

# Connecticut Broadband Internet Coordinating Council

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Minutes from June 29, 2009, 9-11 a.m., Meeting – Legislative Office Building, 1B

## **Call to order, Introductions**

**Jack McCoy**, Town of Manchester

**John Emra**, AT&T

**Rob Vietzke**, *Vice Chairman*, Internet 2

**Lou Manzione**, *Council Chairman*, Univ. of Hartford

**Bob Mundy**, *Ex-officio*, DPUC

**Mike Chowaniec**, Cablevision

**Anthony Santino**

**Pat O'Brien**, *Ex-officio*, OPM

**Rob Earley**, Comcast

Not Present: Ed Murphy (JDSU), Bill Vallée (OCC), Greg Shimer (Consultant)

## **Vote on March, December Minutes**

Manzione called for motion to approve the December minutes. Earley motioned. It was seconded. All were in favor; none opposed. (*December minutes were on the table because not enough time was given for review of these minutes prior to the March meeting*).

Santino motioned to approve the March minutes and Chowaniec seconded. All were in favor; none opposed.

## **Council Term Dates**

Ann Bertini (CASE admin support) provided a list of Council members showing term dates and appointing authorities; all based on their appointment letters. Bertini said that she contacted appointing authorities to obtain letters of re-appointment for members whose terms expire June 30, 2009. However, legislation states that members serve two year terms so the question of whether a re-appointment letter is necessary arose. In addition, Emra questioned whether the two-year term outlined in legislation would be modified for those who were appointed in 2007 to reflect the start BICC's meetings in 2008. Bertini/CASE to contact the Legislative Commissioner's Office for clarification.

## **Proposed 2009—2010 Meeting Dates**

Manzione requested that the proposed meeting date of Sept. 28 be pushed out to Oct. 5. Beyond that the other dates were agreed upon. As of this meeting they are:

- Monday, Oct. 5, 2009; 9 – 11 a.m.
- Monday, Dec. 14, 2009; 9 – 11 a.m.
- Monday, Mar. 29, 2010; 9 – 11 a.m.
- Monday, June 28, 2010; 9 – 11 a.m.

There was discussion later in the meeting as to whether meeting more frequently might be better operationally.

## **Legislative Update**

Mundy stated that HB 6426 passed the House but was not brought up in the Senate. Emra reported that an almost identical bill passed the Senate but not the House. Chowaniec reported that DPUC, OCC, industry participants were able to work on a consensus log. He was not sure what would happen during the special session but said the collaboration was very positive. Manzione said the info on other states' broadband legislative initiatives is helpful and asked if anyone had further news. Mundy cited the summary of other states initiatives that is posted to the BICC web site as being relatively up to date. And Manzione asked the group to issue e-mail updates to the Council if they learn of significant developments.

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## **Stimulus Update & Discussion**

Vietzke said he has been following NTIA & BTOP. NTIA has bulked up its staff. Last week the U.S. Senate confirmed Larry Strickland, Obama's appointment to NTIA. Strickland wanted to read-in on the material so there is more waiting.

Vietzke said there is pressure within NTIA to get grants awarded. Last week Secretary of Commerce Locke put out a limited waiver on the requirement of buying American since this kind of technology can rarely be purchased entirely American. He noted that there is less focus on the states and more on individual applications. There is a goal of at least one grant award per state. He said that the Governor's proposal will not necessarily be the winner.

Vietzke talked about the multi-agency working group organized out of the Governor's office and the discussed public forums, which have not occurred yet. They are waiting for the NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability) to come out. Vietzke said other states have created a broadband authority to guide the process with public/private partnerships to make sure proposals are not competing. He noted that CT has not been doing this and is behind others. Mundy echoed this, saying other states appear to be better positioned.

Mundy said that he and Bill Vallee have been meeting with Matt Fritz's office and working with GIS, DPS for input to dovetail into a mapping grant response. They also put a request out through DOIT for mapping information for the grant. He mentioned a person at UCONN who is working with the USGS and is also pushing for same agenda because the mapping is needed and the grant for broadband may be the only opportunity for it.

Vietzke asked the group if anyone was aware of other applications .... For example, in the municipalities. McCoy said that the municipalities have shovel-ready lists but he does not think they are very far along. He cited the problem of the lack of regional government so that it's up to the municipalities or the state but no one in between. The regional emergency operations center being connected to the cities is critical and it has not worked yet.

Vietzke said the state had convened stakeholders and thinks the Council could propagate that out so people are aware and create a common language. He mentioned the 45-day reply window on the applications.

Manzione mentioned the fact that "shovel-ready" is limiting and McCoy agreed that the term needs to be dropped or modified because there are big-concept projects that could not be classified as shovel ready. McCoy said BICC subcommittees should gear up again.

Earley said it was worth mentioning industry investments in the state – improved speeds etc. Manzione underscored that point saying stimulus of the private sector is key for what will make things happen.

Vietzke stressed that fact that early stimulus projects were focused on construction but that the next round is really about broadband.

Emra made the comparison in stimulus investment in broadband (\$7.2 Billion) vs. AT&T investment (\$19 billion). How to address the pockets where there is no broadband? Probably stimulus dollars.

McCoy said that the point is to have large effects from small investments.

## **Council Deliverables Discussion**

Manzione cited the fact that the BICC operates in a new landscape then when it was first formed since the ARRA was not on the horizon then. The BICC must now define its role better. The nature of the industry is that it is largely "shovel-ready" because things can be implemented so quickly.

McCoy stressed that he would take up again the subcommittee on municipalities and that an educational network is needed. He also addressed borderless communications for public safety. There would be real progress for the state if the Council could articulate and surface these issues. He also mentioned the statistic of 40% of inner-city student

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families not having access to broadband; this should be surfaced. McCoy suggests an operational change for the BICC, possibly more frequent meetings.

Manzione said he wants to bring it up to a higher level. Perhaps come up w/ new recommendations for the legislature. What are the actions for the near-term (45-day) window? And the long term?

Vietzke suggested that it could be appropriate for the Council to offer to review stimulus proposals. Discussion about this: whether it would be a full review (probably too involved for the Council) or an endorsement of some sort. Mundy mentioned that other parts of the governor's office and OPM are paying close attention to transparency. Manzione said a letter could be crafted offering the council's services to review proposals. Vietzke noted that any offer should be structured as additive and positive. Chowaniec suggests follow-up with Matt Fritz by phone before sending a letter. Vietzke will do this.

Mundy pointed out that the RFI process can take a long time, cited the DOIT site project. Chowaniec mentioned the stakeholder, public forum process that has not materialized.

Emra said that legislation could still pass as part of the budget implementer.

## **Action Items – Near Term**

Vietzke to contact Matt Fritz about the Council providing vetting for broadband stimulus grant proposals.

Bertini to find out official info on term dates from LCO

Emra, Santino to invite guest speakers for the October meeting.

## **Action Items – Long Term**

Subcommittees to reconvene. Per Manzione each should do a one page summary as a report.

## **Public Comment**

Rick Strauss of CASE suggested that the Council hold a periodic forum for the committees of cognizance and the GA to inform them of what is happening around the country. **Discussion:** Vietzke asked if those from industry could participate in a forum if it were focused on the national, global landscape. Emra said it would depend on how much detail was requested. Also, things change, capital budgets etc. Life-cycle is not necessarily what the companies anticipated ... and there is wireless, not just wireline. Vietzke suggested that a better management of the tension between public and private interests would enable the BICC to function better.

Lee Samowitz former state rep from Bridgeport, now an investor with a company called Broadband Associates, based out of California. It is an education driven company. All education institutions in CA linked with the broadband backbone (He mentioned CENIC). BB Associates lets the government own the system and they are wholesalers and they moved into rural bb. He is trying to help CT get with the program. Samowitz says the largest grant in the country so far has gone to BB Associates for rural broadband. He also cited a company that does fast mapping via phone called Chico State. They have a statistical system that works well. He emphasizes buy-in from the legislature and state agencies if anything is going to get done.

Pua Ford of the League of Women Voters also briefly spoke to cite the legislation 6424 that did pass the Senate with many amendments. SB 890 is dead.