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**CITY OF CONDON
WORK SESSION AGENDA
FIBER COUNCIL
Thursday, July 22, 2021, 2:00 PM
CONDON CITY HALL**

1. Call the Meeting to Order

Chair Rita Rattray called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

Present: Fiber Council members Rita Rattray, Jan Stinchfield, Elizabeth Farrar-Campbell, Josh Hendricks; staff - Kathryn Greiner; consultant Adam Haas.

Absent: Fiber council member Donald Jamieson.

2. Discuss Gilliam County RFP Process & Industry Input

Telecom consultant Adam Haas stated that four responses have been received from the Gilliam County Request for Proposals for Design/Engineering for Countywide Broadband System and all were qualifying. The four included Communication Network Engineering, Inc.(CNE), Commstructure Consulting LLC (Commstructure), Danella and Mid-State Consultants (Mid-State) and were scheduled for interviews in this meeting. Haas stated that Danella and Commstructure are firms which are hands-on design and have designated engineers that will be sub-contractors. Mid-State and CNE both had engineers on staff and Mid-State has some local experience. Haas discussed that the firms may need to be asked how they are going to get an accurate count of the homes and buildings in the rural portion of the county that will be in need of broadband and if they have experience in fixed wireless for some of the remote buildings. Campbell stated that the Council must recommend to the Gilliam County Court the top three firms, which then they will ask for the pricing and make the final decision.

Council discussed potential questions during the interviews, if there is an issue with not having licensed engineers or if they had local experience. Haas stated that the firms had the ability to subcontract with engineers licensed in Oregon and did not see this as a concern.

2.1. Discuss Experts Information on the Proposals & Scoring

3. Proposers Interviews



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3.1. 2:30 - Communication Network Engineering, Inc

Blake Griffin, president/principal engineer of CNE presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Fiber Council, along with staff members Steve Lewis, Joan Steiner and Ashley Waswick. He explained that CNE has offices in Fargo, ND and New London, MN and had just obtained temporary Oregon engineering license with the full license in September. Griffin stated that if wireless network is needed, they have a partner in PCS Technologies, Inc. that is based in the mid-west and has 25+ years of experience. Griffin added that they focus on rural clients to set up rural systems, and due to working remotely he does not see an issue with this project in Oregon. He said that the project will start off with a kick-off meeting with Gilliam County and stakeholders, then his staff would spend 1-2 weeks in Gilliam County gathering data. Griffin said that they currently have 29 rural broadband clients which is 100% of their client base. He stressed that they are experienced in USDA RUS projects that includes grant and design requirements.

Hendricks asked how much involvement CNE would be with a wireless system. Griffin stated that they work closely with their partner PCS and that they provide the equipment, including servers and configure the system. Greiner asked what they consider "rural" and Griffin stated that they work with systems that may have only one connection per mile. Haas asked how they were going to verify the homes in rural Gilliam County. Griffin said that they will use the survey that Gilliam County will provide and the time that their staff is in Gilliam County to map the locations. Haas also asked about the hand-off between fiber and wireless with Griffin replying that it depended on the funding that was available for the system. If there was enough funds to take fiber to every home it would be built, but if not enough funds they would use a less expensive fixed wireless system.

Brief discussion as they left the interview is that Griffin gave a good presentation regarding working with rural customers and discussing funding that was not a part of the written proposal.

3.2. 3 p.m. - CommStructure Consulting, LLC

Erik Orton, owner & CEO of Commstructure presented that his communication infrastructure design company is celebrating its 15th anniversary and he has 25 years in the communication field. His company has projects in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and northern California and his staff of 25 has experiences working with municipalities and private providers. Commstructure has worked with local providers and companies that include Zayo, Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative (CBEC), Q-Life in The Dalles, and communities that include John Day, Burns and Lakeview. Orton said that he expects more federal and state COVID funds for broadband to rural areas that may fit with this project. He said that he did a POP hut for CBEC in Condon and was familiar with the Arlington-Condon dark fiber leased by Gilliam County and Condon, plus the Zayo line that goes through a portion of the county.

Hendricks asked what Orton's experience with wireless systems and Orton responded that he was familiar with 5G to tower placement in this area and that he works with different technologies. Greiner ask about Orton's relationship with Pacific Power since that was the company on the north end of Gilliam County. Orton said that he has a long standing working relationship with Pacific Power and did not anticipate any issues. He stated that there may be issues with Pacific Power's easements with private landowners where they are unable to have access for telecommunications. Hendricks also asked what the process would be to survey the homes in Gilliam County. Orton said that he would determine what information is already available through the existing landowner information and he didn't know how long it would take to gather this information.

Rattray asked if Orton had questions and he asked about the Fiber Council's relationship with Frontier TeleNet (FTN) and ability to leverage local assets. Campbell stated that as Gilliam County Judge he is a member of the FTN board and that she thought there may be an opportunity to use the FTN towers, but wants to see what the consultants/design team bring back to see what may need to be used for the potential system. Orton said that not only local assets such as FTN, but they may need to leverage all technologies that may include cell towers. He added that broadband is no longer a luxury to residents but an essential service. Haas asked that depending on funding, can Orton design to RUS standards. Orton stated that he has worked on several projects with these standard and did not see a problem. He asked if the community was going to be supportive of this project, with Campbell replying that her sense of the community is that they are going to be supportive as they are in need of reliable broadband.



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3.3. 3:30 p.m. - Danella

Dan Howick, VP Design & Construction of Danella stated that his company did a lot of municipal broadband projects that were rural in nature. He said that their advantage is being a financially stable business and that they have worked in every utility market. He stated that "what we design is constructable" and that they know how to successfully staff projects. Katie Howick, Director of Operations of Danella added that they have buying power of materials due to their company's size but remain vendor neutral which allows them to keep up with all different forms of technology. She added that they have worked in rural Illinois with a fiber to the business and they were familiar with different municipalities rules and regulations.

Hendricks asked how Danella would do a survey of the homes in rural Gilliam County. Dan Howick said that they would use GIS technology and work closely with the local electric cooperative. He noted that the kick-off meeting would be critical in bringing partners together on this project. Haas asked how Danella would balance fiber to the home (FTTH) and wireless options. Dan Howick responded that they would take the county as a whole, then break it down into zones. He added that it may be a multi-year project to obtain funds to build in each zone. Hendricks asked what we could do to make the process easier. Katie Howick stated that it is key to have weekly or bi-weekly meetings with stakeholders to communicate progress, and it may include contacting homeowners and communities up front. Dan Howick added that community engagement is a huge factor in planning a successful project.

3.4. 4 p.m. - Mid-State Consultants

Mike Riley VP of Engineering for Mid-State Consultants said that this is a stable company that has been in business for 57 years providing value services. Regional partner is Oregon Telephone Company of Mt. Vernon and has experience with RUS and other federally funded projects. Riley noted that the pandemic had made it challenging to get supplies for projects. He added that landowners - private, BLM or other governmental agencies may necessitate historical or archeological studies for the this project. Riley discussed that their company would need to know the assets available to use and work with local providers. He noted that he has worked with NTIA and RUS on projects.

Hendricks asked what Mid-State's experiences has been with fiber vs. wireless projects. Riley stated that his company has worked with both types of projects. Hendricks also asked about how Mid-State would determine the number of homes in Gilliam County and Riley said that they would use local information, Google earth and census block information. Greiner and Hendricks asked about their relationship with OTC and if there were advantages. Riley said that he saw it as an advantage as similar projects in Oregon.

4. Discuss Recommendation & Scoring of Gilliam County RFP for Design/Engineering of Countywide System

4.1. Recommend & Rank Top Three Proposals

Fiber Council members had individually scored the four proposals and Greiner tallied them together on an Excel spreadsheet. The final numbers were

1. Commstructure Communications - 311 points
2. CNE - 297 points
3. Mid-State Consultants - 284 points
4. Danella - 241 points

Campbell said that she will take the top three to Gilliam County Court's August 4 meeting where she hoped that they would make a decision at that time. Haas was to get the pricing from each one no later than Monday, July 26, 5 p.m. for the final 10 points of each proposal.

A motion was made by Stinchfield to recommend the following ranking of the companies - 1 - Commstructure, 2 - CNE and 3 - Mid-State Consultants. The motion was seconded by Hendricks and approved unanimously.

Haas will contact the top three companies to get the pricing and forward the information to Campbell.



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5. Other

None

6. Adjourn

Chair Rattray adjourned the Fiber Council meeting at 4:57 p.m.