



NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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North Central Executive Committee Meeting Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Members

James Thomas	Cameron County
William Bogart	Cameron County
Mark McCracken	Clearfield County
Matthew Quesenberry	Elk County
Daniel Freeburg	Elk County
Jeffrey Pisarcik	Jefferson County
James Sleigh	Jefferson County
Douglas Morley	Potter County

Staff

James Chorney
Cheryl DePanfilis
Christine Perneski
Jennifer Hibbard
Rachel Wolfel
Edward Matts
Mary Lou Jessop

Guests

Thomas G.G. Coppolo	Solicitor
Brian Stockman	Ridgway Record

Chair Quesenberry called the meeting to order at 9:35 with the pledge to the flag.

QUORUM/INTRODUCTIONS

There was a quorum for the meeting.

MINUTES

With no corrections or amendments to March 27, 2019, Executive Committee Minutes, Doug Morley moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. Motion unanimously passed.

Matt informed the Committee that Al Pingie, McKean County Commissioner and past Chair of North Central, passed away on April 23, 2019. He was a great friend and will be missed.

NEW BUSINESS

Financial Reports

With no comments or questions on the March Financial Reports, Jim Thomas moved to accept the Financial Reports as presented, seconded by Doug Morley. Motion unanimously passed.

A95s

There were no A95s for the month.

Correspondence

Several Letters of Support were included in the mailing. The letters were North Central's support for the Penn State DuBois LaunchBox and Innovation Collaborative ARC POWER Grant application; North Central's support to Clearly Ahead Development's effort at securing EDA funding to assist in their work toward developing a 2-story, multi-occupancy building along the riverfront in downtown Clearfield; and North Central's support for the Northern Pennsylvania Broadband Connectivity ARC POWER Grant application.

Also included was a letter from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) regarding 11 public meetings in conjunction with the development of the 2020 State Plan of Program Operations and Administration.

This is for information only.

Purchases

There were no Purchases for the month.

Resolutions

There were no Resolutions for the month.

Loans

There were no Loans for the month.

DISCUSSION

Regarding the ARC POWER Grant program that Neil Fowler spoke about at the January Full Board Meeting, Jim Chorney announced that four applications, from our region that were reviewed by the State, have been forwarded to ARC in Washington, DC, for review. The four applications are:

- McKean County – Essential Emergency Support Training Program
- Penn Highlands Healthcare Mobile Low Dose CT Scanner Program
- Clearfield County – Penn State DuBois LaunchBox and Innovation Collaborative
- Potter County – Tri-County Electric applied for funds to further their broadband project

We did very well as far as applications for the ARC POWER are concerned. This is a competitive process where ARC in Washington will now evaluate these applications against other applications within the 13-

state Appalachian Regional Commission region. ARC has about \$45 million to allocate so hopefully we will get a fair share of those funds for our region.

Regarding the 990s, Jim stated the 990s have been received from the auditors. We are in the final stages of checking them. Jim will forward them out to the Executive Committee for their review as we didn't get them in time to send them out for your review and approval at today's meeting. These have to be filed by May 15 so a follow-up phone call vote with the Committee will be held after you have had a chance to review them. We will get back to you with a date for that phone conversation.

Regarding the contract with Strategy Solutions, Inc., Jim stated that after conversations with Tom Coppolo in regards to what we could do as far as modifying the original contract of \$13,500, as long as we stay within the original parameters of the RFP and what was bid on, expanding those items, we can do that without having to put it back out to bid. If we expand beyond what the original scope of the RFP was, we would almost have to consider it a separate item and put that out to bid by itself.

We asked Strategy Solutions, Deb Thompson, to put together a modified budget, which she did, and we submitted it with the grant application. It has come back to us. We have the hard copy of the contract. One of the stipulations of that contract is that we supply the State with the executed agreement between Strategy Solutions and us.

Our initial thought was that we would sign the \$13,500 and then make amendments. However, Jim is not sure we can take that approach because we have to submit the contract with all the paper work that goes back to the State. We have 60 days from April 9 to sign the letter and send it back to the State with the executed contract.

From his standpoint Jim thinks we have one of three options. We can sign the initial RFP for \$13,500; we can modify the Scope of Work to add in some of the things that, as a Committee, you suggested to Deb Thompson that we consider doing, which was the second budget of the \$24,500, but still staying within the original Scope of work; or we can do nothing at all and relinquish the funds.

A three-page document was handed out showing the original Cost Proposal with the RFP of \$13,500. What we submitted to the State, had some additional items Deb Thompson felt fell under activities in the original Cost Proposal.

Jim then asked the Committee how they would like to proceed.

Matt added that the idea was we knew we had up to \$25,000 available from the State. We also knew that the original proposal came in at \$13,500. Once we had an opportunity to review the proposal and talk with Strategy Solutions, we realized there may be some opportunities to expand some of the elements because of funds available. We didn't want to go too far off the original Scope of Work; but we didn't want to wind up putting ourselves in a financial position that if we needed to expand, then we wouldn't have the funds from the State available. That is how the original proposal got modified and it justified for us to request almost the full amount available.

As Jim mentioned the State is asking us to put down the amount we want, either the \$13,500 or the \$24,500.

Jim noted we weren't anticipating the State asking for a copy of the contract. We thought we would have time to be able to make the modifications or add-ons that were talked about. Our opportunity to put those add-ons into the contract is basically under a 60-day window now.

Doug asked if the additional items expand or enhance what we will get out of this Plan. Are we just expanding additional things to do, or is there an anticipation that by doing these additional things we will get a much better result.

One of the main items that was added, which was brought up when Strategy Solutions was at our meeting, was the recommendation or suggestion that they go out and actually meet with the three commissioners in each county. This was not something they were originally going to do. This is one of the big ticket items that they added for this. From a Commissioner's perspective, is that adding value to what they are doing?

Matt said that the lower cost gave us an opportunity we didn't have before. We thought originally we might have to figure out how we were going to make up the gap. We could accomplish things on a lesser proposal; but having the opportunity to meet face-to-face, he would be willing to risk doing that for a better outcome than not. Now that those funds are available we have the luxury to do that.

By having the additional meetings and interviews would add value.

From the Commission's standpoint on several of the other items such as the Research Alternative Funding Streams and Grant Opportunities, that wasn't something they talked about. They were going to recommend doing that, but this is that added step of giving us suggestions on where the funding is available. Added value for North Central, Jim believes is there for that component.

Based on that, Doug suggested we do the \$24,500 because it will enhance the study and bring some additional things and enable us to learn what we can.

Jeff agreed with Doug to go with the enhanced study.

Jim asked Tom if he had any problems with where they are proposing putting it under the original proposal that it would create any problems.

Tom said he didn't see any problems.

Therefore, Doug Morley moved to proceed with the \$24,500 with the additional add-ons, seconded by Bill Bogart.

Matt said it has been moved and seconded to provide the updated cost proposal for \$24,500 for Strategy Solutions so we can enhance the original elements under the base agreement.

With no further discussion the motion unanimously passed.

Jim said he will sign the contracts today and will also sign the contract with Strategy Solutions for the updated costs. They will be getting in contact with us then shortly to start the Kick-off meeting, which Jim assumes will involve the Executive Committee as well North Central staff.

Jim reported that Kristi Wendel, an Enterprise Development staff member, has submitted her resignation. She is taking a job with the City of St. Marys and her last day will be May 1.

Jim then asked Ed Matts to give an update on the activities he has been providing with Broadband.

He has completed several projects. One was the Russell Stone project in Grampian. They are very happy with the service that we are supplying to them. The owner now wants internet across the hill to where his house is in Curwensville. After doing some research, Ed found out there is a tower site that he already has a contract with the gentleman to use it. There is also a township building that needs internet, so Ed is going to look at expanding services to that area. North Central will be the provider, at least for now.

Jim and Ed had a meeting in Cook Forest on Tuesday and met with some people from the Vowinkle area, which is out of our region. The Northwest Commission, who put the meeting together, was in attendance as well. There is a camp ground, cabins, as well as a new facility going in for weddings, etc. so Ed is looking at how to cover that area. It is a hard place to cover because it sits in a bowl and is below everything else. In talking with some of the owners and we're willing to build a small guide tower there. The owners are looking at an outlay of cash and are going to try to get a grant from tourism or some such to try to cover the install. If we install the tower on one piece of property, we should be able to cover most of the businesses there. The camp ground is always full in the summer, and this will be very beneficial to everyone out there.

Ed said he is still looking at where Burger King in Clearfield is. All the businesses along that corridor are complaining about poor service. There is fiber there and Ed is working on getting a price of terminating that fiber at one of the businesses and then shooting it out wireless to all the businesses out there.

Ed also noted he was with some people on Tuesday and a courthouse is complaining about their internet service. In doing some research, Ed found that Zito's fiber is terminating in that building. All they have to do is contact Zito to get tied into it.

If you do get requests from places, forward them to Ed and he'll look at them. We may or may not be able to do them. Ed has another in Mahaffey that Rep. Dush's office sent him. He doesn't know if anything can be done or not.

There are several places in Kane that are interested in service. Requests are coming in and Ed looks at them as quickly as he can and lets them know if something can or cannot be done. There is a project in Ridgway that he may be doing. He sent a quote out to CEMHMR that is moving. So we will see what happens with that one.

We are progressing along, still doing the buildouts on our own; and we are trying to figure out how to get some additional funding to do some of the buildouts to help the individuals on the end.

Jim also stated that one thing we are potentially looking at is grant opportunities to do a combination Vertical Assets, Fiber and possibly Speed Testing on the Impact Site so we can start to identify some of these areas ourselves. We are looking at possibly getting some Federal funding for that.

Ed also stated that we are looking at doing a speed testing, different that it has ever been done before. When you do it by census block, it is very skewed. The Federal Government just got called on the carpet

that their maps are so bad. Just because someone in an area has 50 Megs, it means that census block has 50 Megs, which is very unrealistic that is happening.

We are hoping to partner with all the school districts in our region and make it a Senior Project that they have a form they fill out at home, they run a specific speed test and send us a snapshot of that. We will compile that data on the map and get better information than they have ever had before.

Ed has talked to several school districts and they seem to be willing to do this. They thought it would be a good project. They will even find out where there are holes or where there is nothing. We are hoping to get better data. Our Vertical Assets will be more than just towers. We are looking at water towers, silos, anything that is above, buildings that are a couple stories, etc. Anywhere that you can actually put radios to move your signal around.

Matt asked if this survey could be something that is pushed out to the counties to cover as much ground as possible.

Jim said this stemmed from a conversation with Congressman Thompson and Deborah Pontzer where we came up with the idea of possibly utilizing other resources besides just surveys. We are going to try to cover as much as we can possibly cover to get a good representation who the providers are and what the current speeds are that they provide.

Using the schools will give us a wide area of information and then we take it further and go out to the counties.

Ed said there is a site, Test It, but you must make sure you are connected to WiFi at your home to run the test. Otherwise the data is saying what a good job Verizon, ATT, Comcast, etc. are doing.

Jim then asked Chris Perneski to give a brief update on the Foreign Trade Zone.

Chris gave an update on the Foreign Trade Zone. She wants to get to the point where there is a process that everyone knows so we can direct someone through the process step by step.

In follow-up to the March Executive Committee Meeting, Chris wanted to address some of the questions that were asked in her absence.

North Central is the Grantee of the Foreign Trade Zone #254. North Central is the only FTZ nationally that is also identified as the both the Grantee and Operator. A Grantee never wants to be an Operator. The Grantee is the administrator of the FTZ. They market, oversee the Operators and submit reports. The Operator is actually the company that has the products moving in and out of the FTZ.

North Central is working to relinquish any identification that may exist in association with North Central being identified as an operator. Moving forward it is the intent to have a Standard Operating Procedure in place to address FTZ inquires, the application process and fees. All responsibilities of the Grantee.

We are working with Campbell Trade Group, who will be setting up the fee structure and allow us to do what most all other organizations do. It limits our liability with this process as well. Randy Campbell did

offer to do some training for the Executive Committee at some point and he is developing a power point that we can do with our PREP Partners.

Chris mentioned that AgriPower have hired Scott Armstrong to develop the International market and also the product and technology. They are bringing in a delegation from the Philippines, mainly government officials. They have worked with the City of St. Marys. They need really high ceilings and the airport site probably won't work. They are looking at a building at a building in Jefferson County.

She will forward additional information out to the Committee. They did ask for a delegation of us there to welcome them, probably a half hour. He is willing to show us all their technology. Often times overseas visitors appreciate meeting officials that can help them. It is at 3:00 PM on Monday, April 29.

Regarding the Engage! Program, Chris will be taking this over in the interim until a replacement is hired to fill Kristi's position.

Chris reported that the information on the map being shown can be layered on to the Impact Map that was presented a few meetings ago.

After the February meetings it was decided that we are going to make everybody equal.

Jim Chorney stated we are going to go from what we considered a Cost Reimbursement contract to an Incentive-based contract.

Each county has been asked what it is going to cost them to do the Engage! Program. We are going to do a straight \$50 if you engage a company, \$350 if you enter the survey and \$350 if there is an action plan. Everyone will be treated equally.

McKean and Potter counties did not really ask for any dollars as the surveys were done by a regional partner or Workforce Development.

Every county has been touched. One hundred-ninety interviews have been done and we received additional dollars. We initially said we would do 245 interviews and we were doing such a good job that we were asked how many more could we do and how much more money would we need. We committed to 290 interviews.

Bill Bogart asked how much money Cameron County is getting. Jim Chorney stated for the upcoming year they can apply for whatever they feel they want to do as far as the number of interviews. When Chris talked about the Incentive-based Contract of being a total of \$750, we went to the counties, local EDCs and IDCs and asked how many interviews did they want to do because North Central is going to reimburse them \$750 an interview. They set the limit. That doesn't mean the State won't come back and tell us we're not getting the full amount we requested. We haven't gotten that far yet.

For the previous year Chris believes Cameron County committed to 10 interviews and they told us what it was going to cost them to do those 10 interviews. For this year, Chris said that Lori Reed is going to be doing a lot of the interviews.

When you look at some of our counties and what they pay their staff and the mileage they are covering, their cost per interview might have been higher. McKean County says they do it anyway and we don't have to pay them. This is a way for counties to get additional dollars. We realize it is hard when you have to pay a county employee out of some of your funds that if we could make it a straight reimbursement, those dollars become the county dollars.

In Potter County, the Community Education Council is going to be doing the interviews.

The only thing we told the County Commissioners was a consistent thing. If you do not want to do it and you don't want your staff to do it, the County is going to be served and we will do that with a regional partner. No county will go unserved. Every county came back and told us what they feel they are capable of doing.

Regarding the Loan Program, Jenn stated that there is an application being worked on for the May meeting.

Cheryl had nothing to report on the benefits side. Our broker is still working on getting our employees the very best rate on our benefits as possible.

The next North Central Executive Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 22, at 9:30 AM in the Teleconference Room.

ADJOURN

With no additional items to be discussed, Bill Bogart moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Freeburg
Secretary/Treasurer