

**ILLINOIS CENTURY NETWORK  
APRIL 18, 2011 POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Mike Dixon called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Kathleen Bloomberg asked if we were planning to discuss a letter from Lincoln Land Library that was sent to the ICN Policy Committee members. The ICN staff was not aware of the letter. It was added as Item 7 of the agenda.

Members present:

Greg Wass, Cook County	Mike Dixon, Western Illinois University
Chet Olson, Mayor of Rochelle	Amy Edwards, IL Board of Higher Education
Todd Jorns, IL Community College Board	Bonnie Styles, Illinois State Museum
Kathleen Bloomberg, Illinois State Library	

Staff and guests:

Lori Sorenson, Central Management Services	Kirk Mulvany, Central Management Services
Tom Oseland, Central Management Services	Deborah Kelley, Central Management Services
Robin Woodsome, Central Management Services	Carla Poani, AT & T

**Minutes**

Mike introduced the first item on the agenda, the approval of the minutes from January 18, 2011. Chet Olson motioned that the minutes be approved. Amy Edwards seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership Update**

Lori Sorenson reported that March 31st closed the year one, quarter three of the three year project. Staff have been preparing reports and assessing progress – the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) measures progress by money spent not necessarily activity.

The most significant accomplishment this past quarter was the completion of the environmental assessment and receipt of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). At the time the draft environmental assessment was submitted in January, ICN did not yet have an approval letter from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (HPA). In mid March, the project received approval from HPA with additional requirements and restrictions. The restrictions included the avoidance of Cahokia Mounds near Collinsville. Additionally, about 200 miles of the 1,000 miles of new construction requires additional surveys to ensure avoidance of archeological concerns. The archeologist hired by the Architectural and Engineering firm will conduct the field survey work prior to construction. The field survey work will be an additional cost to the project.

Staff is working on securing fiber lease agreements for the nearly 1,000 miles of leased fiber. Agreements were secured with the Department of Transportation and the State Toll Highway

Authority in the western Chicago suburbs. When combined with the Level3 fiber, the Collinsville to Chicago run is nearly connected. Bids have been issued for several other fiber routes. Members questioned if those potential vendors were concerned about late state payments or the required certification documents. Lori explained that that since the funding is coming from federal dollars and not the General Revenue Fund, payments are issued in a timely manner.

Construction bids were due April 15th. Proposals were received from several vendors and are under administrative review before routing to the technical/business evaluation team. Staff hopes to have contracts with five vendors completed in June.

The Architectural and Engineering firm has completed the detailed design and construction specifications for 23% of the new construction. The goal is to have the same design work completed for 25% of the backbone and 25% of laterals by June 30th. Construction will begin along I-57 – from Kankakee to Champaign. The next routes under construction will be from Kankakee heading north to southern Cook County, Champaign to Bloomington and then Bloomington to Chenoa and Bloomington to Lincoln.

Staff is also working on evaluating various customer forms including the participation agreement, service agreement, application, and acceptable use policy. This is being done to address changes as a result of a new customer base (businesses and third party service providers). The new forms will be reviewed by the Advanced Engineering Taskforce and Policy Committee for comments and feedback.

The total project costs as of March 31<sup>st</sup> are \$4.2 million. This includes \$2 million in federal funding and \$2.2 in local match. ICN has been received \$1.9 million in the federal funding. As reported on [federalreporting.gov](http://federalreporting.gov) and Illinois Stimulus 360, the project has directly funded 18 full-time equivalent jobs - mostly engineering, architectural and environmental.

### **Primary Constituent Funding**

Staff continues to tweak the model. The education community was combined into one group to address disparities between K-12, universities, and community colleges. This had little impact on K-12 but significant benefit to the allocation for community colleges and small universities. Assuming level funding and the adoption of the proposed rates, education organizations would be eligible for a minimum of 50 Mbps and a maximum of 2 Gbps per organization. The model includes funding for non-FTE educational organizations like Regional Offices of Education.

Staff received data from the State Library regarding library size and have developed a few models to accommodate larger libraries. Large museums or museums with digital content will be accommodated through a bandwidth grant.

Overall, the model is easily adjusted based on the level of funding received from the state. Staff is developing documentation for constituents explaining the model.

The model also addresses concerns regarding aggregate connections. Many school districts with multiple buildings locations connect to the backbone through a single aggregate connection. The new model enables districts to allocate bandwidth resources among their locations as they choose. Feedback from school districts indicated they like this model since they can allocate more bandwidth to high schools than the grade schools.

Todd Jorns asked if there is a chance the \$13 million state appropriation could go away or be lowered. Lori responded that it's always a possibility. If the appropriation is eliminated prior to implementing the fiber network it could force schools and libraries to use a DSL or cable modem connection that provides lower throughput, no access to Internet 2, and no redundancy. With the new customer base of the fiber network it might be possible to establish a model to fund primary constitution connections with some of the revenues that come from the other sources.

The AET established a subcommittee to look at developing a membership fee. The committee includes Jim Flanagan, Dennis Gallo, Ken Davis and Robin Woodsome. Staff is also looking interim solutions to meet the primary constituents growing bandwidth needs but cannot afford to increase bandwidth at the current rates. These solutions include the use of additional bandwidth at night when overall network traffic is low. This nighttime bandwidth can be used for server backups and pushing or pulling server and/or desktop updates. Another consideration is the ability to use backbone bandwidth reserved for failover in the event of an outage. Staff continues to work with constituents on a case-by-case basis to find creative solutions to meet bandwidth needs without compromising network operations.

### **AET Membership**

Kirk provided an update on the AET membership. There are seven terms expiring in June. These are two-year terms with a two meeting per year attendance commitment. Of that group, there are two individuals that have not attended any meetings this past year - Charles Kline from UIUC and Louis Kirkbride from ICAHN. The AET and ICN staff would like to have representation from both groups and will be following up to see if there is someone else better positioned to participate.

The focus of AET this past year has been the broadband infrastructure and cost allocation model. The AET has also been talking about collaboration with the cloud service providers. Policy Committee members are encouraged to send Kirk any recommendations for new appointments to the AET. There are typically four meetings per fiscal year with two meetings conducted via video conferencing and two meetings in person. If an AET member is unable to attend a meeting, they can send a delegate.

It was noted that Doug Minter with Heartland Community College is no longer Chair of the Community College President's Technical Council. Scott Armstrong of Kishwaukee Community College is the current Chair.

Membership recommendations will be presented at the next Policy Committee meeting.

## **E-rate**

Tom Oseland provided his E-rate update. The 2009 funding year has been closed out. ICN received a little over \$1.3 million. The 2010 application was approved for up to \$3.6 million. ; Tom estimated the final amount will be around \$3.2 million. This is a big increase over the prior funding year due to a change in calculating the network utilization by eligible entities.

Staff is finalizing paperwork and various forms for the 2011 funding request. The 2011 application is very similar to 2010 – it was submitted on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. USAC has started to review the application.

There is not much happening with 2001 funding – some invoice records no longer exist.

Once the fiber network is in place ICN will likely go from being an applicant to a broadband service provider (Internet only). Individual schools and libraries would file for E-rate funding with the ICN listed as the service provider. Staff would work with constituents to provide direction for the application process. The service provider activities would be completed by ICN.

## **Lincoln Library Letter**

Lincoln Library in Springfield, IL sent a letter to Policy Committee members requesting ICN to reconsider how bandwidth is calculated for libraries. The library suggested that ICN consider the size of the population served rather than a fixed amount per library location. They are also asking for an interim solution – more bandwidth with no costs. Lori reported that similar requests are received at least a couple times a year from other constituents.

Kathleen Bloomberg mentioned there is frustration that if the State is subsidizing the ICN at the rate of \$13 million and yet some libraries, museums, and schools are not getting a competitive rate compared to some other ISPs.

Lori explained that the ICN service can't be compared to a basic residential or small business service rate. The ICN provides dedicated bandwidth with the same upload and download speeds. DSL and cable solutions are shared bandwidth with an advertised speed but no guarantees of actual throughput. The download speed is also greater than the upload speed so anyone accessing data at any school location will experience greater delays. Despite these differences, staff agrees that current operational costs are too high which drives the rates. The migration to state-owned fiber will significantly reduce operational costs and lower rates. However, rates will never be as low as DSL and cable solutions.

All agreed to have the AET review the Lincoln Library situation to determine if any of the interim solutions would meet their needs and to consider their recommendations in the funding allocation model. Lori will contact the Library in the meantime.

Chet Olson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mike Dixon seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:51 PM.