

BCN ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Attendees:

Phone Bridge: Joan Wade, Greg Barniskis, Marge Jeffers, Bruce Mathew, Wayne Erdman, Holly Scharf, Diane Kohn

In Person: Tim Schell, Tom Taibl, Larry Baeder, Nan Linde, Bob Bocher, Jay Jaeger, Ed Meachen, Mike Kessenich, Susan Canty

Meeting called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Tim Schell.

BCN Contract Extension Update – Diane Kohn

- Contract negotiations continue. AT&T is due to deliver updates on Wed, June 22 to DOA. They are close but need to finalize a few points. Cannot give a timeframe but they are interested in completing this process soon.
- Members noted the ongoing delays may force schools to seek other vendors to meet their bandwidth needs. TEACH has many pending bandwidth requests that cannot be addressed and is currently paying more for service than is anticipated once the contract is signed.
- Agency budgets are stretched and they are also looking for the cheapest alternative for bandwidth. While they prefer BCN, they may need to look elsewhere.
- UW bandwidth usage is going up at 45% per year with costs staying steady. They are eager to help schools and libraries but legislation will limit this.
- Technical colleges are seeing exponential growth requests for bandwidth. Anything they can do to keep this cost in control is essential. Questions were raised regarding the BCN postalized rate theory which is creating a climate where BCN cannot compete.
- BCN Advisory Council Executive Committee requested a meeting with Diane and new CIO in late August for an update
- Special thanks to Diane Kohn, who is planning to retire, for her work as acting CIO. She noted her goal is to wrap this up before she leaves.

Long Term Planning Process-Business Requirements – Diane Kohn

- Need to foster a climate of business and education working together in the future
- DOA is committed to growing the next phase of BCN and is hiring staff to ensure this occurs. Mike Mietz's position will be filled and will focus on contract management. Goal is to ensure TEACH dollars are going to areas where bandwidth is needed. An additional position will be added to focus on network functionality and capacity.
- DOA is hiring a new CIO to start in early fall and Diane is recommending that the BCN be considered a high priority for the DOA

DOA Staffing Transitions- Diane Kohn

- Mike Mietz retired and they will be filling his position. Also will be looking at TEACH to be sure it is appropriately staffed. Mike Kessenich will cover until Mike Mietz's position is filled.
- A new position will be added to focus on network infrastructure and technical requirements
- A new CIO will be hired to begin in early fall.

UW Extension CAN ARRA Grant Status – Ed Meachen

- Recent legislation approved by Joint Finance resulted in the UW entering into discussions with telecommunication companies regarding CAN grant activity. The outcome for these discussions is to reach agreement on what will benefit both entities. The plan is to move these discussions forward as quickly as possible.
- CAN work continues as planned. UW urged not to delay construction over the summer months as it could seriously delay progress.

What can WBAA do to help foster a more cooperative relationship – Group Discussion

- Recent lobbying efforts by the telephone companies and the resulting legislation from the Joint Finance Committee relating to the UW and WiscNet created distrust with schools and libraries. What is the telephone company position on this and how will telephone companies re-build trust with these groups?
- AT&T supports Access WI who took the lead on this as they felt threatened by UW and WiscNet CAN efforts. Their position is that private industry should not have to compete with public entities that are publicly funded. This action is based on the principle of public vs. private sector dollars used to compete with private sector firms. AT&T understands the value WiscNet provides to the schools it serves but simply wants a level playing field. The telephone companies support BCN and are spending \$200-400 million to extend fiber and the network.
- An audit by the LAB will be conducted with a final report due January 2013.
- UW believes there are numerous unintended consequences that remain with the current legislation that will hurt the state
- It was noted that there is not a clear line between public vs. private sector funding with tax dollars. The WBAA receives \$17 million in Teach funds and Access WI receives \$150 million from the Universal Service Fund
- School budgets are severely constrained and they are looking for the best service with the best performance at the cheapest price. This legislation implied that tax dollars were not being spent wisely and that is not the case. In some cases, private vendors beat the BCN price by 50%.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.