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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS FALL GRANT PRESENTATION WORKSHOP**

**Date and Time:** 2:30 pm on Wednesday, September 15, 2021

**Location:** Home Loan State Bank Community Room

### **Attendees:**

Quint Shear  
Dusti Reimer  
Craig Springer  
Janet Rowland  
Chris McAnany  
Dane Van Loon  
Melonie Matarazzo  
Kari Distel

### **Agenda:**

- I. Call to Order at 2:11 pm.
- II. General Public Comment.
- III. Presentations by Fall 2021 Grant Cycle applicants:
  - a. Traditional Grants:
    - i. 2021-FT-01 Town of Collbran: Plateau Valley Broadband for \$300,000.
      1. Presenters: Melonie Matarazzo & Kari Distel
      2. Requesting \$300,000 to bring Broadband Internet to the Plateau Valley for economic development, emergency situations and school district improvement.
      3. Questions:
        - a. J. Rowland asked Melonie if she had recently told her they had some entrepreneurs and businesses that wanted to move there, but because of the lack of broadband, they were unable to make the business relocation work?
          - i. M. Matarazzo said they have had several businesses and entrepreneurs try to move there

but haven't been able to move there because of the lack of broadband.

- b. C. Springer said we've always been really cautious about getting involved in hypothetical projects for a variety of reasons. The most significant reason is that we could approve a grant request for a project that never happens, meanwhile the number two grant request that scores the second highest, goes unfunded. They could come back and say no part of that is fair. I'd like for you to speak to that, and there have been broadband federal government programs for the last dozen years. They are throwing money at projects everywhere. Are you sure you've got to have this \$300,000 to make this project work?
  - i. K. Distel yes, we believe so. Again, we believe this is money that we can leverage as we go to DOLA, the EDA, USDA, it shows a higher level of commitment. We do believe that. We also have a reasonable expectation that we will start construction perhaps as soon as next fall. We aren't talking hypothetical 5-7 years out. I think the difference between now and then, is that we have a really strong stake holder group that we've never been able to pull together before. It started as a result of the school district reaching out to Representative Soper, and he came up and brought the group together. We said the Town of Collbran will be the coordinating committee for the group. We couldn't leave our kids or businesses without broadband level services. It wasn't fair. I know Melonie's daughter she completed an assignment and pushed a button and it disappeared into the vapor, and she failed that class. It's that impactful to us. Her program was Front Range and they have great internet and they didn't accept the excuse that they have terrible internet. We need this funding, and this is an extraordinary time. We can't wait till next fall, which is when I understand your next grant cycle will be. We need this funding, and we need it now, so we can show these dollars for the matching application and start construction next year.
- c. C. Springer asked what they would do if they don't get the dollars?



- g. J. Rowland said that Mesa County is very committed to this project making sure it gets through. We are looking at Gigabit speeds throughout the county. We referred a ballot measure to opt out of Senate Bill 152 that said local governments couldn't get involved in broad band service unless the voters opted out. Throughout the Western Slope all the voters have opted out, except Mesa County. We expect the voters to follow, and that will help us to support with some of the funding for Collbran and other parts of the Valley as well. We are very committed and believe it needs to be done. We wouldn't have committed \$1 million if we didn't think it wasn't going to happen. We believe there could be some other sources of funding through COVID relief dollars. One of the approved expenditures is broadband, but there should be more dollars coming down just for broadband. When ever you see community commitment to the project you see a higher likely hood of getting those dollars. Job Corps is very invested in this and doing a lot of work for us.
  - i. K. Distel said State Parks is very invested in this as well. The State Parks have a goal this year to get broadband brought to all the state parks and have been involved with every conversation also.
  - ii. M. Matarozzo said there are special grant funding for telemedicine and community clinics. The Hospital District has a community clinic in Collbran and Mesa so that is another cycle that is due in January. We intend to apply for funding to see if they will help connect those two clinics. There is a lot of strategic opportunities and eventually cross over to be redundant service to Cedaredge and over the Mesa to Marble and those other areas.
- h. Q. Shear asked if they had engineers identified? Contractors identified? How far along yet?
  - i. K. Distel said they are just at the engineering stage. They will have to put the construction funding package together to go out for bid.
- i. Q. Shear asked if there were any concerns about the availability of contractors?
  - i. K. Distel said I think that is a reasonable concern and I think that's why we're incentivized to do it

quickly before all these other projects come online and started taking the bandwidth.

- ii. M. Matarozzo said they have partnered with District 10 in Montrose and AGNC because what DOLA has for models statewide are using those economic development agencies as key players. We are working with them, especially region 10. They were part of the DMEA network. They were part of the ones that kicked off that region. They have position funded through DOLA a region coordinator that services the state and providing the technical expertise. It's the partnership through DOLA and the broadband coordinator. He's the one doing the proposals and did this map for us.
- j. Q. Shear asked if the Board had any other questions.
- k. The board had none.

b. Mini Grants:

- i. 2021-FM-01 East Orchard Mesa Fire Protection District: Brush Truck for \$50,000.
  - 1. Presenters: Dane Van Loon.
  - 2. Questions:
    - a. Q. Shear for that price tag, what type of hours and mileage?
      - i. D. Van Loon said this particular one has 24,000 miles and the other one has somewhere between 50,000-60,000 miles. This has quite a bite of life. The State has a protocol called the Broken Arrow protocol. They can call departments and if approved, we can send a unit out for three days just pass Mesa County and just pass Meeker. With our use, we project at least a ten-year time to hold on to this one. We've dumped \$5,000-\$7,000 into our current unit this year to just try and keep it appropriate and ready to send and go. That went way beyond our budget for repair expense. Our structural engine is in the shop right now and we have \$5,000 we are putting into it, including the tires, that's normal wear and tear and that was budgeted. But the transmission we have to fix,

that was a little bit pricey. That's an old GJ fire unit we got through online auction. These are our hopes. Our call numbers have gone up and up and up. Last year we went to 69 calls, if we continue on this path, we'll hit over 100 calls for our small little area, not just the county.

- b. C. Springer asked how many volunteers they had?
  - i. D. Van Loon said they just lost three, so they have 17. With the new restructure, they are hoping to go up to 25 volunteers. Unfortunately, in the summer, I lose 8-9 of them because of farming. And rightfully so, it is their livelihood and we're having to stretch out further into the county. We're hoping to get more and train in higher levels of certification.

c. The Board had no more questions.

- 3. D. Reimer said she would send out a calendar appointment for when she will come and pick up the scores from the Board. It won't be until October, so you'll have time to review them. I'll probably pick them up on October 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 4. J. Rowland thought they were due today, so hers are done.
- 5. D. Reimer said there is \$350,000 available and its up to the discretion of the board to award out all, some or none of it.

IV. Unscheduled Business.

- a. None.

V. Adjourn.

- a. C. Springer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. J. Rowland second. Voted. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm.