



NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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North Central Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 27, 2021 – 9:30 AM

Members – in person or via Zoom

Ann Losey	Cameron County
Dave Glass	Clearfield County
Jodi Brennan	Clearfield County
Kristy Smith	Clearfield County
Matt Quesenberry	Elk County
Jodi Foster	Elk County
Eric Wolfe	Elk County
Padraic McGrath	Elk County
Jeff Pisarcik	Jefferson County
Jack Matson	Jefferson County
Jamie Lefever	Jefferson County
Carol Duffy	McKean County
Tom Kreiner	McKean County
Jeremy Morey	McKean County
Susan Zook Wilson	McKean County
Nancy Grupp	Potter County
Will Hunt	Potter County
Doug Morley	Potter County
Abbi Peters	At-Large – PA Wilds
Carolyn Newhouse	At-Large – Bradford Area Alliance

Staff - in person or via Zoom

Jim Chorney
Amy Kessler
Cheryl DePanfilis
Christine Perneski
Ed Matts
Jennifer Hibbard
Mary Lou Jessop

Guests via Zoom

Elizabeth Kishbaugh	Senator Robert Casey's Office
Deborah Pontzer	Congressman Glenn Thompson's Office
Rep. Brian Smith	66 th District
Dr. Jill Martin-Rend	BC3@Brockway
Tom Beveridge	Solicitor
Brian Stockman	Ridgway Record/Daily Press

Chair Pisarcik called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM with the pledge to the flag.

QUORUM/INTRODUCTIONS

Roll call was taken to make sure everyone on the meeting was captured. There was a quorum for the meeting.

MINUTES

There was one correction to the November Board Meeting minutes. Jeremy Morey was listed as being from Jefferson County instead of McKean. With no other corrections or amendments to the November 18 and December 16, 2020 Board Minutes, Ann Losey moved to accept the minutes as presented, Carol Duffy seconded by. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee met regarding the Slate of Officers for 2021. The recommendation of the Governance Committee is to accept the 2021 Slate of Officers as listed below:

Chair – Carol Duffy (McKean County)
1st Vice Chair – Nancy Grupp (Potter County)
2nd Vice Chair – Ann Losey (Cameron County)
Secretary/Treasurer – Padraic McGrath, CPA (Elk County)

Chair Pisarcik called for the motion to approve the 2021 Slate of Officers as listed above.

Matt Quesenberry moved to approve the 2021 Slate of Officers, seconded by Dave Glass. Motion passed.

With the motion being approved, Carol Duffy took her place as Chair. Carol thanked Jeff for the good work he has done through this COVID-19 year and doing everything through Zoom. It is very much appreciated.

Financial Reports

Jim announced that we have hired a Director of Finance and that is Shelly Caggiano, who has been with North Central over 15 years. With trying to meet deadlines and still doing her old job as well, Shelly is not at the meeting but you will get to meet her at the next meeting. We are now looking to hire for her previous position.

Jim noted that we will be working on the budgets so hopefully they will be included on the Financial Reports for the March meeting. We will also be sending along the Department Reports as well.

With no comments or questions on the October through December Financial Reports, Jack Matson moved to accept the Financial Reports as presented, seconded by Dave Glass. Motion passed.

A95s

There were no A95s.

Correspondence

Even though there was nothing in the mailing, Jim reported that as part of our application for our Keystone Community Broadband Project, there is a letter that needs to be sent to the municipalities; and what we have done for previous applications is send the letter to the County Commissioners. You will be receiving this letter and what it represents is the State portion of the Statewide Broadband project. It matches the ARC POWER Broadband project that Ed has talked about at previous meetings. The two projects are each \$600,000 for a total of \$1.2 million which is being split among the seven LDDs across 52 of the 67 counties.

Purchases

We are requesting approval to renew the MIP FA Maintenance and Support Plan for the Accounting Software for 2021 through Abila, Inc. The cost for this is \$8,394.36 and has been budgeted for.

Chair Duffy called for a motion to approve the renewal of the MIP FA Maintenance and Support Plan through Abila.

Padraic McGrath moved to approve the renewal of the MIP FA Maintenance and Support Plan through Abila, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. Motion passed.

Jenn is requesting approval for the purchase of loan servicing software supplement from Portfol. The total cost of the purchase is \$8,290 which includes one-time consulting fees for setup of \$6,290 after 15% offered for 10 loan closing documents and \$2,000 annual license fee.

This software is a supplement offered through Portfol which is the servicing software used by North Central. Our standard loan documents will be housed within Portfol and the software is designed to input all data specific to each loan to be entered once to auto-populate all fields. This investment will greatly reduce both staff time that is dedicated to generating closing documents and risk of errors that can occur with repetitive data entry.

The cost of this purchase will be charged to the EDA CARES Act RLF Administrative Grant and has been budgeted for.

Chair Duffy called for a motion to approve the purchase of the Portfol loan servicing software.

Jodi Foster moved to approve the purchase of the Portfol loan servicing software, seconded by Jamie Lefever. Motion passed.

Resolutions

Resolution No. 21-01-3018 Redevelopment Assistance Capital Grant Program (RACP) is whereby Penn Highlands Healthcare is desirous of obtaining funds from the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Grant Program of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the amount of \$500,000 to renovate the third floor of the existing building to increase capacity for adults diagnosed with mental health and substance abuse issues. All projects awarded RACP funding by the Commonwealth are charged an administrative fee by

North Central equal to 1% of the grant amount and where no portion of the fee may be paid from the proceeds of the grant.

This Resolution authorizes the Executive Director, Interim Executive Director or Director of Finance, on behalf of the Commission, to execute a sub grant agreement and an administrative agreement.

Dave Glass made the motion to approve Resolution 21-01-3018 to administer the RACP grant for Penn Highlands Healthcare Third Floor Renovation and charge an administrative fee of 1%, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. Motion unanimously passed.

Loans

TD Fabricating & Welding, LLC, Clearfield, Clearfield County, has requested a loan in the amount of \$24,000 from the EDA CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund for 5 years at .75% for the purchase and upgrade of equipment. This loan will enable them to purchase software, hydraulic and tooling equipment needed to update a used CNC milling machine and turning center. This equipment will be purchased to diversify and expand services to performing machining jobs as a long-term recovery plan from adverse impacts of business from COVID-19. North Central's collateral will be first lien security interest on equipment to be purchased, as well as the personal guarantee of the owner.

Chair Duffy called for a motion to approve the loan to TD Fabricating & Welding, LLC.

Dave Glass moved to approve the loan to TD Fabricating & Welding, LLC seconded by Nancy Grupp. Motion passed.

Also included in the Board mailing was a chart Jenn did showing the EDA CARES Act Loan Fund Activity as of January 19, 2021.

Jenn received an email from EDA saying we're not getting our money out quickly enough and they want to see half of the funds out on the street by June and all of it out on the streets by June 2022.

Jenn would like to see each county getting a share of the funding and noted that Clearfield County has expended most of its \$300,000 so she will have to revisit this for the March meeting.

Nancy asked if Jenn could sent out the parameters of the funding so they can get out and visit companies.

Jenn stated she will have Mary Lou email the information out to the entire Board as well as to Brian Stockman so he can do an article in the papers. A press release was done early on but the parameters hadn't been set at that time. The parameters were sent to our PREP network hoping we would be able to get responses through them.

And if you as Board members know of anyone we can contract within your counties that might be able to help us with that we would appreciate that.

Jenn stated that the EDA is working capital and she is able to do equipment, purchase of real estate. The only thing that can't really be done are construction projects.

The repayment terms are pretty generous to help encourage recovery efforts with our businesses.

Jamie asked if she could get the information formatted that she can put on her Facebook page. Chris will get this out to the PREP network.

Again EDA doesn't care how we share the money. They just want 50% out on the streets by June 30 or they may retract some of the funding.

Broadband

Regarding Broadband, they have been busy trying to wrap up a project in Clarion, which is one of the Keystone Community projects. They have had an awesome take rate over there. He and Adam have been there two days a week for three weeks. They have 25 customers and have started an expansion off of that to reach another area about a mile away. It is going well.

Adam is in Ormsby in McKean County testing some sites there. There are a lot of trees in one area they are trying to get to.

We are busy with the grants and we are working another grant trying to get tower access in Lumber City, the Mahaffey area, to get that area taken care of.

They have a project in Forest County they need to get started.

Some of you saw the areas we picked for the POWER Grants and in some areas the places we identified the counties have identified. We have the ability to move those projects around as long as the impacts are the same. Don't get upset if you saw areas out there that are already going to be served. We will fix that as they come through. And we will definitely coordinate with everyone in the counties to make sure we are going to the right areas.

Jim added we have been receiving more information and have several meetings set up with Windstream and Charter Communications because we are trying to communicate as much as possible with any of the incumbent carriers. The goal is to make sure that the residents are served, whether it is us or them. We are moving forward but we are running into some challenges and Ed can attest to that. We are starting to run into problems with the supply chain as far as getting some of the equipment itself, the brackets to hold the equipment up, etc.

Ed said that we are looking at the end of March for some of the equipment we use. We are trying to huddle together some legacy equipment that we can get and mix and match to keep the projects going.

He also noted that some of the RDOF money that was put out to the phone companies is causing some issues right now, i.e. Windstream and Frontier. That is part of the problem and we have to try to work out an agreement with them. Some areas found out it is going to be up to eight years until they deploy some of that money. That's a long time to wait for broadband. We are trying to come up with some agreement and he doesn't know how that is going to go. Windstream is giving us a run for our money.

Ann asked if they are being difficult to work with.

If we put grant money into an area, they have the right of first refusal so if they refuse us entry into that area because they put grant money in it, Ed has to respect that. If he would use revenues to build an area there isn't too much they can say about that. But if he is trying to use grant money, it's hard because they got the grant money for that too. In Cameron County they got a lot of grant money for a lot of areas so he doesn't know how that is going to affect us. There is a meeting scheduled in February.

Ann said she would like to hear the outcome of that meeting because she had reached out to Jeannie Shearer and she seems very interested and very adamant that they want to get into Cameron County and get this going. So Ann would like to hear both sides of what is happening.

Ed stated their idea of coming in to help is if we have the grant money to do a buildout, they want the grant money. They want to do the buildout. They don't want us to come in and compete with them.

Jim has had a couple conversations with Jeannie and she has provided us a map of Windstream's service area and will be providing us a more detailed map in the future. Jim's biggest concern is, and he expressed it to her, that the map she has says a service area has 25/3 as an example, she has to assume that is true. We are finding out from customers that that isn't always the case. We are just trying to work through some of those issues. As Jim explained to her we are just making sure that people are getting service. We don't care whether it is them or us, as long as the end result is someone has at least 25/3.

Ann has been trying to get some answers on getting broadband rolled out and trying to figure out which direction to go and what she needs to do from her level. She doesn't care who puts it in to get the service going. If there is anything they needs to do or anything they need to facilitate conversation, please let them know.

It's the right of first refusal that is the issue and there is not much that any of us can do about that. Ed thinks that's a law that came into play many years ago at the Federal level to help protect some of the phone companies from other things going on. It is there and there is nothing we can do about it. We just have to try to work through it. Even if you apply for a big grant for Cameron County, Jeannie may come back and say Windstream is doing that so you can't use your grant money in those areas. That is what we are trying to work through.

Elk, Cameron and parts of Jefferson County have a lot of Windstream. Verizon hasn't said a word on what we are doing.

Ed told Carol he has had a few calls from people on how to contact someone and he did pass on Bob Veilleux's information. He knows some of them are from Kane and the people are interested in what you are doing and how to sign up for it.

DISCUSSION

Regarding the Board Orientation, Jim reported they are targeting the week of February 22. We will be reaching out to everyone to make sure they will be available. Keep your eyes open for the date.

As there were several guests present, Chair Duffy asked if they had anything to update the Board on.

Deborah Pontzer thanked Jeff for all his hard work as Chair and welcomed Carol to the Chair position.

She reported that Congressman Thompson is now the ranking member of the Ag Committee for the Republicans and that is a nice opportunity for our region. Further to that, the new Secretary of Agriculture is the old Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary Vilsack. And they are looking to ramp up the world development work they do with him and with the Ag Committee.

They have announced Secretary Vilsack's Chief of Staff and that is Katherine Ferguson. Ms. Ferguson was the key-note speaker for the PA Wilds Annual Dinner in 2019. Deborah mentioned that because it really highlights this region for us and that is going to be a nice connection that we will garner some fruit from.

The PPP program is open again. For those who are interested it sounds like there are a lot of loan opportunities. PPP does come with some forgiveness. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Deborah.

As of January 14, the Treasury has released more rental assistance money. That is really critical for many of our counties. Northern Tier approached the Congressman's Office about the need for more rental assistance dollars because landlords in our region are starting to hit some benchmarks or low marks where if they have any kind of outstanding mortgages, they are running into problems. Again, if you have any questions, Deborah will send you the link to Treasury.

Deborah asked Jenn if she would like the Congressman to do a press release on some of the loan opportunities. If you would, please give Deborah a call.

She thanked everyone for participating and all the hard work people at the county level do. And really hopes by the March meeting we will be able to meet in person.

Elizabeth Kishbaugh from Senator Casey's Office was glad to be on the call. She started with Senator Casey in May so she is still pretty new and learning a lot of the ropes. She doesn't have anything to report but has been taking many notes. She is here as our connection in Central PA to Senator Casey. She represents 16 counties. McKean and Potter are a colleague of her so if anyone from there wants that connection and doesn't have that, please feel free to reach out to Liz. She also echoed Deborah in that she hopes to be able to meet people in person.

The next full meeting will be March 24, 2021, at 9:30 AM in person and via zoom.

A virtual meeting will be held on February 24, 2021, if required to approve loans.

ADJOURN

With no additional items to be discussed, Chair Duffy called for a motion to adjourn. Doug Morley moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ann Losey. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Padraic McGrath, CPA
Secretary/Treasurer