

USDA ReConnect Project Update – Marian Walrath/Dan Long
Finance Committee 6/8/2021

1. **Services Agreement with Empire Access**

- a. Agreement still out for review and approval by USDA/RUS → backlog.

2. **Engineering**

- a. RUS Form 217 and insurances in County approval process. Executed contract will be submitted to RUS.
- b. NYES signed lease and moved into office space at 100 Main St., Penn Yan.
- c. Initial survey/fielding work started week of May 17 and is continuing.
- d. Plan is to complete Plans and Specifications and then the construction bid process in phases.

3. **Construction**

- a. Goal is to start Phase I construction in Fall 2021.
- b. The ‘bottleneck’ for pole permits has been and will continue to be the NYSEG engineering survey review due to minimal staffing. This factor may lead to construction start delays, however we and the engineers are working on mitigating this as much as possible and if necessary, use our contacts at the legislative level to assist and expediting the review.

4. **Grant Applications**

- a. Intended use for first three would be to expand the ReConnect network to reach the unserved/underserved NFSA premises that are adjacent to this network (non-funded service areas = areas which are not eligible to build to using our ReConnect grant monies).
- b. Northern Border Regional Commission grant (NBRC) -- Applied on 5/14/21 for \$1M grant with \$250K match. Notification Fall 2021.
- c. Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request – Submitted \$4.9M request thru Senator Schumer’s and Senator Gillibrand’s portals on 5/26/21. Notification Fall 2021.
- d. NYS Consolidated Funding Application - \$750M available across all 10 NYS Regional Economic Development Councils. A portal grant application has been started and initial vetting of qualifying grant programs has been performed. The most likely funding source will be via Empire Development Corporations’ Infrastructure Fund. Goal to submit an application by CFA deadline of June 30, 2021.
- e. USDA ReConnect Round 3 – FOA (Funding Opportunity Announcement) expected Fall 2021. Application deadline not yet known but expected to be before year end 2021. Will be proposing hiring an engineering firm to identify remaining unserved/underserved premises and to prepare the application.