

USDA ReConnect Project Update – Marian Walrath/Dan Long
Finance Committee 5/4/2021

1. **Services Agreement with Empire Access**

- a. Empire Access (Jim Baase, CEO) has signed the Services Agreement.
- b. The Agreement has been sent to the USDA/RUS for review and approval.

2. **Engineering**

- a. New York Engineering Services (NYES) has met the requirements to practice in NYS.
- b. NYES completed RUS Form 217, which is our contract. This has been submitted to RUS for review and approval.
- c. A Kick-off meeting was held between Yates County and NYES where we shared Network Build Criteria that were developed by the Broadband Committee.
- d. An initial meeting was also held between Yates County, NYES and Empire Access.
- e. NYES will be in Yates County in early May to secure office space and to start fielding the network routes.

3. **Construction**

- a. Goal is to start Construction Summer 2021.

4. **Northern Border Regional Commission Grant**

- a. We have identified another grant opportunity thru the Northern Border Regional Commission. Infrastructure projects like broadband are eligible with a maximum grant of \$1M. Eligible applicants are state and local governments, Indian tribes and non-profits.
- b. Our plan is to submit an application (May 14 deadline). Intended use would be to expand the ReConnect network to reach some of the NFSA's (non-funded service areas = unserved/underserved premises which are not eligible to build to using our ReConnect grant monies).