality bandwidth to the schools and libraries. These locations require three things pervasiveness of infrastructure throughout Connecticut at some speed, high-quality high-

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speed bandwidth to key locations in the communities, and high quality infrastructure and ability for individuals to come on sight to be seamlessly connected utilizing either existing or personal technology. If we fail to do all three of these things, we have not satisfactorily delivered the necessary requirements.

Elin Katz shared that this is a town-specific deal. Each town decides what is important. The town puts together its goal for high-quality infrastructure to key areas. Supplying free or discounted access to all areas of their community. Some areas of Litchfield and Pomfret counties are still on dial-up service. It needs to make economic sense to complete these build-outs. She summarized that we must have a dialogue about the whole picture to move this process forward.

- o Mark Raymond shared that many communities would consider supplying the services to their disadvantaged populations if it could be put financially in their reach because it is to their advantage to do so. CEN would be willing to work with providers to make our assets available to a broader audience.
- o James Elsesser asked about CEN's ability to sublease.

Scott Taylor summarized that CEN can sublease out, depending on availability.

- o Rick Mavrogeanes summarized by stating that it does not matter how much bandwidth you have, the usage requirements will rise to meet it. He recommended pursuing a 10 gig network. A vision statement would include mechanisms for telecommuting and stop the need for building bigger highways.

Elin responded that it is important to build the lines in to begin and agreed that the usage would grow to fill any availability.

- o Tom Dillon questioned the source of funding for this project and considerations for the State to create an existing fund to which private businesses could contribute through their existing ISP. He referenced an example of the electric company utilizing a voluntary contribution option where you can agree to pay 10% more to ensure that electricity comes from clean power sources. There could be an option to pay 5% more for social justice initiatives that improve internet access. He asked if this



option had ever been discussed to fuel the social justice aspect of this initiative.

Elin likened this idea to the universal service fund for telephone, which is run at the federal level, everyone pays a little more on their phone bill to build out to areas that are not currently serviced. It is now being used for broadband. She serves on the board for universal service. All models are on the table. The RFQ states that there is no municipal contribution; however, the responses that are returned in January will show what is being proposed as working models. At that point, the towns can decide which model they like best and if they are willing to make contribution. The confirmed that they have not talked about contributions in the manner that he recommended; however, this might be of interest in the next Legislative session and should be up for discussion.

- Ken Wiggin: Points of interest. This commission has statutory authority to solicit donations as a possible avenue to support statewide network plans. Also, when the commission was first being created, an eRate was being considered. Since the fee may be construed as a tax, it was not pursued at this time. There is a small program that sponsors computers for low income families. The largest hurdle is access to internet service.
- Lisa Pellegrini complemented Elin Katz on her presentation. She would like to see this group help move this initiative forward. It is important to the future.

Elin stated that it is important to gain support for this initiative.

- Scott Shanley reiterated that it is important not to wait. He would like to see a statewide initiative rather than one that addresses each town exclusively. What is the economic and job impact that can be weighed against this investment.
- John Elsesser shared options for bidders to access CEN on our existing network to lower the cost of build outs. If we network a partnership, we can utilize our current infrastructure and have the bidders build out from where we leave off at the schools. He stressed the importance of vision.
- Nick Caruso referred to the 169 municipalities and also referenced the lack of a statewide vision. He stresses the need to champion this vision from this Commission up to the Governor's office.



- Mark summarized that it appears there is a consensus of opinions from Commission members. He will note the recommendations discussed today and continue future discussions.

Elin shared that there are many ways to approach this; however, if we can get one downtown commercial area in one town wired with a gig, we will have made progress and others will follow.

- Other Business: None
- Public Comment: None
- Meeting Dates will be confirmed via email as follows:

March 2, 2015 1:00-3:00 p.m.  
55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford Conference Room 1008

June 1, 2015 1:00-3:00 p.m.  
55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford Conference Room 1008

September 14, 2015 Time and Location TBD  
(Legislative Office Building is preferred, if available)

December 7, 2015 Time and Location TBD  
(Legislative Office Building is preferred, if available)

Adjournment: Having no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Rich Mavrogeanes, seconded by Nick Caruso. Meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aleshia M. Hall  
Executive Secretary to CIO Mark Raymond, DAS-BEST

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