

Special Minutes of
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1 OF PEND OREILLE COUNTY
January 24, 2022
VIRTUAL VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present: Curtis J. Knapp, President
Richard A. Larson, Vice President
Joseph B. Onley, Secretary

Staff Present: F. Colin Willenbrock, General Manager
Management/District Staff
Tyler Whitney, General Counsel & Assistant General Manager
Karen Willner, Clerk of the Board

Others: Two Members of the Public

Pursuant to notice given to the Newport Miner, the special meeting for the Board to discuss potential funding opportunities for the Community Network System (CNS) and give direction to staff related thereto was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Curtis J. Knapp, President.

A roll call was taken.

Colin Willenbrock, District General Manager reported this is a special meeting to further discuss fiber broadband opportunities.

Sarah Holderman, District Director, Treasury, Broadband & Strategic Planning shared a presentation. She met with the Washington State Broadband Office (WSBO) to discuss our unsuccessful grant application. The next round of funding is anticipated to be in May and may have different stipulations requiring higher speeds. Commissioner Onley inquired about the anticipated requirements. Ms. Holderman suspects it will be 150Mbps symmetrical.

Ms. Holderman reviewed the next steps for upcoming grant opportunities. Discussion was held. She provided and explained the different match requirements. She further explained the number of passings, take-rates, projected revenue, and anticipated additional costs for the loan payment, labor, and hardware and licensing fees.

Commissioner Knapp asked if the commissioners had any questions or comments. Commissioner Larson commended CNS and the finance team for working hard to get CNS financially in the black. He commented that we should continued to pursue fiber expansion in the north and inquired whether we could turn grant money down. Commissioner Onley and Mr. Willenbrock both agreed the money could be turned down. Commissioner Larson commented on the additional time and resources required to apply for additional grants. Ms. Holderman stated that the District is well positioned to apply for the next round of WSBO funding but would need significant outside assistance to prepare the federal ReConnect grants.

Commissioner Onley expressed some concern over the \$6.9M match. He suggested focusing on the next round of WSBO funding with the 10% match. He strongly supports fiber expansion in the north.

Commissioner Knapp agrees with both Commissioners Larson and Onley. He commented that we need to decide what is best financially. We have reduced our staff and are doing more jobs with fewer people, so we need to be careful.

Commissioner Knapp asked if there was any public comment. There was none.

Commissioner Larson commented that we should continue to look at every opportunity within the timeframe that staff can do. He noted that Star Link is \$100/month and could reach into the valleys up north.

Commissioner Knapp asked Mr. Willenbrock if he and staff have what they need from the Board. Mr. Willenbrock commented that they do. Commissioner Knapp commented that we have a great team and appreciates what the CNS department does.

Commissioner Onley inquired if we need to look at a fiber rate adjustment and plan for a disadvantaged discount. Mr. Willenbrock said staff would investigate options as part of this next application.

Commissioner Knapp announced the next meeting is February 1, held via Microsoft Teams.

There being no further discussion to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

President

ATTEST:

Secretary

General Counsel
Approved as to Form